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The Experience of Sponsored Filipino Seniors in Providing Support to
Immigrant Families in Canada: A Grounded Theory Inquiry

by

Ernie Z. Alama

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Abstract

Sponsored Filipino seniors are among the 11 million Filipinos dispersed in more than 190 countries. Along with other sponsored seniors, they are marked or stigmatized as potential ‘drainers’ of government funded health and social welfare funding. The purpose of this study was to learn about the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families in Canada. The stories of eleven male and female participants not only revealed the nature of support to their families but also their experiences in the context of the struggle for survival and settlement in a foreign land. Using constructivist grounded theory as a method of inquiry, the emerging categories led to an understanding that this sponsored group are among the Filipinos in diaspora, an overarching theoretical construct that best reflects their experience as Filipino seniors. As diaspora, they experienced the “pushing” and “pulling” realities embedded in the family demands that led to their sponsorship and emigration while coping with the demands of a newly constructed reality in the *hostland*. This exploratory examination of the stories of sponsored Filipino seniors tells us that they did not come to Canada to be supported by their adult children but to provide support to their families. As this study may be one of the few attempts to focus on the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada, it is hoped that the emerging constructs may inform policy makers and Canadian society about the complexity associated with sponsorship of seniors. The diasporic experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors contribute to emerging theories and conceptual discourse around diaspora, transnational identity, motherwork and subsistence, and productive aging. Most importantly, the findings invite opportunities for future research relating to transnational motherwork and subsistence of sponsored immigrant seniors as well as the diasporic experience of Filipinos.

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Dedication

I offer this work to all sponsored Filipino seniors, and to all Filipinos in diaspora, who are among the 'silent' builders of their homeland.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--|
| AINP | Alberta Immigration Nomination Program |
| CCSD | Canadian Council on Social Development |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CEC | Canadian Experience Class |
| CIC | Citizenship and Immigration Canada |
| DOLE | Department of Labour and Employment |
| EVAT | Expanded Value Added Tax |
| NOC | National Classification of Occupations |
| OCW | Overseas Contract Workers |
| OFW | Overseas Filipino Workers |
| PNP | Provincial Nomination Program |
| UN | United Nations |
| VFA | Visiting Forces Agreement |

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Airports in the Philippines are always crowded with well-wishers to such extent that at Manila International Airport only passengers are allowed to enter the terminal. Employees prefer to incur the ire of their boss rather than miss going to the airport to say good-bye to a relative who is leaving the country to work abroad. It is recognition of the sacrifice, a cementing of the relationship, a giving of face, and a tacit way of saying, "when I am in need, I may call on you.

-- Graham Colin-Jones and Yvonne

Colin-Jones (2004)

In 2017, one Canadian in five may be a visible minority (Bélanger & Malenfant, 2005). The Filipinos are among the largest cohort of ethnic immigrants in Canada. Lindsay (2001) reported that Filipino-Canadians were the third largest non-European ethnic group in the country. In 2001, nearly 328,000 Canadian residents came from Filipino background; about 50% of them settled in Ontario, 21 % in British Columbia, and 11% in Alberta. Seniors, age 65 and above, comprised 6% of the Filipino communities in Canada. Many Filipino seniors came through the family sponsorship program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Citizenship and Immigration Canada allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents who are above 18 years of age to sponsor their parents, grandparents, adopted children and other relatives to Canada through under the Family Class Program (CIC, 2009a and 2009b). The sponsored and the sponsor must sign a *Sponsorship Agreement* that outlines the obligations of each other. The latter must promise to support the basic daily living requirements of the sponsored relative for a period extending from three to ten years (CIC, 2009b). Sponsored parents or relatives are not eligible for government financial assistance when they reach Canada. Under the Family Class program, sponsors must provide the basic living requirements of their sponsored elderly parents or grandparents for ten years following the day on which they become permanent residents (CIC, 2009c).

Canada has seen an increase of sponsored Filipino seniors each year. According to Lindsay (2001), Filipino seniors usually stay with their children or their families upon reaching Canada. Lindsay found that only 7% of them live alone, compared to the 29% of all seniors in the country who do so. This information is unsurprising, as Filipinos are accustomed to living in extended households. Such a large inflow of sponsored Filipino seniors to Canada therefore offers this study both significance and the timeliness.

At this point, it is important to define the term *seniors*, because an age-based definition is rather problematic. Defining seniors as age sixty-five and above has conceptual difficulties when juxtaposed with cultural nuances. In Filipino culture, seniors are elders in the family. In becoming a senior, one does not wait until age sixty-five. One is a senior when he or she becomes a grandparent or has grown-up children who are married. Physical characteristics like greying hair, wrinkles on the skin, change

of voice, stopped build, diminishing memory, and blurring vision are among other signs of old age. In this study, the term ‘senior’ is understood as a social construct, as its meaning in many cultures like the Filipino, is not restricted to age sixty-five and above.

