

Practicing Filipino Catholicism in Korea: Characteristics of Hyehwa-dong Filipino Catholic Community (HFCC) in Seoul*

Hyung Chull JANG

Abstract

The main questions of this article are: (1) how does religion function in the life of migrants? and (2) how do migrants practice their religion in a new place far from their home? This article analyzes the characteristics of Hyehwa-dong Filipino Catholic Community (HFCC) in Korea through ethnographic fieldwork, surveys, and semistructured interviews. The characteristics of HFCC as a migrant community can be seen in three aspects: belief, practices (including rituals and festivals), and community. Firstly, members of HFCC have a strong faith in God, who they believe sent them to Korea and helps them with their life in Korea. Secondly, they more actively practice their religion than when they were in homeland. Various activities allow them to practice Filipino Catholicism. Thirdly, HFCC is a strong network in both practical and spiritual ways. The members not only regard HFCC as a Catholic community but also a spiritual family. In HFCC, Filipinos are able to practice their religious cultural identity. Also, it is a network that allows them to create their own social and religious capital. These characteristics provide Filipino migrants with an opportunity to reaffiliate themselves with the Filipino society in Korea. Furthermore, Hyehwa-dong, known as the Korean SoHo, seems to become Filipino territory every Sunday, namely reterritorialization. Finally, the emergence and growth of HFCC contributes to Korea's becoming a multicultural country.

Keywords: migration, belief, religious practices, network, identity, reaffiliation, reterritorialization, multicultural

* This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea, funded by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea (NRF-2015S1A3A2046920), as well as by the John Templeton Foundation.

Hyung Chull JANG is Dean of the Chaplaincy at Induk University. E-mail: jangwmc@naver.com.

Introduction

We live in an era of globalization. One of the consequences of globalization is the increase in the number of migrants as a result of economic, political, and social changes of their home countries. Migrants can also bring about cultural change in their host society because they bring with them not only their nationality but their culture and religion. Cook (2002, 84), for instance, explains how Latin American Christianity came to the United States through Latin American migration. Yamada (2014, 55, 61) has studied the characteristics of Brazilian Protestants in Japan. The religion of migrants is not the same as the religion of the country into which they move because their history, tradition, and culture are different.

Religion concerns human understanding of the divine or the sacred. From a sociological perspective, religion is practiced in individual and social life. Berger (1969, 26) defines religion as a human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. For migrants, in particular, one may ask how religion functions in their life in a new place. More specifically, one may ask how religion functions in a migrant's life in Korea. The following questions may also be asked: (1) what is religion to migrants? (2) what is the function of religion for migrants? and (3) how do migrants practice their religion in a foreign place with its new sociocultural context? To answer these questions, I conducted a case study on a migrant community, namely the Hye-hwa-dong Filipino Catholic Community (HFCC) in Seoul. In this article, I first discuss the function of religion for migrants. Second, I outline a profile of the Filipino migrants in Korea and the sociocultural geography of HFCC. Third, I endeavor to characterize HFCC by three aspects: belief, practice (including rituals and religious festivals), and community. Finally, I discuss the implications of these characteristics.

Migration and Religion

The decision to migrate is not an easy one to make. For individuals, it can be a strategy to escape difficult circumstances in one's home country and to

transition to a new and better life. Migration in the contemporary world can be discussed from the viewpoints of global economics and politics (Nititham 2011, 198–199). Accordingly, migration often results from the rise of global capitalism. The majority of migrants come from the third world. According to San Juan (2009, 112), in 2004, there were approximately 200 million migrant workers from the underdeveloped countries of the world.

As Connor argues, religion can serve as a bridge to facilitate an immigrant's adjustment to a new place (Connor 2014, 78). It has been shown that immigrants who regularly participate in a religious organization are happier, less depressed, and experience less emotional distress (Connor 2014, 78). In Japan, for example, religion helps Peruvian immigrants experience a sense of belonging (Milani 2014, 143). In this article, it is assumed that religion has its own role and characteristics in the life of migrants. Even though migrants may have a different socioeconomic status from immigrants and usually return to their home country after their contract has expired, religion can bring them encouragement, empowerment, and comfort as migrants in a new place. This function of religion is also found among Filipino migrants, who are separated from their family or kinship networks in their home country. Filipino migrants do not arrive in Korea with European Catholicism. Rather, they bring with them to Korea a particular form of Filipino Catholicism. Thus, the aim of this case study is to analyze the characteristics of HFCC to find out how Catholicism functions in the lives of Filipino migrants in Korea. In other words, this case study investigates how religion, Catholicism in particular, functions in the life of a Filipino migrant in Korea.

Research Methods

For this research, firstly, I conducted a literature review. Secondly, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork, which included participant observation by such things as joining their Mass, church calendar programs, events, and festivals. I also conducted some semistructured personal and focus group

interviews with members of the HFCC. Most interviewees are lay volunteers who serve HFCC by leading its festivals and prayer meetings. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I used initials instead of full names.¹ I also surveyed 25 HFCC members who attended the Wednesday night Mass on November 18, 2015. The reason for this date is that the Mass on that day takes place in the basement of the HFCC Center where it was more convenient to conduct the survey. On Sundays, the church is very busy and crowded so that conducting any survey is on that day is very difficult before or after Mass. Most of the survey participants are active volunteers for the HFCC. For this survey, I used a questionnaire designed by the Center for the Religion and Civic Culture (CRCC), University of Southern California.² I added two extra questions regarding whether the survey taker considered their faith to be becoming stronger and the perceived reasons for this.

