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From Transient Migration to Homemaking: Filipino Immigrants in Guam

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The Filipino immediately felt at home in Guam...It was not, however the mere fact that he worked in climes similar to that of the Philippines that made the Filipino feel at home. Here in the island bastion, he was with people whose culture is like his, hammered out of the anvil of Castilian rule for over three centuries. (Abcede 1955, 6-8)

Introduction

Guam, an outpost that carries military and strategic importance, sits on the fringe of the United States acting as its western Pacific border. The slogan “where America’s day begins” captures Guam’s position as a transit point of entry to the U.S. mainland by immigrant labourers from the Philippines, who obtained legal permanent residency but departed after short employment stints on the island. Thus, Filipino immigrants in Guam were often labelled as “transient aliens”, a label constructed in the 1970s, which portrayed them as merely economic migrants seeking the American dream. In 2008, Filipinos in Guam were still described by Chamorros, the indigenous people of Guam, as just “passers through” because Guam was seen as the “escape route from poverty for the Filipino” (Kal-el 2008).

Guam, a maritime borderland to the Philippines, is geographically closer to the Philippine islands than to the U.S. mainland. It takes Filipinos only a few hours of flight time to reach Guam. Filipino immigrants have long considered Guam as a stepping-stone to “U.S. citizenship and financial aggrandizement, not willing to invest in an island community which can be fragile” (Monnig 2007, 361). This chapter challenges this assumption. Instead of being a “transient” community, this research finds that Filipino immigrants, after a long period of immigration and development, have settled and developed their own communities in Guam. It examines how the Filipino community has transformed social spaces and made their home on this Pacific island. It will first provide a background of Filipino migration to Guam, and then examine the various “home-making” processes of Filipino immigrants. In addition to the existing literature, this research has benefitted from my fieldwork in Guam between 2011 and 2012. Interviews were also conducted with Filipino community leaders as well as old and new immigrants.

Filipino and other migrants in Guam

Prior to World War II, in-migration did not significantly alter Guam's ethnic configuration (Bettis 1993, 268). Throughout the Spanish era and the American pre-World War II years, the Chamorros remained predominately the largest ethnic group, composing over 90 percent of the population. The few immigrant groups mainly included Filipinos, Micronesians and Whites, occupying less than ten percent of the total population. Most early immigrants had arrived for military, administrative and religious positions, and were largely integrated into the native society through intermarriages and resettlements. Yet, colonisation and in-coming immigrants had also led to the rise of a "neo-Chamorro" culture featuring cultural influences taken from Spain, Mexico, and the Philippines (Underwood 1985). The latter in particular brought with them traditions that helped paint the cultural tapestry of the Guam Chamorro society: Filipino food traditions such as *lechon* (roasted suckling pig), *paksiw* (meat or fish stewed in vinegar), and *tuba*, or coconut sap liquor, had settled well into the local palate. Cockfighting and the *mestizo* style of female dress had also become a part of the local traditions.

The Americans had significantly altered Guam's lifestyle. As stated by Rogers, the native inhabitants underwent an intense process of American acculturation that ran "deeper than their absorption into the Spanish culture in all social aspects except religion" (Rogers 1995, 157). Despite the fact that the indigenous culture still maintains elements of strong family ties and deep attachment to the ancestral land, many indigenous people have lost the use of the Chamorro language that was previously the prevalent language in homes and other social settings during the pre-World War II years. English has become the national language while American ideals and democratic aspirations have been inculcated into the indigenous "imagination" through an American-centred education system. Teachers from the U.S. mainland and Hawaii have greatly assisted in the teaching of American history and culture, while the teaching of Guam history and knowledge is downplayed. American federal holidays have been made mandatory public holidays, and have gradually weakened the observance of local customs and traditions (Perez 2002, 459).

