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Adaptation of the Filipino Family upon Immigration to the United States

This study examines how acculturation into United States society has caused the structure of immigrant Filipino families to change. Surveys given to young adults (18-26 years old) who were born in the United States or emigrated here at an early age provided data about the current status of the Filipino family in the U. S. Interviews and discussion with Filipino men and women (40-80 years old) who immigrated to the U.S. as adults provided information which allowed me to compare and contrast their current family situation to their previous family structure in the Philippines. This study revealed that while the Filipino family in some aspects has remained traditional, the influence of United States culture as well as the distance from the "homeland" has caused a change in the role of individual family members, has altered some beliefs, and has caused some variations in family functions.

History of Filipino Immigration

"The Philippines-- with a burgeoning population, a relatively low standard of living, and a highly educated and skilled population-- is a country of emigration" (Mangiafico 1988: 41). Since as early as 1763, Filipinos have lived in and emigrated to what is now called the United States. According to Sustento-Seneriches (1995), Filipino immigration trends can be categorized into four periods: 1763-1906, 1906-1934, 1945-1965, and 1965- present.

The period of 1763-1906 began with the arrival of Manila men in Louisiana. Due to the maltreatment and forced labor they endured, these Filipinos escaped from the galleon *San Pablo* which was captained by Spanish colonizers. "There followed domestic helpers, steamship crew members, stowaways, mariners, and others who wanted adventure and a better life in America (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:8). These emigrants settled in various states such as California, Hawaii, Washington, and Alaska. During 1906-1934, "this wave [of immigrants] comprised mostly of young, single, uneducated or poorly educated men from the rural areas of the Ilocos and Visayas regions" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:8). These men were hired to work on the sugar cane plantations of Hawaii. After 1924, a larger group of Filipino laborers arrived and began to work on the railroads and the mines. They also became employed as farm laborers, cannery workers, domestic help (in hotel, homes, etc.), busboys, and janitors. "In spite of being underpaid, the Filipinos managed to send part of their hard earned money to their relatives in the Philippines" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:10).

The immigrants during 1945-1965 "consisted of war veterans, military personnel and their families, students, and professionals with their wives and children" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:11). It was during this period that the Philippines began to lose their best educated people to richer countries. From 1965 to the present, the flow of people from the Philippines continued to increase. Filipinos, eager to escape the poverty stricken Philippines, make their way to the United States in hopes of building a new life.

"In the United States, hard work is rewarded. In the Philippines, it is part of the struggle to survive. Images of American abundance, carried home by the Balikbayans, or immigrants returning to their home-land for visits, have pulled frustrated Filipinos to this country. When [one man] went back for a visit in 1981 after working in the United States for 10 years, he told his friends: "If you work, you'll get milk and honey in America." Other Balikbayans described the United States as a "paradise"" (Aguilar-San Juan 1994: 208).

The appeal of the U.S. is undeniable, and as the social and economic situation remains oppressive, Filipinos will continue to seek the shelter of the United States.

Research Objectives

This paper examines how the Filipino family has adapted after acculturation into United States society. The people of this study have relatives, or have themselves, entered the United States during the third and fourth wave of immigration. These families, and the changes their family structure have undergone, are the focus of this study.

Methods

Questionnaires were sent out to 15 people, 11 of which responded. The respondents were seven Filipino men and four Filipino women who were recruited through Filipino clubs on the campus of various universities. All of the respondents are unmarried, United States citizens. All have finished high school and are currently enrolled in a university or junior college. For a copy of the survey, refer to Appendix A.

I interviewed various members of the Ignacio family and the Muñoz family at their homes and all names of participants in the present study have been altered to protect their privacy. The Ignacio household contains four members of a nuclear family (mother, father, daughter, son) and four members of an extended family (paternal grandmother, foster son, his wife, and their five year old daughter). (For the Ignacio family tree, refer to Appendix B.) The Muñoz household contains a divorced father, a son, and a daughter. All interviews were recorded on audio tape (each interview ranged from 45 minutes to one hour in length).

I observed the Ignacio family over a period of one month within their home. During that time period, I had the opportunity to watch the Ignacios in a variety of social situations: a family party, mealtimes, etc. The Ignacios were friendly and receptive to my presence. I tabulated the positive and negative responses to 15 questions asked in my questionnaire. The results are presented table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree to questions asked

Question Asked	Yes (%)	No (%)
1. Would you consider your family hospitable and generous to visiting		

friends and relatives?	90.9	9.1
2. Is Tagalog or some other Philippine language spoken at home?	90.9	9.1
3. Is it important to the women in your family to marry and have children?	90	10
4. Would you ever marry someone of whom your family did not approve?	81.8	18.2
5. Is it important for the women in your family to have jobs?	90.9	9.1
6. Is it important for the men in your family to have jobs?	100	0
7. Is it important for the teenagers in your family to have jobs?	45.4	54.6
8. Is it important for men to be educated?	100	0
9. Is it important for women to be educated?	100	0
10. Is it important for the children in your family to be educated?	100	0
11. Are the women in your family allowed to go outside the home by themselves?	72.7	27.3
12. Are the women in your family more protected than the males?	90.9	9.1
13. Has anyone in your family suffered or is suffering from a mental illness? .	9.1	90.9
14. Do you employ servants or maids at your home?	0	100
15. Is anyone in your family sending money to other relatives in the Philippines?	90.9	9.1

Discussion

Traditionally, the family has been at the core of a Filipino's identity since it provides stability, support, and guidance throughout all aspects of life. Thus, a better future, as well as improved job opportunities and living conditions remain powerful incentives for immigration to the United States since those factors benefit not only the immigrant individual, but the entire family as well.