Sociocultural Geography of HFCC

As shown in Table 1, there were 53,437 Filipinos in Korea as of January 2016. According to the report from the South Korean Ministry of Justice, the Philippines ranked fifth in terms of national origin of immigrants to Korea, behind China, the United States, Vietnam, and Thailand.

-
1. I interviewed A on August 14 and November 18, 2015. I interviewed B on August 29, 2015, and C on September 12, 2015. They are, respectively, a church minister, a president of another Filipino organization in Korea, and a shop owner at the Sunday Filipino market. I also conducted a group interview with HFCC volunteers (D, E, F, G, and H) on January 17, 2016. These latter were, respectively, a domestic cook, domestic helper, unemployed person, factory worker, and lay missionary. All of my interviewees had been in Korea between six months and 14 years and volunteered to be interviewed following an announcement seeking interview volunteers. The interviews were conducted in English and the answers have not been edited to correct grammar, though occasionally a bracketed gloss is provided for clarity.
 2. CRCC developed a survey for congregational leaders that can be used in conjunction with either congregational research or on its own. The survey contains two primary sets of questions. One set of questions is focused on congregational leadership and governance. The second set of questions is focused on characteristics of the congregation related to issues of “place” and how the congregation acts within its community.

Table 1. Immigrant Population in Korea by Country of Origin

	All	China	USA	Vietnam	Thailand	Philippines	Japan	Others
Number of people	1,879,880	981,610	136,008	134,164	89,211	53,437	36,063	499,387
Percentage	100	52.2	7.2	7.1	4.7	2.8	1.9	26.6

Source: Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea, "Churipguk oegugin jeongchaek tonggye wolbo, 2016 nyeon 1 wol" (Monthly Statistics Bulletin, January 2016), accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.moj.go.kr>.

Table 2 also shows that approximately one half of the Filipinos in Korea are unskilled migrant workers (47.5%), followed by spouses (19.7%), mostly wives. These numbers imply that the Philippines is not exceptional in the global labor market. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimated that there were about 10.2 million Filipinos living or working abroad in 2013.³

Table 2. Filipinos in Korea

Visa status	All Filipinos	E-9 (Non-professional employment)	F-6 (Marriage migrant)	C-3 (Temporary visit)	E-6 (Culture and arts)	F-1 (Visiting and staying with relatives)	F-2 (Residency)	Others
No. of people	53,437	25,421	10,559	5,185	3,336	3,106	483	5,347
Percentage	100	47.5	19.7	9.7	6.2	5.8	0.9	10

Source: Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea, "Churipguk oegugin jeongchaek tonggye wolbo, 2016 nyeon 1 wol" (Monthly Statistics Bulletin, January 2016), accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.moj.go.kr>.

3. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, "Stop Illegal Remittance Agents, BSP Urged," November 14, 2012.

Geographically, HFCC is located in Hyehwa-dong close to the Seoul city center. For Korean youth, Hyehwa-dong is a popular place for meeting friends, dining on different cuisines, social drinking, watching plays, and shopping for the latest fashion items. In other words, it could be referred to as the Korean SoHo. However, from a religious perspective, it is also important for its varied religious landscapes. These include Dongsung Catholic Middle and High School, the Catholic University of Korea, and Myeongnyundang 明倫堂 (a lecture building for high-level Confucian education during the period of the Joseon dynasty) at Sungkyunkwan University, itself a key site in Korean Confucianism.

In addition, as shown in Table 3, Catholicism is one of three major religions of Korea. The Catholic population of Korea may not have a great influence on HFCC. However, this religious context of Korean society may enhance the growth of HFCC, more so than other religious communities, such as the Muslim one, in Korea.

Table 3. Religious Affiliation in Korea according to Statistics Korea (2015)

Religion	Protestant	Buddhist	Catholic	Other	Non-religious
Percentage of population	19.7	15.5	7.9	0.5	56

Source: Statistics Korea (2016).

The HFCC has its own history of development. In 1989, Sr. Mary Anne of the Good Shepherd Sisters founded Sampagita,⁴ the first Filipino migrant congregation in Korea. Sampagita held its Sunday Mass at Jayang-dong Church. After Sr. Mary Anne returned to the Philippines, the leadership was handed over in 1994 to Fr. Raester of the Mission Society of the Philippines. At that time, it became known as the Filipino Catholic Community. In 1996, the increase of participants necessitated the congregation's move

4. A name derived from the national flower of the Philippines.

to Hyehwa-dong Catholic Church, and the name was changed again to Hyehwa-dong Filipino Catholic Community (HFCC). Currently, HFCC is the largest group of Catholic Filipino migrant workers in Korea and is administered by missionaries from the Mission Society of the Philippines (MSP) under the auspices of the Seoul Archdiocesan Pastoral Center for Filipino Migrants. At Hyehwa-dong Catholic Church, the Filipino congregation has its own Mass at 1:30 every Sunday afternoon. It is estimated that between 500 and 1,000 Filipinos attend this Mass. Since 2000, the congregation has also had its own center in Seongbuk-dong. The center is approximately a 20-minute walk from the church. The Archdiocese of Seoul has entrusted MSP with the administration and management of the HFCC center. The center building has three floors with several rooms. In this center, the congregation has Wednesday night Mass, shares food, takes a rest, and even holds various programs before or after Mass. This center also serves as a shelter for anyone. And, in HFCC, those who assume roles in different aspects of Filipino community life are called volunteers. Among the ministries and committees that were formed are those for Worship and Liturgy, Education, Temporalities or Finance, Extraordinary Communion Ministry, Sports and Recreation, Stewards and Marshals, and the Filipino Mission Auxiliary Association, which is a lay organization closely linked to the Mission Society of the Philippines.