A more significant change brought about by American policies, which had a huge impact on the demographic composition of Guam, occurred after World War II (Bettis 1993). Following World War II, American military policies initiated a massive recruitment of Filipino workers for rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, which contributed greatly to the prominent presence of Filipino migrant workers on the island. This influx of Filipinos had the direct effect of "minoritising" the Chamorro population, shrinking their numbers from over 90 percent prior to the 1940s to less than 50 percent of the total population in the 1980s.¹

With the signing of the U.S.-Philippine labour agreement,² large numbers of Filipino men arrived in Guam to work as labourers, carpenters, electricians, masons, and engineers. Predominately male labour migration was then followed by Filipino female migration; many Filipino women were later employed either in health services or other professional and semi-professional fields. Furthermore, early “single male migration” had given way to family migration in later periods.

By 1950, Filipino workers made up 65 percent of the workforce in Guam. A steady flow of foreign workers continued through the 1960s and 1970s following the adoption of the 1965 Immigration Act that established more comprehensive worker categories and strengthened the provisions on family reunification. This Act significantly paved the way for the immediate family members of Filipino migrant workers to migrate from the Philippines to Guam and apply for permanent residency and U.S. citizenship. The large number of Filipino immigrants had fostered the flourishing of a highly visible Philippine community in Guam and the subsequent building of a Filipino-Guamanian identity. Inflows of Filipino migrants brought great relief to labour shortages that had plagued Guam for years. They worked in Guam’s various sectors, such as tourism, housing projects, and the rebuilding of typhoon-ravaged homes. The Filipino population is now the second largest group in Guam. Of the Filipino population (41,944) in 2010, 12,916 were Guam-born while the remaining 29,028 indicated their place of birth as the Philippines (Bureau of Statistics and Plans 2012).

Micronesian immigrants such as Chuukese, Pohnpeneians, and Palauans also arrived in Guam in increasing numbers in pursuit of education and gainful employment in the post-war period. Prior to 1950, migration from the Northern Marianas was mostly for family reunification. Migration from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) was insignificant and only increased in the period from 1975 to 1980 (ICP 1988). Migration from the other islands of Micronesia increased substantially in the late 1980s after the signing of the Compact of Free Association Acts that established the relationship between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)³ and the Republic of Palau, also collectively known as the Freely Associated States (FAS). Under one of the provisions, Micronesians were permitted to freely enter, reside, and engage in occupations within the United States, its territories and possessions, thus leading to the increase in the migrant population from FSM and RMI. Immigration stood at 1,000 persons per year from these Asia-Pacific islands and an estimated 8,000 immigrants and their children had entered Guam by 1995 (Office of the Governor 1996). The majority of the Micronesian migrants engaged in labour-intensive sectors such as hotels and restaurants, landscaping, and construction.

Filipino home-making in Guam

Under the American colonial rule, Filipinos were more active in conducting community activities. They were permitted to celebrate Philippine festivals and memorial days during the American period prior to World War II. One example highlighted by Abcede (1955, 35) is the celebration of Rizal Day on 30 December. The Filipino community would commemorate that day by carrying the Philippine flag along Agaña's pre-war roads. The Philippine community also built a monument to pay tribute to Apolinario Mabini, one of the revolutionary heroes, interned in Guam after the Philippine-American war. His statue was located in the village of Anigua in the late 1930s, which was then destroyed during World War II (Abcede 1955, 36).

Filipino community life became more pronounced after the Second World War. As mentioned above, the first post-World War II wave of Filipino migrants was predominantly male; they worked mostly as labourers in the construction industry. Like Filipino migrant workers in California and in Hawaii (see Alegado 1991; Okamura 1998; Pido 1997), the Filipino contract workers in Guam lived in labour camps and were separated from the local communities. These camps were situated within the vicinity of the U.S. military bases, and Filipino workers, like military personnel, had to obtain permission from village officials to enter Chamorro municipalities (Bettis 1993). Workers' physical encampment had reinforced their status as temporary residents and limited their interactions with the local people. Yet, this physical isolation had also helped foster close ties between the migrant workers, and the labour camps became a base for the establishment of thriving Filipino communities. Many contract workers had arrived knowing very little of Guam. They were assisted by previous groups of contract workers to adapt to the new environment. To alleviate feelings of loneliness and build camaraderie, most camp residents actively engaged in a wide variety of activities, including religious processions, sports festivals, barrack clean-up contests, and many fund-raising activities for civic purposes (Palacol 1955, 57-59). Fictive kinship ties were developed among the workers, who came to regard each other as family, and these close relationships remained even after the labour camps were closed in the late 1950s. While all Filipinos participated in the commemoration of Philippine national holidays, different Philippine dialects flourished along with the reproduction of regional traditions and ways of life in Guam.