For Filipinos the initial group, and the one which remains central throughout life, is the family. . .The family is the ultimate place of security, and a consideration of the needs of the family, often over one's own wishes and interests, is a serious obligation. As the Filipino matures, the family group remains bedrock and serves as a model for the development of other friendships and associations. . . .To a degree unusual in the United States, Filipino families are closely intertwined in each other's comings and goings, failures, and triumphs. To understand Filipinos is to accept the complete centrality of the family-- and that means the extended family, including several generations. No other single aspect of life is likely to be as important, lasting, or influential on choices and decisions from childhood to old age. Among Filipinos, the person exists first and foremost as a member of a family and ultimately looks to that family as the only reliable protection against the uncertainties of life." (Gochenour 1990:17-18)

Despite acculturation into U.S. society, the function of the Filipino family as a whole Despite acculturation into U.S. society, the function of the Filipino family as a whole, within an individual's life, appears to remain the same. Of those interviewed and surveyed, eight out of eleven lived in homes with extended family members and all described their families using positive adjectives such as "supportive," "loving," "protective," "happy," "close," "loyal," and "bonded together for life." While the adjectives "strict" and "demanding" were also mentioned twice, those words were used in conjunction with the aforementioned adjectives. Upon considering the actual role of family within an

individual's life, most emphasized the belief that their families would always be present to provide support, advice, and a foundation from which they could always draw strength. "The role of family is [one] of guiding and offering assistance. . .offering a sense of stability where there is none" states twenty year old Philip Magdalena. However, while the function of the family is undisputed, the definition of who is a relative and who is part of a family is in question. Philip Magdalena, wrote that "a family comes to mean those who you care for deeply. Blood or no blood. A family is ever changing." In contrast, twenty year old Catherine de la Cruz stated that family is a "group of people connected together by blood." This concept of blood equaling kinship is the focus of David M. Schneider's "American Kinship: A Cultural Account." In his article, Schneider states that:

"In American cultural conception, kinship is defined as biogenetic. . .Two blood relatives are 'related' by the fact that they share in some degree the stuff of a particular heredity. Each has a portion of the natural, genetic substance. Their kinship consists in this common possession. A blood relationship is a relationship of identity. (Schneider 1968:392-393)"

Therefore, while the notion of blood as the common link between family members is a trait of the American kinship system, it is not clear whether or not this is inherent of Filipino kinship beliefs. As I observed with the Ignacio family, demonstrating respect for friends of the family consists of referring to them with what Schneider called "basic terms": aunt, uncle, cousin, etc. (Schneider 1968:391). However, assignment of a basic term does not necessarily indicate membership within the Filipino family structure. In some cases, the term "aunt," for example, is simply used to show respect to an older woman, while in other cases, a woman who is referred to as an "aunt" is extended all the rights and privileges which accompany the term (regardless of whether or not a "blood" tie exists). However, while talking to members of the Ignacio and Muñoz families, as well as reviewing the questionnaires, it is interesting to note that in listing members of their extended family, all mentioned kin who were related by blood or by marriage, the "explicit definition which Americans readily provide [of what constitutes] a relative" Schneider 1968:391). It is unknown, therefore, whether the Filipino idea of what constitutes a family member is influenced by the American kinship system or if these notions were already in use in the Philippines. For the remainder of the discussion, the term "family" will be used to indicate members of the nuclear and extended family who are related through blood or marriage.

The Roles, Status, and Treatment of Individuals within the Family Women

As seen in the Philippines, there is an attitude of protectiveness toward the women. "A protectiveness toward females is pervasive in the Philippines, extending to an active preoccupation over matters of chastity and safety" (Gochenour 1990:19). This strong sense of protection towards women has not waned due to immigration into the United States. Three out of the four women and five out of seven men mention that because they are female, their parents have been stricter about their upbringing. Jennifer Ramos writes that her parents seem more lenient towards certain things with her brother than her sister and herself. Her parents are known to be far more protective of their daughters because they as women are exposed rape which is more prevalent in females, possible pregnancy, and because they are perceived to be weaker physically. One male however, claims that there "is no difference" between the way boys and girls are raised in the family. It is unknown, however, why he

subscribes to this belief. Because of this protective attitude towards women, in certain parts of the Philippines, young women are not allowed to travel outside by themselves.

"In Manila [the capital of the Philippines], I was always protected and surrounded by older relatives or paid chaperones. It was unthinkable for a young girl to go to the movies by herself. It was a sin." (Aguilar-San Juan 1994:175)

However, within Filipino families living in the U.S., there is a lower correlation between how much protection the women in the family received and their ability to leave the house unchaperoned. Of those surveyed, 90.9% agreed that the women in their families are more protected than the males, yet only 27.3% stated that women were not allowed to go outside of the house by themselves. For example, eighteen year old Anna Ignacio Cisneros has the choice to attend high school dances by herself, or go out to the movies with a group of friends. She is, however, one of the most protected members of the Ignacio family. "Everyone takes care of Anna" said twenty one year old Michelle Ignacio. "Everyone makes sure that no one hurts her or makes her unhappy." (Anna is, perhaps, the most protected woman because of her status; she is the only female adolescent in a family where the other women are either over the age of twenty one or younger than five years old.) Therefore, while women remain as well protected in the United States as they do in the Philippines, their social life is not as curtailed. The responsibilities of women to the family, however, are expected to remain the same.

Although a greater number of women are entering the work force in the Philippines, "the rightful role of women is still strongly believed to be that of homemakers and mothers"(Gochenour 1990:19). In addition to their responsibilities at the workplace, "the mother is primarily responsible for the social, religious, health, and educational activities of the nuclear family" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:110). Women are responsible for the maintenance of the home as well: cooking, cleaning, and raising the children. Immigration to the United States has not altered the role of the women in the family, although there is also an emphasis now on outside employment; 90.9% of respondents stress the importance of women having a job. Despite the fact that many of these women are working at demanding jobs (such as, nursing, veterinary medicine, teaching, accounting, etc.) they are still required to take care of the home during what sociologist Arlie Hochschild calls the "second shift." In addition to their work outside of the home, Hochschild discovered that women were working "an extra month of twenty-four-hour days a year" taking care of the responsibilities at home (Hochschild 1989: 3). During my research, I discovered that Filipino women in the United States were also undertaking a second shift. All eleven people surveyed mentioned that the women's responsibilities in the home consisted of cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, doing the laundry, ironing, washing dishes, etc. in addition to their careers. "The women of the family are raised to care for the needs of the men" writes Catherine de la Cruz. Also, while the men in these families appeared to be sharing the second shift, in reality, they were not. "If real sharing means sharing the daily or weekly tasks, then again, [men] didn't really share" (Hochschild 1989: 146). The Filipino men of this study had non daily chores: mowing the lawn, washing the car, yard work, car repair, home repair, or paying bills. The majority of the housework, therefore, remains the responsibility of the women. They have retained their traditional role as the caretaker of the family, yet their entrance into the work force has caused them to undertake the "second shift." It is unknown if the women of this study are employing any strategies to help them cope with the second shift, or if

they are completely comfortable with their situations. What is certain, however, is that the women's role in the Filipino family will undergo changes as more women must deal with the demands of their career and their responsibilities to the family.