The Background and Significance of the Study

Despite the increasing population of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada, the significance of their contributions to their immigrant families and Canadian society has remained unknown. While previous studies (Chen, 2001; Durst, 2005; Durst, Abu-Laban, MacLean, Ng, & Northcott, 2001; Hui, 1987) were ethnic-focused, they were not designed to accommodate the distinct experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors as an ethnic-specific group. Likewise, other research endeavours by, for example, Statistics Canada, were quantitative and had inherent limitations in understanding the immigration experience beyond the boundaries of numeric analysis. In general, research studies focusing on Filipino seniors in Canada are scanty and generic.

Many studies around immigrant seniors were either demographic in character, gender-based, health-related, or focused on issues of older persons in general. There was very little qualitative information about the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors. In other words, many studies did not address their individual contexts or experiences. The knowledge gap or limitations in this field thus left a vast area in which to explore their experiences in providing support to their families in Canada within the ten-year sponsorship period. Findings have yet to be added to the scarce literature on the experience of ethnic groups of immigrant seniors in Canada.

Furthermore, views towards sponsored visible minorities also informed the findings in this study. For example, previous studies with sponsored visible seniors indicated that they were active builders or contributors of Canadian society (Durst et al., 2001; Durst, 2005; Hui, 1987; Leung & McDonald, 2007). Emergent concepts of survival and settlement support of sponsored Filipino seniors to their immigrant families in Canada further confirm the view that immigrant seniors are co-builders of society. On the contrary, others argue that accepting non-skilled and potentially welfare-dependent older persons amidst a technology-dependent and capital-oriented state could hurt the economy and the social welfare of the state (Francis, 2002; Simons, 1999). The multi-dimensionality of participants' motherwork support, however, countered the negative constructs towards sponsored seniors.

This research project is both timely and beneficial, not only to Canadians but to Filipinos. Firstly, findings of the study challenge the assumption that the influx of immigrant seniors could drain Canada's social welfare resources. As cited earlier, previous studies suggested that visible minority seniors were active contributors to society; hence, this study further investigates their contributions using the lens of sponsored Filipino seniors. Secondly, it could inform Canadians about the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors. Although this study does not claim universal representation, the experiences of the participants mirrored some of the life of sponsored Filipino seniors. Thirdly, the study offers insights about the plight of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada in the light of the participants' experiences. It also contributes to informing families who plan to sponsor their parents or relatives, about its potential impact. Lastly,

it could offer some views as possible policy considerations towards the ‘prescribed’ ten-year period before a sponsored senior becomes eligible for social welfare support.

In conducting the study, I expected that by focusing on experience as the basis for discussion, it would provide an opportunity for participants to talk about their stories as sponsored Filipino seniors. However, as the study included a group process, it also offered a forum where they shared their stories, gained insights from each other’s experiences, developed friendships, or provided support to other participants. I considered this study, an opportunity to investigate and report upon, the context of sponsored Filipino seniors and the emergent concepts of their experiences. It is my hope that the study’s findings will contribute to research endeavours around the conceptual domains of diaspora, motherwork and subsistence in transnational setting, as well as researcher in labour and productive aging.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families in Canada during the 10-year sponsorship period as a way of understanding their situation and their contributions to Canadian society. This study uses the constructivist approach of grounded theory to explore concepts of the phenomenon emerging from the investigation. The openness of the constructionist approach to multiple realities allows a deeper engagement with the subjective experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their families in Canada. With little known on the topic of interest, the use of this method of inquiry suits the exploratory and qualitative nature of this research.

The Research Question

To explore the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their families, this study asks the question: How do sponsored Filipino seniors describe their experience of providing support to their families in Canada within the sponsorship period of 10 years? The question is based on the assumption that they came to Canada not to be supported but to provide support to their families and kin, as opposed to the construct that they came as a potential ‘drain’ on Canada’s welfare resources. Moreover, there is a link between the relevance of the sponsorship period of ten years to the assumption that sponsored Filipino seniors are dependent on support from their sponsors. CIC’s sponsorship policy requires sponsors to provide life’s necessities to their sponsored parents or elderly relatives. Among others, the knowledge gaps that the question had explored were around pushing and pulling realities influencing decisions and actions of sponsored Filipino seniors, the challenges of survival and settlement as diasporas, and the multi-dimensional motherwork and subsistence support.

Using the main question as my starting point, I prepared some open-ended questions to stimulate the participants’ conversation regarding their experiences. In constructivist grounded theory, it is acceptable to formulate such questions in order to gain access to the participants’ experience. A researcher may develop a “loosely guided exploration of semi-structured focused questions” (Charmaz, 2006, p.26). During the interview process, I spontaneously asked questions to clarify and/or pursue details or categories of participants’ experiences. In other words, having the prepared questions guided me as a student in theory construction but did not deter me from pursuing or clarifying concepts. I also pursued localization of questions. According to Charmaz,

localization as a spatial concept is a 'point of departure' to form interview questions and not pre-determined categories enforced on data. It was necessary in the study as it provided contexts of the participants' experiences in the *hostland* and in the homeland.

I intended to make the interview intensive yet conversational in order to impress on the participants that I was interested in knowing their experience. I was aware that during the interview my gender, academic background, posture, or gestures might have affected the relationship. Nonetheless, having building trust in the relationship enabled me to sustain engagement with the participants. Furthermore, the research question was close to my heart, as a Filipino, and a person living in dispersion.