Characterizing HFCC

In order to have a full understanding of the characteristics of HFCC, three aspects, namely, belief, practices (including ritual and prayers), and community are discussed.

Beliefs of Filipino Migrants

The Catholic faith is the foundation of HFCC. As C remarked, "Sunday Filipino Society was created by the Catholic faith." To those Catholic Filipinos I talked to, especially the volunteers for the HFCC, the church is their

primary concern and comes before anything else in Filipino society in Korea. C said, “If the church moves, then Filipino market in front of church will follow.” However, this reveals not only their Catholic faith, but also the characteristics of contemporary Filipino Catholicism. Cornelio (2016, 77) suggests that contemporary Filipino Catholicism constructs new active characteristics emphasizing personal belief and experience. Furthermore, the term *action-oriented relationality* denotes doing good and not doing harm to others (Cornelio 2016, 86). This activeness is one of the characteristics of current Filipino Catholicism. El Shaddai is a good example. El Shaddai is a Catholic charismatic lay movement in the Philippines. It is formally called El Shaddai DWXI Prayer Partners Foundation International, Inc., and is also known as the El Shaddai ministries. It began in 1981 as a non-denominational Christian radio program. Within 15 years, El Shaddai had become a substantial movement with a followership of nine to eleven million (Wiegele 2005, 4–5). El Shaddai clearly reflects the globalizing movement of a prosperity gospel, such as healing, becoming rich, and positive confession (Wiegele 2005, 7). El Shaddai can also be found at the HFCC. It has its own time for a song of praise and worship dance for services and other activities, and it organizes gatherings such as festivals, prayer meetings, and Recollection Day.⁵

The Filipinos I talked to expressed the notion that their migration to Korea was not their own decision; they believe God sent them. E remarked, “When I applied [for a visa], I didn’t have sufficient documents. But God allowed me to come here.” For them, it seems, economic considerations are not the only reason to migrate. Any theory on international migration that relies solely on economic factors in the decision of migrate, and overlooks

5. Recollection Day is a meeting organized by the laity. About half of participants were members of El Shaddai when I joined it on December 6, 2015. The meeting proceeded as follows: (a) lay speech; (b) song of praise (“Rock My Soul,” etc.) with cheerful dancing by El Shaddai; (c) group meeting (sharing their thoughts on and reactions to the lay speech); (d) song of praise with cheerful dancing by El Shaddai; and (e) sharing what they discussed in the group meeting. Led by El Shaddai, the Recollection Day I attended was very charismatic in mood. From my personal experience, it was reminiscent of a revival meeting of the Pentecostal Church.

the cultural context, fails to address the role of religion in the migration process, especially the spiritual resources that influence some immigrant populations in their decision to migrate (Hagan 2002, 89). Religion plays a significant role in migration. Religion can explain how migrants make sense of their decision to migrate and the destination. With regard to American immigration history, Connor (2014, 32) claims that it is common for labor migrants in the United States to describe their migration in spiritual terms, whether past European immigrants or Latino immigrants today. Religious imagery, symbols, and narratives are employed to make sense of the trials and challenges of their migration journey.

Furthermore, Hagan (2002, 89) argues that the psychological effects of conviction on the migrant's commitment helps him or her to endure the hardships of migration. It appears that HFCC members have their own conviction that God guides their life in Korea. This kind of conviction regarding migration can also be found in other migrant cases in Korea. Interviewing Peruvians in two Korean mega churches, Vogel (2014, 332) discusses how they believed their migration to Korea to have been predestined. However, there is a difference from the Filipino case in that Peruvians hoped to change their status from being migrant workers to recognized leaders within Korean churches (Vogel 2014, 331). Peruvians believe that God will reward them for having made a correct life choice (Vogel 2014, 332). These migrants aspire to be global figures connecting Korea with Peru, rather than remaining undocumented economic migrants (Vogel 2014, 341). Meanwhile, members of HFCC do not seek to be deeply associated with Korean Catholics and society. In the final section below, I will deliberate on this in my discussion of their interest in being Filipino in Korean society.

During interviews, I also found Filipino migrants describing the growth of their Catholic faith. Members of HFCC ensured me that their faith was stronger than it had been. As F said, "I had a hard time physically and spiritually. The difficulties were caused by the different social system and culture of Korea. I realize I needed Him. Nowadays I pray the word of God." D said, "I believe God sent me over here to experience everything. I am experienced and am still experiencing for a better life." Moreover, G noted how, "Being a lay missionary here [in Korea] is a turning point of my life."

Most interviewees were confident that their faith had grown stronger than it had been in the Philippines. D said:

My faith is same. But it grows and becomes stronger than before because of being far away from where I came from. Being in Korea, there are things to struggle with emotionally and physically.

Further, H remarked, “It strengthened my faith when I came here. And I must say I will die as Catholic,” and F said, “I became much stronger about God [i.e., my belief in God is much stronger than before].” Also, 20 of 25 survey respondents answered that their belief became stronger in Korea.⁶ It would seem that these immigrants need an active and optimistic faith as they face various differences and challenges in Korea. They experience sociocultural differences and a very different geography, including climate. They are very vulnerable to cold weather because the Philippines does not have winter. They also have difficulties with physically hard work, communication at work and with Koreans. Their faith encourages them to overcome these challenges, a faith that is strengthened by their religious practices, such as Sunday Mass, prayer meetings, and religious festivals. This is discussed in the following section.