Filipino associations and organisations

Following the closure of the camps in the 1950s, a large number of the workers settled in Guam and continued the activities and social club gatherings originally established inside the camps. With the growth of the Filipino immigrant population, an increasing number of Filipino clubs and associations were established, including business and alumni associations, sports clubs, and many region- or town-based social

organisations. Currently, there are around 50 Filipino associations of different sizes and natures on the island. For larger, long-established organisations, memberships usually consist of a majority of Philippine-born migrants as well as a number of Guam-born Filipinos. A few selected Chamorro community leaders act as their honorary members, and there are also some Micronesian members. Below, I will elaborate upon a few Filipino associations of different natures.

The Filipino Community of Guam (FCG), established in 1954, is the oldest Filipino organisation. The organisation had roughly 500 representatives from the three major labour camps when it was originally set up (FCG 1955, 38-39, 96-97) and acted as an umbrella organisation for other small Filipino associations. During the days in the labour camps, FCG handled many employment disputes and improved the poor sanitary conditions of the camps. The main purposes of its establishment were to unify all Filipinos on the island and promote their welfare. It served as a common platform for organising social projects and cultural events. One of the largest projects was the “Know the Philippines” exposition, which exhibited information about Philippine history and traditions. It was hoped that this would “make Americans understand the Filipino way of life more” (FCG 1955, 96).

This event became an important space for Filipino immigrants to express collectively their identity as Filipinos and later evolved into a month-long celebration held in June. It is now known as “Philippine Independence and Heritage Month”; activities include a food festival, cultural showcases, flag-raising, and an Independence Ball. In 2009, FCG, in partnership with the Philippine Consulate-General of Guam, established the *Eskwelahang Munti ng Guam* (small school of Guam), a learning centre focusing on Filipino heritage. The centre offers a variety of language and cultural classes, including Tagalog (the Philippine national language), Philippine history, and folk dancing, to children between six and 16 years old (Thompson 2012).

The Filipino Ladies Association of Guam (FLAG) is a women’s club that was founded in 1962. The club formed to unify Filipino women, and foster interest in the root culture and promote *Filipiniana* clothing. FLAG is known for hosting the *Santacruzán* procession, a flower-filled parade that marks the discovery of the Holy Cross by Saint Helena. This procession is considered one of the most elaborate and important Filipino cultural events in Guam. The Guam Filipino Artists (GFA) is an association that promotes interest in the Philippine arts. It showcases different cultures and traditions of the Philippines through its exhibitions of paintings, photographs, sculptures and mixed media arts.

The Apalit Association of Guam is an organisation that promotes religious tradition and heritage. Its name comes from the town of Apalit located in the southern area of Pampanga in the Philippines. Every year, the association celebrates the Apalit fiesta

(festival), which is reminiscent of the celebration in the Philippines, with a traditional fluvial parade of Saint Peter, the patron saint of the people of Pampanga. The association has permission to hold this religious procession on Guam's public beaches. The president of the Apalit Association has clearly stated that continuing with the fiesta is a way of asserting Filipinos' religious devotion. The fluvial parade also aims to promote awareness of the patron saint beyond the Filipino community. This event is not only attended by Filipinos in Guam, but also attracts tourists and Chamorros from the island.