Methodological Lens

Philosophical questions regarding reality and knowledge date back to the time of Thales of Miletus. Even now, any researcher asks the same ontological and epistemological question. My study was informed by a constructivist paradigm that sees reality as a construction where knowledge is made possible through subjective interactions in the light of one's experience (Charmaz, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2005; Schwandt, 2000;). As Schwandt clearly said, 'we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth (2000, p. 197). In Filmer, Jenks, Seale, and Walsh (1999), social construction of reality, as Berger and Luckmann defined, is 'the undifferentiated experiences of people construct the phenomena of the world' (p. 31). Similarly, Creswell explained that individuals develop subjective meaning of their lives and their work; "the goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation" (1998, p.20). Reality therefore is a construction of the subjective

experience and multiple individual realities (Creswell, 1998; Mills, Bonner, & Francis 2006). While competing philosophies and paradigms shun on of constructivism, I chose this view as it brought me closer to the experience of the individual participants.

In this study, I use a constructivist methodological lens. I took a different paradigmatic route from classical grounded theory and attempted to follow the method of Kathy Charmaz, a former student of Glaser and Strauss and now a leading proponent of constructivist grounded theory. According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory can complement other approaches to qualitative research because it is not a stand-alone method. Glaser and Strauss (1967) offered flexibility in the use of grounded theory, as did the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990). In the classic work of Glaser and Strauss, the researcher is separate or external from the theory that emerges from the data. In contrast, Charmaz took a position that was philosophically and methodologically different from her predecessors. She said:

I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices (p. 10).

Much as I exerted efforts to be faithful to what was emerging from the data, the naming of categories are my own understanding and interpretation of the participants' statements. Therefore, I co-construct the categories of what I assumed to be the constructed realities of each participant. Interestingly, the classic grounded theorist Anselm Strauss advised that one could never be completely free from bias, which seemed like a gesture of openness to the language of constructivists and post-positivists (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While Strauss and Corbin wanted to maintain objectivity, it appeared

that they also recognized the bias of the researcher in relation to the data (Mills et al., 2006).

The experience of sponsored Filipino seniors has been constructed from the specificity of their realities prior to coming to Canada and the newly constructed realities in their daily encounter with their sponsors and culture in the *hostland*. In this study, each parent responds to different situations and each creates a reality based on one's individual condition. As evident in the stories of participants, each had distinct contexts that pushed or pulled them to immigrate to Canada. While there may be commonality of experiences, the participants had specific constructs that influenced their decisions and response to situations.

Passion and Advocacy for Seniors

I love my grandparents. My passion for seniors stemmed from the same love that I have for my grandparents. At an early age, I was in their care. More than anything else, I felt their love and have pleasant memories of them. At age of fifteen, I left my grandparents in pursuit of a dream – a decision that left a mark of sadness in my soul for not being there when they needed me most. My grandparents passed away when I was eighteen.

Over the years, I became passionate in working for seniors and advocated for their dignity as parents, as seniors, and as persons. At a personal level, I have made sure that my children have established a connection with their grandparents in the Philippines. At the community level, I gave special attention to help senior individuals and groups over the past twenty years, while working in non-profit and community development organizations. While doing my Master in Community Management in Australia, I was an

individual advocate for immigrant seniors with disabilities and worked with a national agency that also provided service to immigrants with disabilities from non-English background. When I came to Canada, I volunteered in a non-profit society working for immigrant families. In addition, as a community development worker in six communities in the Northeast quadrant of Calgary, I worked in partnership with a volunteer group providing services to seniors. With work experience in immigration law, I also help individual seniors with concerns pertaining to their immigration status. This study is therefore a furtherance of my passion and advocacy work for seniors, particularly the Filipino seniors who need help.

While working with immigrant persons with disability and older persons, I had witnessed some manifestations of social stigma, family problems, joblessness, and financial difficulties among immigrant seniors living in diaspora. However, I never had the chance to pursue research questions and analyze evidence of their experiences using a research method. The conduct of this research project therefore is an opportune time to pursue a research interest that I have longed to do.

Introducing the Participants

The study had eleven participants from Calgary, nine of whom lived with their sponsors. Below, I have briefly introduced each of them to provide the context for their stories. Their stories revealed multi-dimensional aspects of their constructed realities in providing support to their families in Canada and in the Philippines.

Fely

I met Fely in a church. She was a widow. After her husband died, she never remarried. She raised her two children alone. Fely ran her little dress shop and other

micro-livelihood endeavours. Despite her economic challenges, she managed to raise her children and sent them on to higher education. Her son graduated as a physician but later immigrated to Canada.

Fely was living in isolation in the Philippines. Her daughter sought work in Manila and left her alone in her province. Six years ago, Fely and her daughter were sponsored later by her son.

While in Canada, she provided care and housework for her son's family. A couple of years later, realizing that her family no longer needed her support, she decided to live with her daughter separately. This coincided with her son and his family's move to a new house, which was far from her work. Fely and her daughter lived together. She supported her daughter's family for over a year.