In addition to workplace and "second shift" responsibilities, women in the U.S. (especially mothers) are expected to have a social responsibility to the family, much like the role women have in the Philippines. As Eric Muñoz states, "mothers are the embodiment of all Filipino values. . .they have the ultimate responsibility: to keep the family together." For example, Theresa Ignacio, (Michelle's mother) completely manages the family. She supervises the activities of all her children and grandchildren, gives advice on any problem a family member is experiencing, gathers everyone together for church, and makes sure that all the Ignacios are safe and happy. When her nephew was in trouble with the law, she recommended that a temporary move to some family members on the East Coast would give him some time to sort out his problems. Upon his return, Mrs. Ignacio assisted him on carrying out his plans to solve his difficulties. Her son Kirk, Jr. was unsure about what college courses to sign up for and she discussed his options with him in a two hour conversation. As a registered nurse, Mrs. Ignacio symbolizes the women of this study: in addition to their jobs, they also have the responsibility of working to maintain the home as well as the family. Because of the economic need for their jobs, the women have engaged in the "second shift", which is beginning to cause a redefinition of their roles. Yet as they change, the family may not be accommodating to this evolution and tensions may arise, a situation Hochschild deemed the "stalled revolution."

Men

As Filipino men immigrate to the United States to gain employment, they come from a tradition of being the "breadwinners" of the family.

"The father is considered the head of the nuclear family, but the mother mainly governs the household. Generally, the father is responsible for supporting the nuclear family, but he usually gives his earning to the wife, who budgets the family income and gives an allowance to the father. . .The father is expected to help discipline the children and to do some major household chores, like repairing broken furniture or mowing the lawn." (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:110-111).

The roles of men in the families of this study have remained similar to those they have in the Philippines. In considering a man's employment, 100% of people surveyed stated that it was important for men to have jobs. "All of the men are breadwinners" states Joseph Garcia, an eighteen-year-old student. Also, when asked to list what the men's responsibilities were around the house, four surveys specifically mentioned paying bills and supporting the family. The amount and type of household chores also remains consistent, as was discussed in the section on "Women." The men of this study had non-daily chores (mowing the lawn, washing the car, yard work, car repair, or home repairs) which ultimately places the burden of the household on the wife. Two surveys did mention, however, that the men in their family did some cooking, cleaning, and taking out of the garbage. The disciplining of children is one action which no one, save one person, attributed to the father figures. As I read in the surveys, the women were responsible for the children and my experiences in the Ignacio home supported that. Mrs. Ignacio, in her role as the managing member of the family, was the person who decided when a person should be punished for misconduct. Eric Muñoz, however, expresses the opposite belief.

“Men are the one who discipline the children. The phrase ‘Wait till you dad gets home’ is a common. Mothers would like to discipline but they rather let the man do it because knowing Filipino men, they would get upset or wouldn't approve of the way the woman handled it. So the women just say ‘Forget this, I'm not going to deal with this. . .I'll let the man handle it.’ It creates a really strong bond between fathers and children.”

Although traditionally both men and women instructed the children, the extent to which men discipline the children now is inconclusive. It would appear that in some cases, only the women are the “punishers”, while in others, it is the men. Perhaps this role is no longer shared by both genders, but rather one parent takes the entire responsibility.

Children

Due to the poverty which engulfs most of the population in the Philippines, many children in a family becomes an asset. The income generated by one child could be quadrupled in a family with four children. Also, when the parents become older, they will have a larger group of people whom they can depend on for help.

“Large sibling sets serve parents well, too. There are more children to make returns to aging parents and at least some of those children, because of the age span in a large sibling set, are likely to be able to assist parents when other cannot. . .Fewer children, more closely spaced, may have difficulty meeting the needs of both their parents and their children.” (Peterson 1993:24).

The need for children to work in the United States has been reduced. Only 45.4% of the people in this study claimed that it was important for teenagers to have a job. This may have to do with the fact that in the U.S., the need for teens to work is minimal whereas in the Philippines, a child's job and the income generated by it is needed for survival. As a lifeguard, Jennifer Ramos stated that her job was convenient for extra money but "school comes first."

In the traditional Filipino family, more siblings also help maintain the family structure since older children can reinforce the gender role of parents.

“Older sibling are expected to help with the parents' responsibilities in the family, such as child rearing, and may also discipline younger siblings. In the absence of a parent, the eldest brother generally takes over the father's responsibilities, and the eldest daughter carries on the mother's responsibilities. A special sibling group is also significant in the Filipino family. Alliances among siblings make shared responsibilities less of a burden. In absence of parents, siblings become more supportive of each other.” (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:111)

Partially, these types of responsibilities to the family have remained the same. In three families, the role of the eldest sibling has remained gender oriented (the eldest brother takes over the father's responsibilities, and the eldest daughter carries on the mother's responsibilities). Gerard Merina, a twenty-six-year old student, states that his responsibilities to the family are to "protect my brothers and sister, maintain appliances, and yard work." Alvin Ramos, a twenty-three-year old engineer, writes that he does "outside yard work, car repair, and cleaning." These two people have adopted the role of men in the family as ones who do non-daily chores around the house. Michelle Ignacio also

follows the gender role of her mother as she cleans the house, babysits, and cooks. Catherine de la Cruz also cooks, washes dishes, sweeps, vacuums, dusts, polishes, and does the laundry, a list of chores which is similar to what her mother does around the house.