While promoting their Philippine traditions and customs, Filipino organisations are also aware of expressing their concern over local issues. Thus, there are also activities demonstrating their civic engagements and contributions, such as donating medical equipment to Guam's Memorial Hospital, undertaking local medical missions to different villages on the island, and awarding scholarships to students of the University of Guam (UOG). Expressions of local commitment have often marked FCG's official statements, showing their intention "to pursue that noble task of helping make Guam progressive and offering gratitude to an island that has been generous to its members" (Barro 1997, 17). Here, home-making is not only about retaining their homeland's culture, traditions and practices, but is also about building and maintaining various proactive relationships with the host society and constructing local "belongingness". In an article published in the *Pacific Daily News* in 2013, Roy Adonay, the FCG president, remarked that the organisation would continue to dedicate and commit their time to the community (Palanca 2013):

[We] harness the energy and enthusiasm of this group into something very good. A majority of us over here are not from here. We're immigrants. These activities are our way of giving back to the community that has welcomed us and adopted us.

In the interview, the FCG president, representing a large number of Filipinos, clearly stated that the Filipino immigrant community has endeavoured to "pay back" and contribute to Guam's development. It is a way to show how Filipinos have fulfilled their civic duties to the local community. This is a sentiment generally shared by other Filipino organisations that look upon their work and activities as not just a matter of showing (off) Philippine cultures and doing good merely for Filipinos, but also as acts of giving back to the Guam society.

The Filipino community space

Besides organising themselves into groups and associations, Filipinos in Guam have also constructed a "Philippine landscape" on the island that mirrors different aspects of home. Geographical concentrations of migrants often leads to "spatial" representations of migrant communities in different destination countries. These kinds

of “ethno-hubs” mark the presence of migrant groups with a variety of food stalls and restaurants, cultural centres, all types of shops, and residences and squatters. The concentration of migrant minorities in both urban neighbourhoods and suburban areas has been well studied (Li 2009; Zhou 2009, 1992). Filipinos have also expanded and strengthened their presence in Guam through food markets, restaurants, cultural centres, and churches. Some of the more prominent manifestations of these spatial identifiers include the SM Department Store, “Bench/”, and Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ). These are premises “transplanted” from the Philippines. Around these Filipino “landmarks” are a large number of stores, banks, and restaurants catering to the needs of Filipinos. Furthermore, the Dededo district has a concentration of restaurants that serve various Philippine cuisines. The district is certainly a culinary ethno-hub for Filipinos to meet and enjoy food traditions.

Ethnic food consumption is an expression and embodied experience of ethnic identities, acting as a continual reminder of one’s ethnicity (Alba 1990). In Guam, Filipino ingredients and canned goods are not only sold in the specialty stores, but are also widely available in major supermarkets like Pay-Less Supermarket and Walmart, highlighting in every sense the prominent presence of a strong migrant community. The prevalence of traditional dishes and delicate snacks and cakes in all festive celebrations, parades and events has definitely helped demonstrate the survival and thriving of a community through food.

The Filipino mediascape in Guam

Ethnic media plays an important role in circulating information that is essential for migrants to live a smooth life. This information may include news about the migrant communities and the country of origin, as well as the advertisement of cultural events, entertainment programmes and job information. On the other hand, by disseminating relevant and up to date information, the ethnic media of migrant communities also helps newly arrived immigrants to understand and adapt to the host society. Filipinos in Guam enjoy wide access to Philippine print media, television and radio programmes, which together form a “mediascape” (Appadurai 1990) that transcends territorial boundaries and has catered to the special needs of the Filipino migrants in Guam.

Guam is home to two cable channels that provide all-Filipino programming worldwide, namely the Filipino Channel (TFC) and GMA Pinoy TV. There are also two Philippine-format FM radio stations, namely KTKB Megamixx 101.9 and Fun 101.1 KNUT. The former, commencing in 2003, was the first of its kind in Guam while the latter relocated its broadcasting from Saipan (in the Northern Mariana Islands) to Guam in 2012. These radio stations play contemporary Filipino music and provide news about the root country. They also announce community activities,

broadcast advertisements for local businesses, and host interviews with visiting celebrities from the Philippines.