6. The survey question was: “If you think your belief is stronger than before, please describe how and why?” Here are some of their answers: (1) “Now it is stronger because of my problems I have right now. I know that God is my good provider.”; (2) “Yes, because it has to be, here without my family, God is my only source of strength.”; (3) “My faith is stronger since I came to Korea and become one of the volunteers at Hyehwa-dong.”; (4) “My faith became stronger, especially after my back operation.”; (5) “Yes, I think that being a witness to the challenges of the migrant workers in Korea has strengthened my faith.”; (6) “My faith became stronger when I joined this community because I hold on to God during my hardships in Korea.”; (7) “My belief is stronger because Jesus Christ is my only savior, comforter, and joy in times of trouble during my stay her in Korea.”; (8) “Stronger because my life is more meaningful and I am able to share my faith as a witness to how God works in my life.”; (9) “Stronger because of my love and compassion.”; (10) “My faith has become stronger because being far from my country and immediate family I have relied on the support of my fellow members in the congregation to strengthen my faith. This shared faith is more uplifting.”

Religious Practices (Sunday Mass, Prayers, and Religious Festivals)

Religion has an influence on both individual and collective life. It can create new individual life and social relationships. In the case of immigration, religious practices can help immigrants become active members of society. In a host country, immigrants may experience the significance of their beliefs and rituals. Analyzing the World Values Survey of 2003, Connor (2014, 31) finds that most new immigrants in the United States attend religious services more frequently than they did when they were in their country of origin. Connor also notes that regular religious attendance is associated with higher citizenship rates in the United States. In particular, 79 percent of Filipino immigrants in the United States claimed to have attended regular religious services in their home country. Whereas 90 percent of them attended regular religious services after immigrating to the United States (Connor 2014, 90–91). Milani (2014, 143) explains that Peruvian immigrants in Japan build their own community by means of particular religious activities, such as the Fiesta of the Lord of Miracles and the Eucharist. Furthermore, some studies have shown that migrants are active when they practice religion. Yamada (2014, 61) establishes that Brazilian Protestants in Japan are very energetic in their long church services (typically lasting more than two hours) and age-group activities.

As Table 2 shows, approximately half of the Filipinos in Korea are migrant workers. Consequently, it is easy to assume that many HFCC members are migrant workers. Although it was not easy to obtain quantitative data regarding Mass attendance, I found that members of HFCC placed great emphasis on attending Mass. A said, “They [Filipino migrants] are more eager to join the Mass. For some of them, it takes as long as two hours by train to get here.” They place high value on going to church and attending Mass, much above anything else. As B remarked, “In the Philippines, it is easy to go to church. Because there must be a church around me always. But in Korea we need to make a greater effort to attend church.”

The Filipino migrants I interviewed regard Mass as a crucial part of being a Catholic Filipino in Korea. As D explained:

When we join Sunday, all the hardship during week is gone. We just give all to the Lord during Sunday. All the trouble of the weekdays are gone after Sunday Service. You forgot everyday stresses from work.

Filipinos celebrate Mass and other religious activities in three particular ways. First, they use the official language of the Philippines, Tagalog. A noted, "We learned it [Tagalog] from school. It is a formal language. Speaking Tagalog makes Filipino feel more at home." D said, "As long as a Filipino priest is saying the Mass, that really makes a difference." E remarked, "In the Philippines, we have different languages. But here we only use Tagalog." The Tagalog Mass helps the Filipino migrant retain his or her religious identity as a Catholic, and national identity as a Filipino.

Second, they believe that their Mass is traditional and does not differ from Mass in the Philippines. To the question, "How would you characterize the main service of your congregation?" D remarked, "Our Mass is traditional," an assertion to which E, F, and G agreed. Furthermore, when responding to the survey, 12 of 16 respondents also replied, "The Mass is traditional." This perception motivates Filipinos in Korea to attend Sunday Mass. If traditional Mass simply means strictly adhering to the Mass procedures as practiced in the Philippines, this may engage the Filipino migrant's attention and result in the growth of the community. Iannacone (1994, 1183, 1193) suggests that strictness mitigates free-rider problems, i.e., problems with those who exhibit less commitment and have low participation. A strict church and congregation that demands a high rate of commitment and attendance can encourage those with little commitment and, accordingly, allow the church to grow vigorously. Presumably, my interviewees' perception of Sunday Mass as traditional helps them commit to HFCC.

Third, Filipinos have their own celebrations in Korea. H said, "We have many Filipino celebrations here [in Korea]. They are really the same [as back home]. We have the same traditions and celebrations." HFCC has many active programs and events, such as its own festivals on Korean Harvest Day,⁷ Reflection Day, a Christmas party, and Christmas Eve Mass.

7. The Filipino Festival on Korean Harvest Day is presented by HFCC and sponsored by Cebu Pacific, Philippine Airlines, Woori Bank, Korea Exchange Bank, Metro Bank, and



Figure 1. Sunday Filipino Mass in Hyehwa-dong Catholic Church.

Source: author.



Figure 2. Sunday Filipino market.

Source: author.

HFCC also celebrates Filipino Catholic festivals, such as Simbang Gabi,⁸ and the festivals of Saint Lorenzo Ruiz⁹ and Santo Niño.¹⁰ HFCC members also pray the rosary¹¹ and novena¹² together on Wednesday nights before Mass and during individual prayer time. These religious practices help to

Seoul Archdiocese. The program for 2016 was as follows: (a) El Shaddai's performance; (b) doxology; (c) HFCC performance and choir; (d) dance of FEWA (Filipino EPS Workers Association); (e) professional singers; and (f) medley by Fathers, including "Like a Bridge over Trouble Water", "Just the Way You Are" and so on; and (g) two professional singers from the Philippines.