Through the years, Fely supported herself. When she came to Canada, she immediately worked for a cleaning agency. However, she assumed a second-generation family support role by offering financial help to her grandson to buy a house. Today, she co-owns the house where she and her grandson's family live together. Fely still has a vision of returning to her homeland; however, she feels happier now with her children and grandchildren in Canada.

Del

Impoverished life pushed Del to come to Canada. She had five children who survived through the meagre income from her mobile store of assorted goods. Del wanted to alleviate the living conditions of her family. Going abroad as an overseas contract worker (OCW) seemed a remote possibility, as she had five children to care for. Her husband did not want to go back to being an OCW, but poverty ruled it out as an option.

One day, Del woke up with a fulfilled desire for a 'better' life. One of her daughters married a Canadian and later migrated to Canada. It sparked the beginning of the exodus of her family to the 'promised land.' A couple of years later, Del, her husband, and youngest child arrived in Canada. The daughter who was married to a Canadian sponsored them. A year ago, her other daughter and daughter in-law also immigrated to Canada to work.

The expectation of a job in Canada came to fruition. Del immediately found a housekeeping job in a hotel. She was delighted to earn some amount for subsistence support and education for her children and kin in the Philippines. Part of her income supported the daily living of her sponsor. Although there was not much left for her, she experienced a sense of accomplishment for having supported her children.

Del had regrets, however, of not being able to be with her family each day. The demands of the job pushed her to reside in workers' accommodation at the job site, which limited her access to her family. She feared quitting her job, as there may not have been another. Above all, she did not want to risk her subsistence support to her children in the Philippines and in Canada.

Joshua

Like Del, Joshua had a small retail store. She worked eighteen hours each day, in the hope of meeting the cost of living and educating her children. Joshua heard about job opportunities in Canada; however, she was skeptical about whether there was some work for people of her age. Several times, she refused the offer of sponsorship from her daughter in Canada. She was afraid of not finding a job as she would find it unbearable to see her children suffer without her financial support. Joshua only agreed to leave the

Philippines when her daughter made some job arrangements in Canada, which assured her ability to sustain economic support for her children.

Living in Canada was not convenient for Joshua. She had very little time to rest. She engaged in triple cleaning jobs to meet the high cost of living and the demands of subsistence support for her families. Her day began early in the morning and ended at midnight, seven days a week. Nonetheless, at age 69, she persisted in her commitment to provide support to her children 'forever' or as long as she was able.

Part of Joshua's understanding of a home was her ability to provide support. Joshua dreamt of her homeland. However, there was no longer a 'home' to return to. Her store was gone. Returning home meant unemployment and starting all over again. With her husband in Canada and several Filipino friends, she felt some sense of home. Although Joshua's sponsor (her daughter) moved to the US and left her in Canada, she learned to accept being alone with her husband. Telecommunication, nonetheless, enabled her to connect with her kin and thus made her feel closer to them.

Gloria

For several years, Gloria did not have experience in paid job. She was a fulltime spouse and a mother of seven children. Although the income of her husband was barely enough for the family, Gloria was proud to say she taught her children how to love God and care for each other. Life began to change when the eldest daughter of the family migrated to Canada to work as a caregiver. The household income was augmented. Her daughter began sending some amount to help defray the cost of living and the education of siblings. Gloria's second daughter also became an OCW in Japan and later helped to support the family.

Gloria did not want to live in Canada despite the persistent offer of sponsorship. At first, her daughter invited her to come to Canada as a visitor. Gloria was pleased to come for a reunion with her daughter's family. During her visit, she looked after her grandchildren and helped with the household chores. The help that she provided enabled her children to look for a second job and/or engage in other activities. Later on, her family sponsored her. It took awhile before she agreed to the plan.

While in the Philippines, Gloria did not have a paid job experience. Having one seemed the last thing in her mind. However, her perception changed when she found a job with a retail company in Calgary. She was pleased to earn some money, which she used to support her children and kin in the Philippines. She took care of her job and adjusted well to her work environment.

Gloria missed her neighbourhood and her network of friends in the Philippines. However, she did not want to return home yet. She needed her job to provide subsistence support to her family. She promised to return to the Philippines only when she could no longer work or when the work was over.

Lorna

Lorna was a retired government employee. Her husband had abandoned her and her two children. She raised her children amidst hardships and leaned on God for help. Her eldest daughter was a recipient of a scholarship that paved the way to completion of a degree and success. Hoping to alleviate her family's impoverished condition, her daughter ventured to work in Canada to provide support to them.

Lorna dreamed of going to Canada too, but her obligation to support her other daughter was her priority. She continued working in a government agency and received

financial support from her eldest daughter. When her daughter married a Canadian, it marked the beginning of new challenges for Lorna like the decision of resigning from her job and leaving behind her other daughter and grandchildren in the Philippines.

The persistent request of her daughter in Canada for caregiving support ultimately convinced Lorna to immigrate. One of Lorna's grandchildren had a physical and cognitive disability and needed her support. Overwhelmed with pity and love for her grandson, she opted for an early retirement and decided to come to Canada.

Immigrating to Canada did not mean an easy life. Lorna did not have the chance of employment because her grandchildren needed her care and support. She was worried about sustaining the economic support to her family back home. However, her daughter offered her a monthly amount, in gratitude for her care and sacrifice. Lorna used the money to support her family in the Philippines.