Print media is another popular source of information. In the early years after the Second World War, newsletters published inside the labour camps in the 1950s were important sources of information and fitted the camp residents' interests. Such print media also contained information on the social and cultural activities provided by different organisations, which served to boost the morale of its residents. An example can be found in one of the newsletters of Camp Roxas, "Barangay: The Voice of Roxas Villagers". In the 1950s, there were few sources of information that the Filipinos could resort to. Barangay was thus a much read newsletter by the camp residents. Selected workers would occasionally receive either a cash reward or letter of commendation for the contributions they made to their respective job areas. Some columns in the newsletters particularly served as "advisors" for workers who felt nostalgic about the homeland and provided suggestions for overcoming homesickness. The newsletter also featured cultural stories that soothed the emotions of the migrant workers.

A number of Filipino newspapers and magazines are now available and widely circulated among the Filipino communities, some of which are distributed for free. For example, *Island Tribune* was published in 2010 with the purpose of advocating Filipino culture and identity, and is freely distributed. This magazine mostly provides feature stories on Filipino cuisine, tourist destinations, pop culture, and traditional events. Others, such as Guam's *Pacific Daily News Bayanihan Weekly*, cover local affairs and social activities hosted by a myriad of Filipino organisations and associations. News pieces of these printed media regularly report on meetings and fundraising activities, such as donations to disaster victims in the Philippines, scholarships to those in need in both Guam and the Philippines, and financial assistance to local community projects.

There are also feature stories of individual Filipinos, highlighting achievements in terms of attaining self-sufficiency or having successful careers. These "success" stories often stress upward mobility and show how individuals can become successful through hard work and their own merits. The titles of these stories—"hard work equals success", "breaking new ground", "reconnecting with their roots"—capture the transformation of migrants with modest backgrounds who are nevertheless capable of embarking upon successful careers after migrating and attaining their aspirations. Stories like these function to encourage other immigrants to work to the best of their ability so as to grasp the economic opportunities in the host society.

In general, community newspapers advertise Filipino businesses and services, and make frequent references to Philippine-related events and news. At the time I was conducting my fieldwork in Guam, it was the news of the Corona trial⁴ that occupied

the front pages alongside local news concerning local political campaigns and community activities. The broadcasting of news related to the Philippines as well as Guam reveals the dual realities of Filipino migrants' lives, and through such ethnic media, myriad virtual spaces spanning national borders have been created (Bonus 2000). The selection of news relating to the Philippines also shows that many Filipino migrants in Guam are concerned about the affairs of their root country, and their sense of belonging will not be complete without making reference to the Philippines, despite the fact that they have settled permanently in Guam.

Community lives of different generations of Filipinos

Within the Filipino community, there is great awareness of the presence of ethnic associations as their activities are often advertised in the local newspaper. Devotees to hometown associations mainly derive from the older generation who wish to stay connected to their homeland roots. Yet, not every Filipino or Guamanian of Philippine descent commands the same degree of attachment to the root identity or the same amount of devotion to Filipino communal activities. A general divide can be made between the older generation of Filipino immigrants and the younger generations who were born in Guam or who grew up there.

A 37-year-old Philippine-born respondent, who grew up in Guam, remarked that his parents' devotion towards the FCG was a way for them to feel less "...homesick... they pretty much want to keep in touch with each other with what's going on". Their involvement with the FCG reveals how they perceive such migrant institutions as sources for instilling a sense of kinship. Similarly, a 66-year-old male government employee joined his first organisation, the Visayan Association, in 1972 when he was still new to Guam, and has since become actively involved in other Filipino associations. The informant commented that joining such organisations has had many positive effects on him including remedying his loneliness and introducing him to new acquaintances. It has also become a way for him to practice the traditions and values of being Filipino.