8. Simbang Gabi is a nine-day devotional Mass before Christmas and is practiced by Filipinos to honor the Virgin Mary.
9. A patron saint venerated in the Filipino Catholic church.
10. Santo Niño (Holy Infant Jesus) is a large—and the oldest—Filipino festival. It originated in the Visaya archipelago, including Cebu. According to Julia (2016, 359–360), devotion to the Santo Niño dates back to the beginning of Christianity in the Philippines with the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in 1521.
11. The rosary is a form of Catholic prayer venerating the Virgin Mary. Survey participants largely remarked that they pray the rosary more often in Korea than in the Philippines.
12. A novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help was originally a devotional private and public prayer in Catholicism. Thus, it became a Filipino prayer during weekdays. It is a religious accommodation which combines Filipino folk religious tradition with Catholic ritual. There are various kinds of novenas in the Philippines. Thus, it represents the local identity and enforces the solidarity of local people. In Korea, a novena is modified in the context of Filipino migrant workers.

affirm their identity as Filipino Catholics.

The identity of Catholic Filipino migrants in Korea can be conceived as diasporic because their religious practices originate from Filipino Catholic culture and tradition. This diasporic identity of Filipino migrants is the result of their religious practices in Korea as their new sociocultural location. For example, HFCC celebrates Santo Niño in Korea on the third Sunday of January. Before the Mass commences, the members participate in traditional dancing and wear colorful costumes that mostly depict the native ornaments while they hold the Holy Image (the infant Jesus).¹³ Their celebration of Santo Niño clearly reveals their migrant identity. Though this religious festival in Korea is clearly not as large as the one in Cebu, the celebration of Santo Niño in HFCC is not just for Cebuanos, but for all HFCC members. Tondo (2010, 219) shows how Filipinos in New Zealand also display a diasporic consciousness by celebrating Santo Niño as a way of facilitating and maintaining their Filipino identity in a foreign land. Thus, for Filipino migrants, it is possible to say that *practicing religion is practicing identity*. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Filipinos' diasporic identity is not a copy of their identity in their homeland because their religious cultural practices do not simply replicate their home culture and traditions, but signify them in a foreign land, namely, Korea.

Historically, it is important to note that some elements of Santo Niño derived from indigenous traditions of the Philippines. This is why Santo Niño is clearly considered a part of Filipino culture rather than other cultures. According to Tondo (2010, 221), the indigenous ritual merged with pious Catholic religious practices through popular devotion. Those elements became so deeply a part of Filipino Catholic identity that it is difficult to comprehend this without knowing its past history, such as the three centuries of Spanish colonization (Tondo 2010, 222). Understanding Santo Niño in terms of performing and constructing the Filipino diaspora identity in New Zealand, Tondo (2010, 239–240) asserts that the festival has two paradoxical implications. On one level, it celebrates a common Filipino national

13. The infant Jesus looks like a young Southeast Asian boy. He wears a crown and royal garments.

identity, even while it affirms Cebuano identity. On another level, it replicates homeland rituals as a way of establishing diaspora distinction from other cultures in New Zealand, while assisting integration through the construction of a new hyphenated identity as Filipino New Zealanders (Tondo 2010, 239–240). Likewise, in HFCC, Filipino festivals like Santo Niño are an occasion to practice Filipino Catholicism. And, at the same time, they also lead to the construction of the diaspora identity of Filipinos in Korea.

HFCC as a Spiritual Family and Network

In Western society, life with institutionalized religion does not always involve spirituality. Heelas and Woodhead (2005, 5, 7) argue that spirituality in the contemporary West is related to the “unique subjective-life.” This is expected to grow in contrast to religion, which contains conforming principles like doctrines and devotion to God. However, according to Connor (2014, 71), a religious community can offer spiritual and emotional support for immigrants so as to make them feel at home in a life fraught with difficulties. This support comes from religious practices such as participating in rituals, prayer meetings, and festivals.

By means of these religious practices, members of HFCC firmly relate to each other. As a result, it seems they feel more comfortable when they are together. D remarked:

But every time of my holiday like Christmas, New Year, special Filipino holidays and events, I go Hye-hwa-dong. It is very heart warming. You feel lonely for your own people. So I come. I used to live inside US army base. I was a volunteer [in a Catholic church] there before. But every Christmas, my birthday and my childrens' birthday I want to see my people. So I came to Hye-hwa-dong for that.

The spirituality of HFCC members is connected with institutionalized religion, namely the Catholic church, rather than with experiencing subjective spirituality outside the church or community. Furthermore, members of HFCC perceive themselves as a spiritual family. In the words of H, “We are like family. We share every word of God. We pray rosary together. We eat

together.” And as D expressed it, “We want to be a happy family even though it is just a day. We feel lonely because our family is so far away from here. The church itself serves as the biggest help financially and spiritually.”

This idea of being like a family seems to be a common one among Filipino migrants, as though they needed their own people to rely on like family. In the Philippines, although the nuclear family is the dominant family type, the concept of extended family functions in their practical mindset (Castillo 1979, 116). Thus, Filipinos might be closely acquainted with many relatives beyond their immediate family unit. In the sense of being together like an extended family, members of HFCC are able to take care of each other. H said:

Recently, there is a girl from Busan [a city in southern Korea]. She got burned in her house. She accidentally poured very hot water. She got the third-degree burn so she asked help. So we are going to help her.

We also help people who have medical problems. The EPS [Employment Permit System]¹⁴ workers who are changing their workplace and people who are looking for a job temporarily, they can shelter here [the second floor of the HFCC Center] with free food and everything provided from community.