There are, however, four examples of teenagers who do not follow any specific gender oriented responsibilities. Both Eric Muñoz and Jeremy Villanueva, for example, cook, clean, and repair things around the house. Joseph Garcia, babysits, vacuums, and takes out the garbage. Samantha Padilla, an eighteen year old student, writes that "all I have to do is to continue with college, do well, graduate, and have myself a good life." Despite the fact that some teenagers adopt the roles of their parents while others do not, they all work toward the benefit of the family. As I will examine in the section titled "Education," even Samantha's plans for a successful life eventually benefit the family.

Of those with siblings, most claim that the bond between them remains strong. As Jennifer Ramos stated "I feel very close to both my brother and sister." Kirk Jr. (eighteen years old) and Michelle Ignacio are also close as they depend on one another when dealing with problems or simply with family chores. However, as the older of the two, Michelle also reacts with a motherly concern for her younger brother. When on her way to Reno with other members of the family, Mrs. Ignacio leaves Michelle with strict orders to "watch out for your brother while we're gone." As Gerard Merina mentioned as well, one of his responsibilities is to "protect my brothers and sister."

While in the Philippines the sibling sets are a matter of survival, residing in the United States has slightly changed their roles. Children are no longer required to help their family in order to live, but rather, they help as a matter of easing the burden on the other family members.

Elderly

In the Philippines, "there is an almost automatic deference of younger to older both within the family and in day-to-day interaction in school, social life, and work" (Gochenour 1990:19). Aging brings with it increased respect and status within the family as well as the community. As twenty-year-old Eric Muñoz reminisces about his maternal grandparents who lived in the Philippines, he refers to them as "almost like gods and goddesses."

"My grandfather, he was in World War II and went through the Bataan Death March. . .he was one of the survivors. He escaped and got military money from the army. My grandfather's brother had gotten caught while trying to escape and got tortured. . .He got even more money and he was the richest man in our province. . .Yet everybody [within the family and the town] came to ask advice from my grandfather. He was the wiser one and more well liked one. . .This one time, this child was going to commit suicide so they called for my grandfather and [he] rushed to the house. Everyone was begging the child to stop but my grandfather just said "Quit that foolishness. Come down right now [out of the house]!" and the kid just dropped the gun and came out and hugged my grandfather. My grandfather had the utmost respect from the whole town. Everyone respected him so much."

As with "lolos" (grandfathers), "lolas" (grandmothers) are respected and wield considerable power within the family. "My grandmother. . .ran everything. That is true in many Filipino families. . .[She] handled the finances and the house. She took care of pretty much everything" (Lee 1991:256). As the heads of the family, the grandparents dictated family policy. Whether in the U.S. or the Philippines, however, grandparents continue command the highest form of respect. Despite having come to the United States 1980's, Grandmother Virginia Ignacio has not, for example, lost any of the reverence

that she would have received in the Philippines. Even family members born and raised in the U.S. treat her with respect. Grandmother Virginia is an impressive example of how the oldest head of the household can take control of the family.

Although she is almost eighty years old and barely four-feet, eleven inches tall, Lola Virginia manages to remain active in both household activities as well as the social life of the entire family. While Mrs. Teresa Ignacio managed the family, Lola Virginia ruled the group. Every time I visited the Ignacios, she was cooking food for either lunch or dinner or washing laundry. For entertainment, she would watch television or play with her greatgranddaughter Kathleen. I realized, however, that Lola Virginia took the greatest pleasure in "making tsismis" (gossiping) with the other family members all over the world. From her bedroom telephone, she was able to talk to relatives who lived in the same city, to family on the East Coast, as well as family in the Philippines. Through the information she gathered and the advice Lola dispensed over the phone, she was able to effectively "rule" the Ignacio family. To the family in the Philippines, Grandmother Virginia attempted to arrange suitable marriage partners for her single grandchildren. In the home in which she lived with her son and daughter in law (Michelle Ignacio's parents), grandchildren, and great-grandchild, she gave advice regarding Michelle's problems with her fiancé. Important family decisions, such as planning the next trip to the Philippines, were never made without consulting Lola Virginia. There were instances when I heard the remark "Grandma is always in everyone's business," but behind those feelings of irritation, most accepted her role within the family and they continued to show her the proper respect. Some responsibilities, such as the family finances, have been passed along to her son Kirk and daughter in law Theresa, although she still maintains control over her own social security check as well as the money in the Philippines. Whatever country she is in, Lola Virginia remains the embodiment of the Ignacio family spirit.

Within the families of those surveyed, grandparents played a similar role as that of Grandmother Virginia. For Catherine de la Cruz, her grandparents "provide guidance and give advice during times when my family has conflicts." Jeremy Villanueva has a grandmother who "does most of the cooking and some of the cleaning within the house." Philip Magdalena's grandparents have a special role within the family. "They tell old stories and as figureheads they try to keep peace and the old ways firmly in mind." The status and role of grandparents has remained the same as the most respected members of the family.

Godparents

As the dominant faith in the Philippines, Roman Catholicism has a definite influence within the family. The tradition of naming of godparents for children, for example, fulfills not only a religious purpose, but a social one as well. "The godparents are. . . expected to provide emotional, moral, and some financial support to the godchildren, as needed" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:111). However, the relationship also extends beyond the godparent and the godchild.

"By Church law and tradition, the requirement of godparents is not just rituals. With it are established contractual obligations between the godparents and the godchild. . . Moreover, they also extend to obligations between the co-parents (child's real parents and godparents). Both families are, therefore, allied through this ritual. Although the godparents normally are the ones obligated to help the godchild, the reverse is also true. The contractual obligations are multidirectional. They are based on who needs the help and who can give it within which the boundaries of the alliances incurred under this mechanism. "(Pido1985:21)

Distance, however, has seemed to weaken ties between those in the Philippines and those in the United States. Seven out of eleven surveyed claim that they do not have contact with their godparent/godchild who live in the Philippines. As twenty -one year old student Jennifer Ramos wrote:

"My godparents are scattered geographically. . .I have a godchild in the Philippines and I know I have a greater responsibility to him. . .but I don't feel I'm playing an active role in his life."