For the respondents who actively participate in communal activities, migrant organisations serve as spaces in which to showcase their ties to homeland, via cultural events, food, ritual practices and the commemoration of national holidays and events. Their activities are ways of "making place" in the receiving society (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). Another participant, a 52-year-old female accountant, pointed out that her involvement with Filipino associations began in the mid-1990s with her joining the Guam Accountant Association, a professional group that had a predominantly Filipino membership. Through the organisation, she met and gained many co-ethnic friends who helped her adjust to life in Guam. She encouraged newcomers to seek out and participate in ethnic associations because "these things help you out in reaching out and not getting bored".

Besides Filipinos from the older generations, newly arrived immigrants also show strong interest in the ethnic activities. For example, a 39-year-old teacher, who arrived in 2005, attributed her quick adjustment to the new environment to her involvement in her parish in Mong-mong. She joined the local choir and was subsequently adopted by a Bicolano⁵ family, whereupon she had lunch with the family almost every Sunday. Her foster family helped her adapt to life in Guam and gain a sense of belonging. With her involvement in communal activities, she was able to establish different relationships with her co-ethnics and gain a foothold in the co-ethnic community, and thus feel less displaced and more “secure”. More importantly, she found that she could maintain linkages to the homeland, the Philippines.

On the other hand, Filipinos, like other ethnic communities, are not homogenous. As stressed above, not every Filipino is interested in ethnic cultural events. The reasons given by some for their disinterest include lack of time, busy work life, a preference to devote time to family and work (rather than to the ethnic community), and not being knowledgeable about Filipino cultural traditions. Generally speaking, there was a lower rate of participation among the younger generations.

Many of the older generation immigrants have hoped to expose their children to the homeland culture by urging them to become involved in ethnic community life. However, in some instances, this has brought about the opposite outcome. A third-generation Filipino Guamanian in an interview in a local radio programme described her disassociation with all things Filipino. She recounted winning the Miss Teen Philippines-Guam pageant but stated, “Up until that pageant, I had never participated in *Santacruzán*. I only sang for Philippine independence but I never really stayed for the event. I only saw things when participating in it because I am Filipino, but as for appreciating it or understanding it, I did not.” Her remarks demonstrate how participation in a mainstream cultural pageant does not necessarily translate to a deep engagement in homeland cultural practices. Many young Filipinos, similar to this young Miss Teen Philippines-Guam, see such participation as an act of keeping up appearances and fulfilling a duty chained to ethnicity; her act was devoid of the importance and meanings associated with cultural traditions.

Chamorro-Filipino relations

Activities of the Filipino organisations are still largely limited to members of the Filipino community. There is little participation from other ethnic groups. A 62-year-old female Filipino professor observed that life in the associations is largely patronised by Filipinos. Philippine cultural events often take place in “Filipino community space” where other groups may not feel welcome to participate. For example, one of the important Filipino festivals is the *Santacruzán* procession, for which Filipino associations sponsor all the flower arches that grace the parade. Most participants are

active members of the organisation, and relatives or friends of these members. A few important “others” may be invited as honorary guests and observers by the organisers. Their presence is a “diplomatic display” of the linkages and friendships between Filipino associations and the centres of power and influence in Guam. At the celebrations, as a matter of formality, these honoured guests praise the organisations for their continued efforts and contributions to Guam.

The use of ethnic space for hosting cultural events illuminates the spatial presence of the Filipino community and its contribution to the island’s cultural diversity, but this, on the other hand, does not “give space” for the participation of other ethnic groups who would like to take part in the Filipino community activities. Indeed, “placing” Philippine cultural events in “Filipino space” has marked the geo-cultural divide between Filipinos and other groups.

The changing demographic and ethnic composition in Guam in the post-World War II period had pushed Chamorro leaders to become more aware and protective of their indigenous culture (Leibowitz 1989). Chamorro leaders had attempted to guard their dominant position by demanding a curb on the inflow of immigrants. There was fear that the continuous importation of foreign labour to fill jobs would undermine local efforts to develop and train a Guamanian labour force (Violet 1979). Tensions were especially heightened during periods of economic decline. Immigrants in vast numbers were viewed as a socio-cultural and political threat.