In addition, this kind of social connection is not exclusive to HFCC. Rather, it has helped migrants in a humanitarian way. It takes an ecumenical concern for non-Catholics, and even those who are not Filipinos. As E expressed it:

It [the HFCC shelter] is not for only Catholic. Before there was a Pakistani. He was a Muslim. He used to stay there last year. He converted to Catholicism. His brother and sister did not help him. So he stayed there almost a year. He had an accident. He cut his fingers at work. So HFCC provide shelter, food, and everything.

14. The EPS is a legal system for employing foreign unskilled workers in Korea. The foreign employees have to return to their country after their three-year contract has expired. They are allowed to renew the contract once for two additional years.

The above anecdote of assisting both Filipinos and non-Filipinos who were in trouble implies that the HFCC functions as an open network. This network is activated by HFCC members. Some case studies have revealed how religious communities help to build networks. In a case study of the Filipino community of St. Catherine in Houston, Sullivan (2000, 223) discovered how the Filipinos there created ties—namely, a social network—which was initiated, organized, and sustained by the devotional Filipino laity. According to her, the social network of Filipinos tends to focus on religious festivals and devotional practices that they brought from their home country (Sullivan 2000, 224). I also found that the HFCC as a Filipino network in Korea is growing as a result of the devotional work of volunteers, who manage the HFCC and make it function as a network. As D said, “Volunteering means you volunteer time and talent.” And G, “It is giving talent, skills, and ability without the experience of military.” And D added, “We say all for the Lord. We try to give back to him. It is one way of giving back for whatever God has given us.” They are also well organized. H noted:

We have different ministries and committees. We have letters and commentators to read the Word of God, altar servers for Eucharist, choir, marshals for taking care of food and everything. It is more than seven. I mean ministry groups.

Moreover, in HFCC as a network, members are able to generate their own social and religious capital. Stark and Finke (2000, 120–121) propose that religious capital has two aspects: culture and emotion. The network makes it possible for members of HFCC to practice rituals and religious festivals. These religious practices not only increase religious confidence, but also strengthen their emotions and religious culture in a foreign country, Korea. Thus, social and religious capital is created through family-like communion and network-building by means of practicing Filipino Catholicism within a community.

Practical Conveniences and Social Services

Beside the particular characteristics of the HFCC discussed thus far, there

are organizations and institutions that are affiliated to and cooperate with the HFCC. These include the Filipino EPS Workers Association (FEWA), Alliance of Filipino Workers in Korea (KASAMMAKO), banks (Woori and Kookmin), the Seoul Archdiocese, Raphael Medical Clinique, and the Sunday Filipino Market. As shown in Table 2, 47.5 percent of the Filipinos in Korea are E-9 holders. They have been coming to Korea through the EPS since 2008. The aforementioned FEWA has been offering advice on EPS, including how to change one's place of work and other important legal factors, since 2009. H remarked:

We are all Catholics. But, we do not call them HFCC volunteers because they are a different organization. We serve Hyehwa-dong Catholic Church but they do not. We have the celebration of the Baby Jesus [Santo Niño] today, so we asked some help FEWA. So they dance before Mass today. This is the relation with them. We are affiliated and collaborate.

The organization KASAMMAKO has been active in issues surrounding the rights of Filipino migrant workers as well as the undocumented. It was founded by a number of members of the HFCC in 1998. The first president was a member of the HFCC. The organization used to oppose the Filipino government and the Industrial Trainee System in Korea.¹⁵ However, it is less active now because since 2008 most Filipino migrant workers come to Korea through EPS. D said, "If they [Filipino migrant workers] come to the Father, then he talks to the Labor Department of the [Philippine] Embassy." E said, "They are not HFCC. They have their own goals. If they have any legal issue, they go to the Embassy because the HFCC cannot handle legal issues. The Father will be a delegate."

Raphael Clinique is a Catholic medical center that provides medical services to migrants. As stated previously, it works in collaboration with the HFCC for migrants who desperately need medical treatment. Two

15. This was a legal system for importing unskilled migrant workers prior to the EPS. In this system, migrant workers were conceived as trainees. Thus, it causes migrant workers many problems such as no wages, human rights violation, and becoming the undocumented.

banks (Woori and Kookmin) are open on Sunday only for foreigners who have to travel long distances to do banking. The Filipino Market is open every Sunday in front of the church. It sells commodities from the Philippines, groceries, and hot meals, which are ready to serve or for take away. However, market vendors are not just concerned about their own business. As D said:

Every December most of them sponsor and share food to feed Mass goer through the night. These people who sell stuffs there sponsor a night to feed all the people. And then, people all the Mass goer go there and patronize their food. This is the relationship most of the time.

C said, "From time to time, like Christmas, market owners donate money, food, and commodities for the undocumented. There is a shelter near the Philippine Embassy." Seoul Archdiocese provides the center building and is connected with an outreach program to help Filipinos. A noted:

The Seoul Archdiocese only supports the center building. We provide facilities and all the expense such as water, electricity, gas and so on. We also provide some meal for the Filipino who arrived Saturday night to join the Mass on Sunday and rooms to sleep.

These organizations and institutions contribute to the growth of the HFCC. They not only work individually but also in concert. In fact, members of these organizations and institutions, such as FEWA and the Sunday Market, attend the Sunday Mass. These organizations and institutions cooperate with the HFCC. Many Filipinos like to come to Hyehwa-dong Church on Sunday, not only because they can attend Mass for Filipinos, but because these institutions and organizations also afford convenience and easy accessibility to social services.

Reaffiliation and Reterritorialization as Transforming Locality

According to Warner (1998, 9), the study of immigration and religion involves the process through which a religion develops the specific charac-

teristics and expressions of a religious community. Warner refers to this process as inculturation, contextualization, or indigenization. With regard to the HFCC, I am of the opinion that the HFCC develops two ongoing sociocultural processes to make its own life and community in Korea: reaffiliation and reterritorialization.