Godparents who live apart from their godchildren appear unable to maintain the traditional roles as set by Filipino culture and Church doctrines. Yet for those in the United States who do live in close proximity to their "anak sa binyag" (godchildren), the traditional role of the "ninang" (godmother) and "ninong" (godfather) appear to remain the same. Michelle Ignacio is a "ninang" to her five-year-old niece Kathleen, and, as I observed, their relationship is very special. Michelle assumes the role of a primary parent by clothing, feeding, disciplining and entertaining the rambunctious five-year-old whenever Kathleen's real parents are not present. One afternoon in particular, I watched as Michelle feed her "anak" cereal with milk. When Kathleen began to get restless and cranky, Michelle played a favorite Disney video tape. As Kathleen sat there smiling and laughing at the dancing animated characters, Michelle turned to me and said "If you want to get Kathleen to be quite, you have to put in Aladdin. I've watched this movie with her so many times I've memorized the words." When I asked her if she ever minded having to watch her godchild all the time, Michelle replied "No. We have fun together and besides, she's like a daughter to me."

It is difficult to ascertain whether any extra obligations (as defined by Pido) would occur between Kathleen's real parents and her godparents because of the fact that they are all part of the same family. (Kathleen's father is Michelle's brother.) The naming of Michelle as a godparent, however, seems to have strengthened the ties within the family. Kathleen now has an "ninang" whose obligations are more serious than those she would have if she were simply an aunt.

Servants

Because labor is so inexpensive in the Philippines, "having a servant . . . was not a big luxury. The middle-class people often had a maid. The rich people has a maid for each kid" (Bode 1989: 55). In the Unites States, however, servants are not employed. Of all the families in this study, none have servants at their homes. The difference in the standard of living between the two countries as well as the fact that workers in the U.S. require higher pay, may be two factors which restrict the employment of hired hands.

Factors Which Affect Family Growth

Fosterage

Fostering children to another family is another form of survival in the Philippines. Due to the insurmountable poverty which many families face, parents are sometimes forced to place their children in other homes which will be able to provide them with food, education, etc.

"Fosterage is seen as a mechanism that provides children to those who have none, provides nurturance to children who lack parents, or adjusts gender ratios within which families. . . The

child who spends a period of time in another household away from parents often forms exceptionally close bonds with those members of the extended family. (Peterson 1993:24)

Although none of the families I researched had ever fostered their children to other people while in the U.S., the Ignacios have had one instance of fostering within the family.

In the 1970's, when Kirk and Theresa Ignacio had settled in the United States, Kirk's sister (who lived in the Philippines) asked him to adopt her two children, Michael and Raymond. After a long discussion, Kirk and Theresa agreed to take their nephews into their home. When asked why she took her nephews into her home, Theresa replied "At the time, we were able to provide them with better opportunities here [in the U.S.]. They were able to go to school and become citizens." Over the years, they had two other children, Michelle and Kirk Jr., who considered their cousins Michael and Raymond their older "brothers." "Kuya Michael and Kuya Raymond will always be my brothers. We were all raised together and we take care of each other" Michelle emphatically states. ("Kuya" is a term of respect for an older brother or older male cousin.) Raymond and Michael also share special ties with their "foster" family. For instance, Michael is the father of Kathleen and he asked foster sister Michelle to be his child's godparent. Also, as I watched them talk to Kirk and Theresa, they were referred to as Mom and Dad, and I sensed that there was a genuine bond between the family members.

This example of fostering took place when someone from the Philippines decided to place their children with relatives in the United States. Although this situation did not occur between families who were already living in the U.S., the Ignacios provide a good example of how fostering can strengthen bonds between family members, as well as give children, who might not otherwise have the chance, an opportunity for a better life.

Marriage

In the Philippines, with its predominantly Roman Catholic population, marriage is a serious vow which joins not only the couple together, but the two families as well. Two different aspects of marriage will be discussed in this section. First, the question of what constitutes a suitable spouse will be addressed, then, the relationship between the husband and wife will be examined. As stated, marriage is an opportunity to enlarge family size as well as form new relationships. In the Philippines, "a family does not 'lose' a son or daughter in marriage, but rather it gains a son or daughter, plus, of course, an alliance with another group. Prearranged nuptials are very rare, but young men and women are consciously or subconsciously aware of the boundaries within which to seek marriage partners. The family does not make absolute demands nor narrow the choices, but if the couple expects the support of both families after the marriage, they must marry those whom both families can at least tolerate, is not actually like." (Pido 1985:19).

Within traditional Filipino families, then, there is an implied limitation as to who a person can marry. As I conducted my research, it became apparent that although those boundaries still exist, parental approval is not mandatory. When asked the question, "Would you ever marry someone of whom your family did not approve?" over eighty percent of those surveyed marked "yes." Yet, ten out of eleven surveyed also consciously or unconsciously recognized the boundaries which their parents had set (Table 2). Of the three who did write that there were no limitations to the type person they could marry, one male felt that neither parental approval nor recognized boundaries are going to limit his selection of a wife. The second male stated that there were no limitations but wrote that "she would probably have to be Catholic." The third male who claimed that there were no boundaries also

mentioned that he would not marry someone of whom his family did not approve. Although he does not recognize it, his choice of wife is, in fact, limited by the seal of approval from his parents. A Filipino man/woman is the most common requirement for a preferred spouse. Concerning the family's spousal preference, 81.8% of those surveyed listed Filipino as their family's number one choice for a spouse with Asian as the second choice. Michelle Ignacio comments that "My parents don't come right out and say it, but I know they want me to marry a Filipino guy. A Caucasian would probably be O.K., but definitely no African Americans." As seen in Table 2, African Americans rate as the last choice for a potential marriage partner. Joseph Garcia also recognizes the unspoken limitations within his own family and provides an example from his own experiences:

"[My brother's] wife is Chinese. My parents don't criticize him for being involved with a Chinese girl but it always seemed to be an issue. For example, when mentioning my siblings to others, my mother will readily describe my brother's wife as "[Lisa], she's Chinese," but on the other hand, she'll describe my sister's husband as "[Renaldo] the doctor." [Renaldo is Filipino.] So I would suppose race and social status play a role in who is "fit" for me but they would never outright say it."