Chamorro leaders seemed to fear the possible emergence of strong resident “alien” groups who, by virtue of their citizenship, could vote for their own ethnic leaders and gain political influence on island matters. As the largest minority, Filipinos have distinctive advantages in asserting their group’s interests. Some Filipinos have attained prominent positions through appointment as well as through election. Their participation in local affairs and their positions may be seen as a threat to the political power of the Chamorro leadership. One case that illustrated this tension was the nomination of Leah Beth Naholowaa, of Philippine descent, as the Director of the Department of Labour (DOL) in 2011. Several Chamorro activists opposed her appointment because of comments she reportedly made regarding the recruitment of foreign workers. Naholowaa promised to provide employment to foreign H-2⁶ workers immediately after the completion of the building of the military base, which implied the increased presence of Filipino workers in Guam. She also expressed her desire to have a Filipino governor in Guam one day (Buhain 2011). Her statements were construed as displaying favouritism for Filipinos as the majority of H-2 workers employed in Guam were Filipinos and a Filipino governor would mean the end of the political dominance of the Chamorros. Chamorro rights activist, Trini Torres, feared that Naholowaa would let “the Filipinos (to) replace our Chamorros from our island (...)” (Buhain 2011). In my interview with Ron Laguana, a Chamorro activist and Director of Chamorro Studies, he expressed explicitly his opposition to Naholowaa’s

nomination and how he was stunned by her insensitive public declaration. Amidst opposition, Naholowaa was appointed for a year.

Laguana criticised Naholowaa for making priorities that benefitted foreigners rather than protecting the welfare of the existing population, such as the unemployed and the youth. Her open claim of her desire to have a Filipino governor also demonstrated “a lack of respect towards the Chamorro community here on the island (...)”. Her statements squarely positioned the Filipinos (as the “Other”) against the indigenous Chamorros and reflected a “local versus foreigner” attitude. Her claims unwisely demonstrated a view that positioned Filipinos as a foreign group, potentially hampering opportunities and benefits that should go to the local population.

The relationship between Chamorros and Filipinos is a complex one, often intertwined with a shared colonial legacy loaded with experiences and memories of over-dominance by White colonial rulers, and inter-marriages and cross-ethnic familial ties between the two groups. In a recent article in the *Marianas Variety*, Davis (2013) wrote, “[M]ost Filipinos have married into Chamorro families at some point or are related to those who have. They fear family conflict, exclusion, and isolation.” This highlights how the Chamorro-Filipino relationship is fraught with long-standing familial and cultural connections dating back to the Spanish period together with some tension over power struggles. Both groups are aware of this subtle relationship, and in general are careful to monitor “situations” to ensure things do not spiral out of control. In my discussion with Laguana, he explained that his opposition to Naholowaa was not meant to be racist and that Chamorros “are not the oppressors”. He stressed, “We are the oppressed. I cannot be a racist in my own homeland. I am just protecting the interest of my people.”

His views reflected the fear of most Chamorros that they would soon be replaced and displaced by other groups as the “political leaders and social movers” of Guam (Underwood 1987, 60). The Americans often see little difference between Filipinos and Guamanians (Maga 1988, 19). The above incident illustrates well the divide that still exists between the two groups. As mentioned above, despite many Chamorros and Filipinos already being tied in terms of familial connections, the two groups are still ethnically and culturally distinctive. When someone like Naholowaa begins to stress the difference and to slide towards one group, the other group is ready to react and retaliate for the interests of their own. After all, the Chamorro, being the indigenous group on the island, will be ready to act to preserve their position and dominion over Guam.

Another case in point is the story narrated to me by one of my informants, a 28-year-old male manager, who heard of a complaint made about an advertisement that had the tagline, “Pinoy Power”. In 2011, a telecommunications company designed a marketing campaign intended to capture the Filipino market in Guam. They wanted to

sell different mobile services directed at Filipino consumers, such as inexpensive per minute calls to the Philippines, unlimited prepaid call cards, and the send-a-load or mobile recharge load service. Accompanying this campaign was a poster showing a superhero holding a mobile phone. Instead of having an “S” on his chest, this superhero was flaunting a “P” and underneath that “P” was the tagline, “Pinoy Power” (Filipino Power). The poster could be found in Filipino shops and grocery stores.