Living as an impoverished person in the homeland was not a desirable condition. Lorna admired Filipino values and tradition. She would have preferred to be in the Philippines, if only she could have had a more secure life there. For now, life is better in Canada than in the Philippines.

Bea

Bea was a fulfilled spouse and mother of two children. Like Gloria, she was a fulltime mother and depended on her spouse's support. However, her life changed upon the death of her husband. Being alone, she had to find ways to raise her two children. With the little savings that her husband left, she used it to open a small fast-food restaurant, which later became the main source of income to support the needs and education of her children.

While Bea had not fully recovered from mourning her husband's death, her daughter passed away. Her life became miserable. In an informal conversation with Bea, I gathered the feeling that the event had struck her deeply, as the sighs over the passing of her husband and daughter continued. Her surviving son and grandchildren meant the whole world to her. Bea's life would have been empty without the presence and support of her family.

Bea did not feel good when her son decided to immigrate to Canada. However, she overcame the feelings of isolation and loneliness when her son sponsored her. She welcomed the idea enthusiastically. While in Canada, Bea spent all her time supporting her family. She helped with the household chores, provided care to her grandchildren, and performed other domestic tasks to help ease the life of her family. She opted to spend time with her loved ones, other than finding a job.

Although Bea lived with her family, she continued dreaming of her past home. Several times, she attempted to go back to the Philippines, but the 'home' that she longed for was not there. The old house still stood but life was gone and only nostalgia and shadows of the past remained. She realized that life would never be the same. Bea decided to stay in Canada with her family.

Rosa

Rosa was a fulltime mother to her five children. Her husband wanted her to stay home and care for the family. While she did not seek employment, she was fully engaged in the daily round of care and housework. When the children were grown up and married, Rosa still performed similar tasks. However, the domestic tasks were not

limited to the confines of her home but extended to the households of her married children.

A year ago, Rosa came to Canada as a sponsored parent. Her daughter found it difficult to balance the demands of work and family, so Rosa came to her rescue. At the same time, Rosa also felt the need to go back to the Philippines, as her other children and grandchildren needed her there.

Rosa considered it a Filipino tradition to provide support to one's children, regardless of marital status. Having accepted the practice as a social expectation and a tradition, she continued the same practice even in Canada. Whether she was in the Philippines or in Canada, she performed the same tasks of providing care to grandchildren and performing chores while her daughter and son-in-law were at work. Hence, when asked to compare her life in the Philippines and life in Canada, Rosa did not see any difference at all.

Poly

In providing support and care to his family, Poly was extraordinary in many respects. While in the Philippines, he had been a babysitter, cook, housekeeper, repairperson, and an auto-repair mechanic. He used to be an OCW in Germany, where he saved some money for his family. When he returned home, he engaged in business, which proved unsuccessful. He considered his sponsorship to Canada as another economic breakthrough in his life.

Poly's eldest daughter sponsored both him and his wife to come to Canada. Within a couple of months after arrival, Poly found a job in a warehouse company. He

had immigrated with the hope of alleviating the living condition of his children and relatives, as he had five children to support, four of whom were students.

In Canada, while he performed the same tasks or roles for his family, he assumed more obligations. He contributed towards payments for house and car mortgages, bought food for the entire family, babysat the children, prepared his granddaughter's lunch and drove her to and from school. He also cleaned the house, cooked, and so on. Moreover, Poly also allocated some of his income to support his kin in the Philippines each month. He treated his children equitably. Those who had more needs got more support than those who had less.

Poly dreamt of going back to the Philippines. Nonetheless, it remained a wishful thought, as he already had his Canadian citizenship. He liked the Philippines the way it was. Unfortunately, during his latest visit, he no longer found the home that he used to know and had imagined. His children and some of his friends were no longer in his hometown. Poly now considered Canada his new home.

Francis

Francis ran a small bakery and a small family farm in the Philippines. Like the other participants, his household income was barely enough to support the entire family of seven. Nonetheless, he was able to send his children to school. All completed their university degrees.

Three years ago, Francis and his wife came to Canada with the hope for a better life. Their daughter sponsored them. Eventually, they sold their bakery and left their farm to the care of their children. Francis immediately found a job that matched his work

experience. He got a job in a bread factory in Calgary. A couple of months later, his wife found work for a cleaning agency.

Francis earned more from his regular job than in his previous one. With better ability to continue supporting his family back home, he and his wife put their resources together to sustain the economic need of their family and to educate their grandchildren in the Philippines. Francis also ensured that he shared some of his income with his family in Canada. He bought a new vehicle for his daughter that enabled her to access job opportunities and augment the income of her family. As Francis and his wife lived with their daughter, they shared in the cost of living expenses. He and his wife also took care of their grandchildren.

Francis and his wife decided to live on their own, as their son-in-law needed room for his sponsored parents. Going back to the Philippines was no longer an option. They liked the Philippines but they had found peace, security, and a better life in Canada. Interestingly, Francis also liked the cold weather.