Three other people mentioned that their parents want them to marry a Filipino, while the remaining three mentioned financial status, religion, and the fact that the potential spouse must make the other person happy as requirement for a spouse. Once a couple is married, keeping the relationship intact remains the number one priority, regardless of any indiscretions such as extramarital affairs.

"Divorce is illegal in the Philippines. . .A mistress on the side, even another child or two outside the marriage are common enough to be recognized as basic facts of contemporary life. Yet, society tends to hold the marriage vows sacred; whatever the man's extramarital habits might be, he is expected to support his family and not humiliate them through abandonment or by flaunting his behavior. The woman is expected to be loyal to her marriage and to strive to maintain it." (Gochenour 1990:19-20)

Table 2. Respondents Views on Marriage

Percentage of families with marriages that have ended in divorce:

Number of incidents	Group	% of all families
No	divorced couples	27.2
1	divorced couples	36.3
2	divorced couples	9.09
3	divorced couples	9.09
4	divorced couples	9.09

Percentage of marriages that have survived an extramarital affair:

not applicable	72.7
one marriage	9.1
two marriages	9.1
three marriages	9.1

Ethnic group from which respondents family would prefer the % of respondents respond to marry:

1st choice = Filipino	81.8
2nd choice = Asian	81.8
3rd choice = Caucasian	70
4th choice = Mexican/Chicano/Latino	60
5th choice = Native American	50
6th choice = African American	40
Does not matter	30

In contrast, United States society has made it legally easier to obtain a divorce. Of those surveyed, 63.6% knew of 1-4 marriages within their family that had ended in divorce. In addition to the existence of divorce, 72.7% of marriages where affairs occurred were ended, indicating that toleration for such "outside activities" had decreased. As Samantha Padilla states "People in my family look down on [extramarital affairs]. Marriage is thought to last forever." In agreement, Jeremy Villanueva writes that "My family is against having extramarital affairs due to our strong religious beliefs."

Of the 27.3% who claimed that affairs were tolerated within the family, the respondents echoed very traditional beliefs. "As an Asian woman, you were raised to accept all faults of your husband. . . Affairs have happened and the wives had to accept it" writes Catherine de la Cruz. As Eric Muñoz observed, "when the guy [cheated] the marriage survived but when the women did it there was a divorce." Even in the Ignacio family with the strong, independent women, a high tolerance of affairs was noted. Although a large number of married men had affairs, no woman had ever engaged in activity, and no woman had ever obtained a divorce. Michelle Ignacio explains

"My family sticks to a lot of the old ways even though they're a little bit more modernized. If someone cheats and they still want to stay together, it's for the sake of being together in front of the kids and in front of the family. They don't want to get divorced because it's really disgraceful. . . Filipinos don't believe in divorce. Staying together for the family keeps everything together."

There is the obvious correlation between tolerance and the expectation that men will cheat. Because men are expected to be unfaithful, they feel as if it permissible to conduct affairs. Traditionally,

however, women tolerate their men's indiscretions because of the belief that they are simply acting in accordance with their manhood.

"Filipino wives are expected to be faithful to their husbands but men are traditionally tolerated by society and by the family when they have mistresses or become unfaithful, since they are perceived as only trying to prove their machismo." (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:113)

The Ignacio family has a similar attitude regarding Filipino men. Michelle Ignacio again relates the belief that it's a given that

"all men will cheat. . It's just something that I'll have to deal with. Like my mom told me, all men will cheat especially Filipino men. They think that they can pretty much do what ever they want because women are still at home. . . They take care of the husband. . . Filipino men are like that because they're babied and spoiled so much by their mothers. They think they can do anything they want."

Interestingly, the Ignacio women continue to encourage marriage. While I was talking to Grandmother Virginia Ignacio, she said to me "You get married now. Find a man to support you." Mrs. Theresa Ignacio also said to me that it was possible to stay married to a man who has had an affair, if "you think you can trust him again." This statement, in addition to the belief that all men cheat, implies that for some, marriage is a continuing cycle of tolerance and trust. For others, marriage is kept as sacred and monogamous as the Church intended.

Family Functions

Decision Making

Traditional Filipino families often consult each other about when making important decisions. "Going to college, taking a job overseas, and getting married may sometimes be individual decisions, but quite often they are family decisions" (Gochenour 1990: 18-19). Actual family involvement in personal decision making has decreased for most of those surveyed, but all admit to considering their family's feelings. "Family plays a very important role by how every decision I make is dependent on whether or not my family will agree/approve/ be happy" claims Catherine de la Cruz. Philip Magdalena writes that there are "limitations in which I have freedom to make decisions regarding personal wants without worrying about [my family]." Respondents also emphasize that they do not always follow their parents' advice and, in fact, often make the final decision for themselves. "I'd be lying if I say that I wouldn't consider what [my family] thinks. but for the most part, I try to think and make my decisions based on how I feel" claims Joseph Garcia. Gerard Merina also remains "pretty much independent but [I] value my family's views and morals." For most people, family remains a constant in their lives, as they attempt to balance their personal desire for independence with the faith they have in their family's morals.

Sharing

Traditional Filipino families are often a close group where

“considerable sharing of material things-- of clothes and belongings-- is taken for granted. . .Sharing bedrooms or sharing the bed itself is commonplace between two sisters or two brothers. Sharing time together with family members and friends-- not being alone very often-- is taken for granted” (Gochenour 1990:19).