Filipino Catholics arriving in Korea reaffiliate themselves with the HFCC. They are not committed to a different tradition of religion but experience a different culture and society. Thus, they are in search of a place where they can belong. By means of practicing Filipino Catholicism through such things as festivals, prayer meetings, and Sunday Mass in Tagalog, Filipino Catholics can reaffiliate to Filipino society in Korea. Their practices and participation do not imply their social integration with Korean society. It appears that members of the HFCC do not insist that they associate with Korean Catholics, even though the HFCC is connected with Hyehwa-dong Catholic Church and the Seoul Archdiocese. The HFCC meets the demand to be a Filipino in Korea. Most HFCC members are more interested in having a sense of belonging to the Filipino community because their status is not that of immigrants who can settle down in and assimilate into Korean society as Korean citizens. With the exception of those who have a Korean spouse, most members of the HFCC arrive in Korea through EPS. EPS workers cannot stay in Korea permanently. It is not necessary, indeed not practically feasible, for them to become Korean citizens and to merge into Korean culture. Rather, they prefer to maintain and practice their national identity as Filipinos. In this respect, Filipino migrants appear to be different from other immigrants. They like to be Filipinos in Korea and build their own community in Korean society, in particular, by practicing Filipino Catholicism, such as attending Sunday Mass and prayer meetings, celebrating Filipino Catholic festivals, and building a close network for themselves. This reaffiliation enables HFCC members to retain their Filipino Catholic identity in Korea.

From the perspective of Koreans, the religious practices of the HFCC can be seen as a ghetto culture or subculture. However, this may be considered from a different viewpoint. The religious practices of the HFCC transform the Korean SoHo of Hyehwa-dong into Filipino territory every

Sunday. More specifically, it deterritorializes Hye-hwa-dong and reterritorializes it as a Filipino site. This social and geographical phenomenon implies a change of locality. Locality is a sense of place, emphasizing the significance of that particular place. It can be defined in terms of the local populace's ownership of territory. This meaning of locality, as Knott (1998, 283) suggests, has its own coherence and is functionally and conceptually manageable. This implies that, from the perspective of the inhabitants, the significance of locality lies in its capacity to be meaningful for those within it, to be important for individual and group identity, and to be a practical working environment. Locality in the contemporary globalizing world is continually and vividly regenerated by activating the imagined notion of the geographical location of local peoples. This locality does not lose its own territory, rather it can still geographically and ethnically occupy its own territory. Tomlinson attempts to put a notion of locality into the necessity of reconsidering the cultural territory. He understands that deterritorialization is not a linear, unilateral process, but one that can be characterized by a dialectical push and pull as seen in his following words: "Where there is deterritorialization, there is also reterritorialization" (Tomlinson 1999, 148). Yet, at the same time, he also argues, that when human lives are opened up to the wider world, what results is an existential vulnerability of the concept of home. When the sense of a secure and circumscribed home is literally and metaphorically threatened, corresponding attempts to reestablish a cultural *home* are regenerated. This is because, for Tomlinson, human beings are always embodied and physically located. In this fundamental material sense, the ties of culture and religion to location can never be completely severed. Concomitantly, locality can continuously be claimed as the physical situation of human life and the world (Tomlinson 1999, 148-149). Thus, for Tomlinson, deterritorialization cannot ultimately mean the end of locality, but its change into something more complicated, namely reterritorialization.

In the case of the HFCC, the reterritorialization of Filipinos is more than geographically reclassifying a landscape and physical place. The reterritorialization proceeded by the HFCC can be regarded as a cultural reoccupation of geographical territory by means of religious beliefs and prac-

tices. With regard to the HFCC, the deterritorialization of the consuming culture in Seoul brings about a momentary reterritorialization every Sunday and proceeds by practicing Filipino Catholicism. And, as noted previously, Filipinos are provided with practical conveniences and social services such as shopping, banking, legal counselling on their rights and status as migrant workers, shelter, and medical treatment. All of these contribute to the reterritorialization of Hye-hwa-dong by Filipinos on Sunday. The area is even called Little Manila.

Local cultural practices construct locality. Yet, this locality is a newly regenerated concept informed by the practices of imagination and the notion of geographical location. Indeed, locality as a human concept requires a revision of cultural territory as the place where people are living, and also as the ground of their cultural practices. Therefore, it seems necessary to recognize how locality has its own territory. In regard to the HFCC, it is accurate to say Catholic Filipinos do not just adapt to their new socio-cultural migration conditions. Rather, by means of reaffiliation and reterritorialization, they signify their religious cultural particularity and the landscape of their new physical place. Thus, they transform the locality of Hye-hwa-dong. They turn Hye-hwa-dong into a religious-cultural territory for themselves. Tondo (2010, 222) points out that diasporic populations are responsive to changing material and social contexts. She further argues that religious festivals, such as Santo Niño, in New Zealand can transform a new space into a diasporic home. The presence of the Holy Image (the infant Jesus) in the festival demonstrates an attachment to the sacred and to the holy image's crucial role in the transformation of a foreign place into a meaningful one, namely a new home (Tondo 2010, 239–240). Likewise, the celebration of Santo Niño by the HFCC demonstrates Filipino Catholicism and contributes to the transformation of Hye-hwa-dong into Filipino territory.