Romeo

Romeo was part of a ship's crew in the Philippines for several years. He spent most of his time working for the family but left the caring and housework to his wife and children. He retired at age sixty-five and was dependent on his monthly retirement pension. Going to Canada was the last thing he expected to happen. However, one of his daughters, who came to Canada as caregiver, sponsored him later.

Caring for children and working at the same time is a challenge for new immigrant families, so Romeo's daughter sought help from her parents. She decided to sponsor Romeo, her mother, and youngest brother. While in Canada, Romeo had not

expected to be alone with his grandchildren during the day. However, his wife and youngest son both found jobs and left the task of babysitting and housework to him. Although housework and babysitting was an 'unfamiliar' task, Romeo gradually adjusted to the new demands of his life. When asked about his plans, he decided to support his daughter and grandchildren instead of finding of a job, as he would not be comfortable in a Canadian workplace due to language concerns.

Romeo and his wife continued providing support to his children in the Philippines. He left his monthly pension to his children who needed it for subsistence. Although he had been in Canada for a year, he already had decided that he might retire in the Philippines.

Eddie

Back in the Philippines, Eddie was an engineer. He worked in an oil and energy company where he had a substantial income to support his family. Like Romeo, he wanted his wife to be a fulltime spouse and mother of five children. With a considerable income, his wife did not have to worry about subsistence support, as there was enough for everyone's needs in the family.

A few years ago, Eddie retired from his job. Although he received a separation lump sum and a monthly retirement pension from the company, he did not want to live an unemployed life in the Philippines. As he was used to living a very active life, he sought employment. However, he was unsuccessful in finding a job. At the time of his retirement, his daughter was already an immigrant in Canada. With preconceptions of abundant job opportunities and a better life in Canada, Eddie agreed to his daughter's sponsorship plan. Over a year ago, Eddie and his wife came to Canada and lived with

their daughter. While Eddie did not find a job equal to his qualifications, he persisted and found a job in a meat processing plant in Calgary. He wanted to return to his engineering job but it entailed working in Fort McMurray, which would have meant separation from his family. His daughter and family needed his support and he saw the value of it. During his off-hours or days, he helped his wife in providing care to the children and doing housework.

Eddie appreciated the offer of financial support from his daughter; however, he chose to support himself and his wife in the meantime. Although he was content to work and remain in Canada, he was open to going back to the Philippines when he decides to retire.

Overview of the Chapters

This study has six chapters and contains appendices. In this introductory chapter, I have described the study's background, significance and purpose, the research question, and the methodological lens chosen to establish the intent, direction, and framework of the research.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of my methodological position and encounter with the constructivist Grounded Theory. It highlights the different views on Grounded Theory held by Glaser, Strauss and Corbin, and Charmaz. I chose to use the constructivist Grounded theory of Charmaz, as it was closer to how I came to know the world. Furthermore, I have included details about the selection and background of the participants, as well as data gathering procedures, transcript, and data analysis using the *Atlas-ti*, diagrams or mind-map, conceptualizations using *inspiration*, and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on topics surrounding Filipino identity and values, dispersion of Filipinos from their homeland, context of seniors in Canada, views affecting labour (including motherwork and subsistence), and sponsorship policy. These were concepts that emerged from the interview data. From the review, I have developed a theoretical framework, not as a deductive approach to data but as an inductive way of inter-relating theories involved in the research question. This also helps establish some conceptual relationships between the categories. This chapter was written towards the last stage of research and represents an attempt to remain faithful to the categories emerging during the data analysis. I then used the emergent concepts as the bases for my review.

Chapter 4 discusses the research findings in terms of the categories that emerged from the data. Those included the pushing and pulling realities, an understanding the bases of their support through identity and values, the challenges in daily living as sponsored Filipino seniors, a re-examination of their roles and expectations, and finding meaning in personal and material support, and an a reflection of their overall experience in Canada. The chapter discusses in detail the content of these emergent categories, using quotes to support them.

Chapter 5 develops a theoretical integration to link Chapters 3 and 4. I discuss about diaspora as the overarching concept that encapsulates the experiences of the participants in providing support to their immigrant families. As such, this provision of support is diasporic in nature. The chapter further considers the push and pull of family demands in the homeland prior to sponsorship, and the newly constructed reality of the participants while living as diasporas in Canada. In their new constructed reality, the participants faced issues around transnational family demands, transnational identity and

tradition, coping as diasporas, the transforming and renewing of roles, and deciding to remain in Canada or to return to the homeland.

Chapter 6 discusses the emerging theoretical propositions. The propositions are not conclusions but theoretical explorations for future study. The chapter also takes into account the implications of the study using theoretical concepts such as migration and diaspora, motherwork and subsistence, and labour and productive aging. I also discuss the implications for immigrant seniors, sponsorship policy, and directions for future study. Moreover, in Chapter 7, I briefly discuss the limitations of this study and my concluding thoughts.

In the appendices, I have enclosed a table of participants' profile. The profile is a simple demographic presentation of the participants' age, gender, ethnic origin, language, number of years in Canada, kinship, and profession or work experience in the homeland. The other documents in the appendices include the interview guide questions, the invitation to participate, a withdrawal of participation form, and a participant's consent form.