This attitude of sharing is still prevalent within families, especially with respect to time and money. "Sharing is very important within my family. Money and resources should be shared and is shared without much-- if any-- question" writes Jennifer Ramos. For Samantha Padilla, it is important to spend "at least one day of the weekend with my family." Even with the Ignacios, on any given night, they can be found playing a few rounds of mah-jongg in the kitchen. In the case of Joseph Garcia, the sharing of money is what allows him to attend college: "there is a great reliance of financial resources. . . Both of my siblings send money to my parents who in turn pay for my tuition." In the case of Catherine de la Cruz, however, she feels that sharing is not important because the members of her family have "all become 'individualized' in a way." In families where sharing is still dominant, all members are benefited. In one case, a student is able to fulfill a dream of going to college while in another scenario, a friendly game of mah-jongg and spending time together leads to family bonding.

Supporting Relatives in the Philippines

As discussed in the previous section, finances are often pooled in the traditional Filipino family in order to help defray expenses. Once Filipinos immigrate to the United States, they are expected to continue helping the family back home.

“Filipinos who live abroad are expected to continue supporting their elderly parents or to help meet the educational and financial needs of sibling or members of the extended family. When a member of the nuclear or extended family is sick or dies in the Philippines, the Filipinos abroad are expected to help pay the hospital bills and doctors' fees, to send medicines, and to send money to help pay funeral expenses. They are also expected to go home to the Philippines to visit sick parents or attend funeral.” (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:112)

Currently, the trend remains consistent as 90.9% of the families studied are sending money to the Philippines. During a recent death in the family, Mrs. Theresa Ignacio was called upon by her sister to send money home to help pay for funeral expenses. In addition to money being sent on a regular basis, whenever they travel back home, the Ignacios bring back several boxes of goods which can be sold. Again, support of the family is essential in order to maintain the strength of the whole.

Family Beliefs

Education

The importance of a solid education is one of the deepest held beliefs of Filipino families. An education for the children will, in time, benefit not only the individual but the entire group as well.

“Clearly education is attractive because an educated child can be called upon in times of acute economic need or when parents are old and in need of assistance. The specific skills acquired through education may be attractive, too. . .The employment of educated members is also seen

as an important means of supplementing household income from the farm, and of obtaining fringe benefits, such as insurance and retirement, which may be provided. (Peterson 1993: 24)

An emphasis on education has certainly remained prevalent within Filipino families in the United States.

"I cannot stress [how important education is] enough. It is priority over everything else and there is not excuse to put off" Philip Magdalena emphatically states. One hundred percent of those surveyed agreed that it is important for men, women, and children to be educated. As demonstrated through Joseph Garcia's statement, education is perceived as a direct precursor to success.

"Education is the key in my family. If you don't have an education, you would turn out to be a nothing in the eyes of this family. We are deeply rooted in the idea of success equals being educated. I, myself, agree with this concept."

All people who were surveyed listed education as the crucial element for a good life, security, wealth, success, and/or the means by which one's future goals can be achieved. Mrs. Theresa Ignacio says as well, "If you want to get a good job and a good life, you should go to school." Her daughter Michelle also subscribes to this belief. As a student in a junior college, Michelle has recently applied to various Universities in the hopes that she will be accepted for the next semester. One afternoon as I was talking to her, I mentioned that she appeared unhappy. Michelle told me how much pressure and stress she was experiencing due to her college applications. "I know I need to have a good education to get a good job. That's why I feel so stressed out about trying to get into a university. I know my parents want me to go to a better school. I need to get out of the J.C. [junior college] soon or I'll never get out." The desire for an education by Michelle, Joseph and the others is obvious. Immigration has not stifled that desire since, as Samantha Padilla wrote, "that's one of the reasons why my parents [came] here." The move to the U.S. meant to foster a greater interest in education, and so far, that has been successful.

Religion

"Christianity is the dominant faith in the Philippines, in particular, Roman Catholicism" (Gochenour 1990:34). Religion is the cornerstone of Filipino belief systems because

"it enables people to face reality with strength and optimism. The Filipino's profound faith in God makes them accept adversity without many deleterious effects on their self-esteem. . . The predominantly Catholic Filipinos have the tendency to practice their religion in a concrete and personal manner" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:116-117)

As seen in Table 3, 90.8% of people surveyed rated religion as important or very important to their families, while 90.2% rated religion as important or very important to themselves. For Catherine de la Cruz, "Religion is very important. . . My family accepts religion as the basis of why things happen." To demonstrate their faith, most families attend mass once a week, as well as biannual confession, and the celebration of Holy Days of Obligation. More data is not available since those surveyed were not specific about the exact role religion played in their lives. Of those interviewed,

one was only sure about the existence of God and was contemplating leaving the Church, while those in the Ignacio family would only attest to the importance of religion in their lives.

Table 3. Respondents Views on Religion

Religion practiced by respondents: Roman Catholic	100%
1. On a scale of one to five, the importance of religion respondent % of respondents	
1. not important	0.00
2. (less important)	0.00
3. (somewhat important)	9.09
4. (more important)	72.70
5. very important	18.10
2. On a scale of one to five, the importance of religion to respondent's family:	
1. not important	0.00
2. (less important)	0.00
3. (somewhat important)	9.09
4. (more important)	45.50
5. very important	45.40

Mental Illness

Within the traditional Filipino family, "a family member's mental illness is identified as the family's illness which causes shame and stigmatizes the family" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:133). Because 90.9% of those surveyed, (and the Ignacio family as well) have had no one in their family suffering from any mental illness, the attitude towards it is unknown. Most however, assume that their families would be supportive and helpful. Mental illness has "never occurred in our family but if someone was mentally ill, we would still be loyal and care for them" says Catherine de la Cruz.

Hiya

In the Philippines, there is an emphasis on family and personal honor. In order to preserve family integrity, the concept of "hiya" is used to control people's actions.

"A form of social control is hiya-- shame or propriety. . . There is concern for social approval and acceptance by others and the need to belong to a group. Behavior depends on what others will say, think, or do. Moreover, while growing up traditionally, the Filipino child has been watchfully

taken care of and exposed to many significant others. He learns to avoid 'losing face' in front of others and to feel the shame of subtle ridicule, scorn, or outright ostracism from others" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995:118).