Further, this transformation of a locality demonstrates a pathway to multiculturalism by Korean society. Korean culture and society has been homogeneous for a long time. However, with the notion of a single culture, it is difficult to give an account of locality because it is continuously reclaimed in the contemporary world of globalization. Furthermore, it can-

not provide the creative tensions of an intercultural dialogue, enhance imagination, and generate moral and intellectual sympathy. However, a multicultural society is likely to achieve a better balance of the qualities that are desirable in a good society (Parekh 2000, 171). The transformation of locality activated by the HFCC may contribute to Korean society, which is becoming a multicultural society and taking on new features and characteristics in the era of globalization.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to discern how religion functions in the life of migrants in the contemporary globalizing world. This case study of the HFCC shows that religion is not secularized, but remains important and has its own significant functions in the life of migrants. Specifically, the HFCC as a migrant religious community can be characterized by three aspects: belief, practices (rituals and other activities), and community. Members of the HFCC say that their faith has grown stronger than it had been in their homeland. They express the belief that God sent them to Korea and helps their life in Korea. The Filipino migrants I examined have various activities to help them practice Filipino Catholicism in Korea, such as Sunday Mass, prayer meetings, and religious festivals. The members not only regard the HFCC as a Catholic community, but a spiritual family. The HFCC also functions as a network to generate their social and religious capital. Cooperative organizations and institutions such as FEWA, KASAMMAKO, the Sunday Filipino Market, Raphael Medical Clinique, banks open on Sundays, and the Seoul Archdiocese, provide social services and practical conveniences for Filipinos living in Korea. By joining the HFCC, Filipinos can satisfy their spiritual and practical needs. In the HFCC, Filipinos can practice their religious cultural identity in order to reaffiliate themselves with Filipino society in Korea. Furthermore, it seems as though Hyehwa-dong, known as the Korean SoHo, is reterritorialized by Filipinos on Sundays. This momentary reterritorialization can be conceived as a change of geography by religion because it is executed by Filipino Catholic migrants.

Thus, in the case of the HFCC, Filipino migrants are not only contextualized into new circumstances, but also transform a Korean geographical locale into Filipino territory by means of reaffiliation and reterritorialization. This transformation of locality contributes to the change of Korean society into a multicultural one.

REFERENCES

- Berger, Peter. 1969. *The Social Reality of Religion*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Castillo, Gelia T. 1979. *Beyond Manila: Philippine Rural Problems in Perspective*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Connor, Philip. 2014. *Immigrant Faith: Patterns of Immigrant Religion in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Cook, David. 2002. "Forty Years of Religion across Borders: Twilight of a Transnational Field?" In *Religion across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks*, edited by Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, 51–74. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Cornelio, Jayeel Serano. 2016. *Being Catholic in the Contemporary Philippines: Young People Reinterpreting Religion*. London: Routledge.
- Hagan, Jacqueline Maria. 2002. "Religion and the Process of Migration: A Case Study of Maya Transnational Community." In *Religion across Borders: Transnational Immigrants Networks*, edited by Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, 75–92. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Heelas, Paul, and Linda Woodhead. 2005. *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 2007. "Religion and a Standpoint Theory of Immigrant Social Justice." In *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*, edited by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, 3–15. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette, Genelle Gaudinez, and Hector Lara. 2007. "Religious Reenactment on the Line: A Genealogy of Political Religious Hybridity." In

- Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*, edited by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, 122–140. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Iannaccone, Laurence R. 1994. “Why Strict Churches Are Strong.” *American Journal of Sociology* 99.5: 1180–1211.
- Julia, Norlan. 2016. “Strengthening Filipino Migrants’ Faith through Popular Religiosity.” *Mission Studies* 33.3: 352–375.
- Knott, Kim. 1998. “Issues in the Study of Religions and Locality.” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 10.3: 279–301.
- Milani, Olmes. 2014. “Transnational Believers: Understanding the Religious Experience of Peruvian Immigrants Japan.” In *Transnational Faiths: Latin-American Immigrants and Their Religions in Japan*, edited by Hugo Córdova Quesro and Rafael Shoji, 129–152. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Nititham, Diane Sabenacio. 2011. “Migration as Cultural Capital: The Ongoing Dependence on Overseas Filipino Workers.” *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies* 48.2: 185–201.
- Parekh, Bhikhu. 2000. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. London: Macmillan Press.
- San Juan, Epifanio, Jr. 2009. “Overseas Filipino Workers: The Making of an Asian-Pacific Diaspora.” *Global South* 3.2: 99–129.
- Stark, Rodney, and Roger Finke. 2000. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Statistics Korea. 2016. *2015 ingu jutaek chungjosa bogoseo* (2015 Population and Housing Census Report). Daejeon: Statistics Korea.
- Sullivan, Kathleen. 2000. “St. Catherine’s Catholic Church: One Church, Parallel Congregations.” In *Religion and The New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*, edited by Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, 210–233. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Tomlinson, John. 1999. *Globalization and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tondo, Josefina Socorro Flores. 2010. “Popular Religiosity and the Transnational Journey: Inscripting Filipino Identity in the Santo Niño Fiesta in New Zealand.” *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 11.3–4: 219–244.
- Vogel, Erica. 2014. “Predestined Migrations: Undocumented Peruvians in South Korean Churches.” *City and Society* 26.3: 331–351.
- Warner, R. Stephen. 1998. “Immigration and Religious Communities in the United States.” In *Gathering in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, edited by R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, 3–36. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

- Wiegele, Katharine L. 2005. *Investing in Miracles: El Shaddai and the Transformation of Popular Catholicism in Philippines*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Yamada, Masanobu. 2014. "Bestowing the Light of the Gospel in Japan': The Formation of an Ethnic Church in the *Dekassegui* Community." In *Transnational Faiths: Latin-American Immigrants and Their Religions in Japan*, edited by Hugo Córdova Quesro and Rafael Shoji, 53–74. Farnham: Ashgate.