The poster was eventually withdrawn due to a series of complaints that started with an email from a Caucasian who questioned the appropriateness of the tagline by commenting, “such a slogan has no place in Guam”. The comments triggered reactions from the Chamorros as well as other groups. Some demanded a similar advertisement tagline (for example, Chamorro Power) and called for more localised products. Much of the strain resided in how the word “power” was understood. To the non-Filipinos, the wordplay came across as a proclamation of Filipino dominance. The combination of words generated uneasiness as the poster symbolised a power struggle in Guam. The tagline could be interpreted as marginalising the Chamorros, the indigenous population, and the rise (to power) of the Filipinos. The discontinuation of the poster did not arouse discussion from the Filipino community; most of its members were aware of the difficulty of debating such issues.

The poster should be considered as yet another incident touching upon the sensitive ethnic relations in Guam. Many Filipinos would rather focus on maintaining the status quo and quietly making Guam their home than drawing attention to themselves. In everyday life, many Chamorros have forged close relationships with Filipinos, seeing them among their families and friends. Yet, conflicts such as that described above can result when issues touch upon political power and economic dominance.

Conclusion

Filipino migration to Guam came about as a result of colonial rule. Many migrant families in early times had not expected to stay in Guam all their lives and yet many ended up staying in Guam for generations. Filipino migration to Guam has been considered or labelled as “transient” —a stepping stone for further migration to the U.S. mainland—but many Filipino migrants have striven to make Guam their home. This chapter has provided data showing how different generations of Filipino immigrants have established their “homeland” in Guam and at the same time maintained close ties to their root country, the Philippines, across the sea border. Despite the subtle tensions that can be observed between Chamorros and Filipinos, the relationship continues to evolve, especially due to the many inter-marriages between the two groups. By reliving their cultural traditions through cultural events and possessions in Guam, Filipinos have weaved the cultural tapestry of the island and also created a strong sense of community tied to their traditional values and

organisational affiliations. Yet, the Filipino community spirit does not hamper their commitment to the building of a prosperous and lively Guam. Filipinos have asserted their presence on the island through matters (such as their skills, professional knowledge, and charitable activities) that draw attention to their contribution to the island's development. It is indeed within various social and cultural spaces that Filipinos have negotiated for full membership in the ever evolving Guamanian society. Yet, most of its members are also aware of the sensitive ethnic relations between themselves and the majority indigenous group.

Notes

1. The Chamorro population accounted for 45 percent of the total population in the 1980s. By 1990, their numbers had decreased to 37 percent and have remained within this figure to the present. On the other hand, the Filipino population in the 1950s only accounted for 12 percent of the total population, but by the 1980s it had increased to 21 percent and is still steadily increasing. In 2010, Chamorros only comprised 37 percent (59,381 people) of the total population (159,358). The number of people of Philippine origin was at 41,944, 26 percent of the total population, while Whites only accounted for 7 percent (11,321) (see ICP 1988; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992; Bureau of Statistics and Plans 2012).
2. It was an agreement between the U.S. Embassy in Manila and the Philippine government in May 1947 that paved the way for the "recruitment and employment of Philippine citizens by the US military forces and its contractors in the Pacific, including Guam" (Rogers 1995, 217).
3. The Federated States of Micronesia comprised the four island states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. These islands were formerly part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI).
4. News media covered the impeachment proceedings of the Philippine Chief Justice Renato Corona in mid-2012. Corona was accused and found guilty of failing to publicly disclose his assets, liabilities, and net worth.
5. An ethno-linguistic group in the Philippines who came from the south-eastern region of Luzon.
6. H-2 workers are temporarily admitted under the H visa worker programme to perform labour that cannot be filled by workers in the U.S. and its territories.

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