CHAPTER TWO: A METHODOLOGICAL ENCOUNTER

A Filipino is a citizen with a Spanish full name, an American nickname (Victoria a.k.a. Vicky, Nicanor a.k.a. Nick), an oriental face, and a Jewish God represented by an old Polish bishop living in the sovereign state called Vatican City, somewhere in Italy.

-- Ted Reyes (2005)

This study began with a passion. Since I came to Canada in 2003, I had been working with immigrant families either as a volunteer or as an employee. Exploring theory and policy concerns around the questions of immigrant settlement, identity, and struggle for recognition, drove my passion and advocacy. While the research area on issues affecting immigrants in this country was huge, it was a challenge to find a topic and a researchable question to start with. However, during my volunteer work with a service agency in Calgary, I met several Filipino seniors at social events. Some of them were sponsored older parents. I learned that, although they were immigrants, they did not receive old age support from the Canadian government. Many of them were also having difficulty in finding jobs. While most of those I met provided help to their immigrant families, they too needed some care and medical assistance. I inquired further about the situation of sponsored Filipino seniors and discovered information around the increasing

number of Filipino parents and grandparents migrating to Canada. I also learned through the CIC website that immigration policy requires sponsors to support their sponsored elderly parents for ten years.

A spark of interest in the condition of sponsored Filipino seniors eventually led me to explore their experience of providing support to their immigrant families in Canada. I decided to use a grounded theory approach. I thought that I had something to start with. There was relevance and timeliness, as the migration of sponsored Filipino seniors to Canada was increasing greatly. I further assumed that there would be richness in their stories of providing support to their families. Moreover, I was interested in the policy around the prescribed ten-year period of no government support. I did a bibliographic search on sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada. It yielded a few works by Aranas (1983), Chen (1998), and some statistical reports from CIC and Statistics Canada. With very little literature on the subject of interest and the many unexplored concepts around the life and experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada, I decided to pursue the research question: How do sponsored Filipino seniors describe their experience of providing support to their immigrant families in Canada within the sponsorship period of ten years?

The period of ten years was an important part of the research question, as already cited in Chapter 1. On the one hand, it is the period when sponsors should be providing the basic life requirements of their sponsored Filipino seniors. On the other hand, the ten-year period is also the time of adjustment, the start of their support to their immigrant families, the period of exclusion from government support, and the critical stage of settling in Canada or making decision to return home. Hence, asking sponsored Filipino

seniors about how to describe their experience of providing support to their immigrant families within the first ten years in Canada established the scope of the study and defined its focus of interest. It was my hope that the inquiry would lead to a deeper understanding of the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors within the crucial period of adjustment and settlement.

This Chapter is entitled *Methodological Encounter* in order to emphasize that the research process was a learning experience. I did not have much attraction to grounded theory at first. I thought it was an empirical-positivist paradigm cloaked in the qualitative method. However, when I started reading the work of Glaser and Strauss and Corbin, their approaches to grounded theory made sense to me. At first, I identified with Strauss and Corbin as the former had a background in pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. I attempted to use their approach but it did not allow me to be involved in theory construction as a researcher and as a Filipino. I wanted to make use of my tacit knowledge of the context of Filipinos, not just as extant information, but also as material to construct and interpret the meaning of emerging concepts. Reading further works of other modern-day grounded theorists, I stumbled on Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory.

In my view, meanings and interpretations evolve through social interaction and in relationship to their socio-historical milieu; however, iterative constructed interpretations evolve from actions and interactions based on every previous interpretation in context. In like manner, I assumed that acts of support of sponsored Filipino seniors are social constructions based on interpretations of the realities besetting them and their families in

Canada and in the Philippines. Using a constructivist approach to Grounded Theory, I was able to build theory from interpretive acts of support of sponsored Filipino seniors.

Meeting the participants was also an encounter and a challenging one. Arranging appointments took time. Most participants were unavailable because of work demands. Others refused to participate for fear of saying something against the Canadian government. Interviews did not start on time, because Filipino pleasantries and introductions were long but necessary to establish trust with the participants before proceeding with the interviews. However, I managed to obtain eleven participants, ten of whom participated in the theoretical sampling. After the first interview, I transcribed the data and then entered it in *Atlast.ti* software. I marked the data with emergent categories, which I used to fill in gaps or pursue questions or concepts in the subsequent interviews. I considered the process of *interviewing – transcribing – coding – reviewing (of categories) – interviewing* as a modified way of theoretical sampling as it was repeated from the 2nd to the 11th participant. After I had interviewed the 11th participant, I reviewed again the emergent categories and clustered them by ‘family’ and then conducted further theoretical sampling through second or more rounds of interviews and telephone conversations with five participants to compare or deepen understanding and interpretation of categories. I had meaningful encounters with all of them although it was a humbling experience to realize how little I knew about their situation.

In addition, using the *Atlast.ti* was in itself an encounter. The amount of data that I gathered became overwhelming. I knew about *Atlas.ti* through online search engines. I thought it could be a useful instrument in processing the data and providing convenience in labelling or coding. It could also be used for memoing, organizing, storing, and

retrieving data. However, befriending the software took months. I went through a process of trial and error, just to become used to the system. Getting lost in the *Atlas.ti* system was inevitable. At first, I had frequent emails to *Atlas.ti* technical support overseas. It was not an easy task to use unfamiliar computer software for data processing.