Sensitivity towards other's opinions continues to be high for those surveyed. Six people mentioned that they were "very sensitive" about what others thought about them. As Catherine de la Cruz has mentioned, she finds it difficult to "judge myself so I rely on the comments of others." Eighteen-year-old student Steven San Juan writes that he is very sensitive about what people think about him because "I don't like it when people are mad at me [because] I don't want to be considered a [snob]." Alvin Ramos, however, is responsive to others for reasons other than honor, or reputation. "I am sensitive towards others because I want to be treated the same. I believe that if you want to be treated fairly. . .you must do the same to others."

Three other respondents acknowledged the fact that they considered what people were thinking about them, but they emphasized the fact that it was not a vital part of their lives. "What others think of me is always in the back of my mind, but for the most part I don't care what they think" says Joseph Garcia. Samantha Padilla also writes "I wonder what people think, but it's not my whole life." In some cases, the actions and decisions of some people are based on what their family and others think about them while for others, only their family's opinions are reliable (refer the section titled "Decision Making").

Hospitality

"In spite of limited resources, Filipinos help friends and relatives and they welcome visitors with warmth and plenty of food" (Sustento-Seneriches 1995: 121). Most Filipino families have remained hospitable and generous to visiting friends and relatives, as 90.9% of those surveyed and interviewed indicated. Every occasion I visited the Ignacio's, Grandmother Virginia, Mr. Kirk Ignacio, Mrs. Kirk Ignacio, or Michelle would always ask "Have you eaten yet? Here, have some of this" or "We have some [food, drink] if you want it." Kirk, Jr.'s friends were accorded the same treatment. Although I was entering their home and asking many questions, the Ignacios made me feel welcomed and comfortable.

Conclusion

As I walked through the Ignacio's dining room, I noticed a large family tree depicting well over 200 names. It's prominent position at the center of the house indicated its importance as the inscription at the bottom read "To the strong and everlasting strength of the Ignacio blood." As I stood there and examined it, I realized that although the family has undergone changes, it remains the cornerstone of the Filipino culture. The family is important, and the responsibilities of the individual to the group has not been forgotten. As Philip Magdalena explained that "it's up to me as the oldest to carry on the honor of the [Magdalena] family." The question remains, however, as to how long the Filipino family will maintain all or even some of its culture as more and more people immigrate to the United States and adopt this way of life. Will the recent wave of Multiculturalism be enough to make people remember their heritage? Or will the traditions and customs of various ethnic groups be relegated to the history books and anthropology classes?

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Appendix A-1

The following document is a copy of the survey sent out to the respondents.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Occupation: _____

Marital Status: _____

Please circle one answer or fill in the blank.

- | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 1) Would you consider your family hospitable and generous to visiting friends and relatives? | Yes | No |
| 2) Is Tagalog or some other Philippine language spoken at home? | Yes | No |
| 3) Is it important to the women in your family to marry and have children? | Yes | No |
| 4) Would you ever marry someone of whom your family did not approve? | Yes | No |
| 5) Is it important for the women in your family to have jobs? | Yes | No |
| 6) Is it important for the men in your family to have jobs? | Yes | No |
| 7) Is it important for the teenagers in your family to have jobs? | Yes | No |
| 8) Is it important for men to be educated? | Yes | No |
| 9) Is it important for women to be educated? | Yes | No |
| 10) Is it important for the children in your family to be educated? | Yes | No |
| 11) Are the women in your family allowed to go outside the home by themselves? | Yes | No |
| 12) Are the women in your family more protected than the males? | Yes | No |
| 13) Has anyone in your family suffered or is suffering from a mental illness? | Yes | No |
| 14) Do you employ servants or maids at your home? | Yes | No |
| 15) Is anyone in your family sending money to other relatives in the Philippines? | Yes | No |
| 16) Do you consider the United States or the Philippines your home? | Yes | No |

United States Philippines Both countries

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 17) What religion do practice? | _____ |
| 18) On a scale of one to five, rate how important religion is to you.
not important) 1 2 3 4 5 (very important) | _____ |
| 19) On a scale of one to five, rate how important religion is to your family.
not important) 1 2 3 4 5 (very important) | _____ |
| 20) How many people do you know, within your family, that have been divorced? | _____ |
| 21) How many marriages, within your family, have survived an extramarital affair? | _____ |
| 22) From which ethnic group would your family prefer you to marry from?
Number in the order of preference, with number one being most preferred.
If ethnicity does not matter, mark "Does not matter." | _____ |

Caucasian _____ **African American** _____ **Mexican/Chicano/Latino** _____ **Filipino** _____

Asian ____ Native American ____ Other (please specify) ____ no matter ____

Appendix A-2

Who among your family members immigrated to the United States (include yourself if you were born in the Philippines) and when did they arrive?

Why did they come to the United States?

How many people live at your home and how many are members of your extended family (i.e. grandparent, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.)? Please list the extended family members.

What does the word "family" mean to you (include adjectives you would use to describe your family)?

What is the role of family in your life?

What role does family play in your personal decisions about your life?

How important is sharing (of time, resources, money etc.) within your family?

Describe the type of relationship you have with your siblings.

What type of responsibilities within the home do the women (mother, grandmother, aunt, etc.) in your family have?

What type of responsibilities within the home do the men (father, grandfather, uncle, etc.) in your family have?

What are your responsibilities to the family?

What is the role of your grandparents or other elderly relatives in your family?

What is the role of your godparents in your life? If you yourself are a godparent, what type of role do you feel you play in the life of your godchild?

What types of jobs do the women in your family have? Include the "homemaker" as one job.

What types of jobs do the men in your family have?

Are there differences in the way girls are raised as compared to the way

boys are raised? If so, what are the differences?

Is education important in your family? Why or why not?

Are there limitations as to the type of person you can marry? For example, does a difference in race, economic status, religious practices or any other factor influence who you marry?

Have extramarital affairs ever been tolerated within your family? Why or why not?

What role does religion play in your family?

What type of religious practices (mass, confession, etc.) does your family engage in and how frequently?

Does anyone in your family practice faith healing or any kinds of alternative medicine, and if so, what type?

What is the attitude towards mental illness in your family?

How sensitive are you towards what others think about you?