The research experience in writing the draft was a construction in itself. Going through a step-by-step process and moving back and forth every step of the way was necessary to build up the categories to a conceptual level that could lead to the findings of the study. The processes involved in initial coding, focused coding through family categories, memoing, theoretical sampling, diagramming, and integrating memos and categories were constructions that eventually led to the findings, implications, and theoretical propositions of this study. Moreover, translating the interview data to English was a challenge. I also exerted efforts to remain faithful to the data in order to construct theoretical interpretations accurately. Elevating categories to theoretical concepts was an excellent learning experience in terms of methodology.

In this chapter, I discuss four key areas of the encounter described above: the decision to use constructivist grounded theory, the methodological position of the study, experiencing the method, and engaging with the participants.

Deciding to use Constructivist Grounded Theory

I could have chosen from several methodological paths to conduct this study. However, I wanted a research method that I could combine inductively derived data and construct theory from the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to families. Having reviewed many research methods, I decided to use constructivist grounded theory, as it was closest to match to what I wanted to do.

I am aware of the differences that evolved between Glaser and Strauss in their use of grounded theory. Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser were the originators of the classical grounded theory. In contrast to logico-deductive theory from a *priori* assumptions, they developed grounded theory to generate theory from systematically obtained data using various processes such as coding, constant comparison, and theoretical sampling until saturation of the data occurs (Bloor, 2006; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kendall, 1999). Both established their names in the field of qualitative research, but later parted ways in their approach. Their dispute became more evident when both published separate works (Charmaz; see also Glaser, 1992; La Rossa, 2005; Melia, 1996). Strauss and Corbin published the first edition of their work on 'Basics of Qualitative Research' in 1990 and subsequent editions in 1998 and 2008 while Glaser published 'Basics on Grounded theory Analysis' in 1992. They also went off in separate directions that led to Glaser's theoretical sensitivity in 1978 and Strauss' Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientist in 1987 (La Rossa, 2005).

Charmaz (2000; 2006) suggested that in 1967, both Glaser and Strauss implied the externality of the observer or researcher from the subjective world and thus grounded theory had to follow the canons of objective reportage, suggesting a positivist approach towards grounded theory. Of the two originators of grounded theory, Glaser had stronger leanings to the positivist discipline than Strauss did. While the latter also had positivist leanings, he acknowledged the interpretivist view. Nonetheless, they were concerned about the relationships of concepts to make an integrated framework (Charmaz, 2006). Strauss and Corbin later claimed "a certain amount of openness and flexibility are necessary in order to be able to adapt the procedures to different phenomenon and

research situation” (1990, p.26). They further said in 1998 that “theorizing is the act of constructing... from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationships” (cited in Mills et al., 2006, p. 4). Corbin also acknowledged the unavoidability of a researcher’s interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin, 1998). It appeared that Strauss and Corbin later acknowledged theorizing as an act of constructing. They both claimed that theories were interpretations coming from given perspectives (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 2008), which signalled openness to interpretive and subjectivist treatment of grounded theory. This contrasts to Glaser’s position for he remained stuck in the data and shunned interpretive procedures.

I do not intend to dwell on the differences between the two originators of grounded theory, but I needed to acknowledge and understand their methodological divergence, which I consider as essential to understanding grounded theory. What is worth noting is that in grounded theory, the data is the foundation of theory and our analysis of it generates the concepts, which a constructivist grounded theory constructs. The use therefore of constructivist grounded theory suits the exploratory and qualitative nature of this study, considering the gap of knowledge and concepts around the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their families. This research may be one of the few studies to theorize the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada using a constructivist grounded theory.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

Although Charmaz (2006) agreed with Glaser’s pursuit of emergence and non-forcing of preconceived categories on data, she maintained that constructivist grounded theory is her vision for future qualitative research, something that takes the middle

ground between post-modernism and positivism (Charmaz, 2000). To affirm its Chicago school of antecedents, she rallied with other researchers like Clive Seale (retaining grounded theory), Antony Bryant (re-grounding grounded theory in an epistemology that takes into account recent methodological development), and Adele Clarke (integration of grounded theory with post-modern sensibilities) to bring grounded theory away from its positivist past to a new direction. Charmaz (2005) challenged the positivistic assumptions of Glaser, Strauss and Corbin, and viewed the givens of positivism as social construction to be questioned. She argued that no qualitative method rests on pure induction.

Although constructivist grounded theory uses the grounded theory guidelines, she argued that it does not adhere to the objectivist and positivist assumptions. She said:

A constructivist approach emphasizes the studied phenomenon rather than the methods of studying it. Constructivist grounded theorists take a reflexive stance on modes of knowing and representing studied life. That means giving close attention to empirical realities and our collected rendering of them – and locating oneself in these realities (Charmaz, 2005, p.509).

Charmaz (2000) positioned the researcher as a co-producer of the data by enriching it with a description of the situation, the interaction with participants, and the impact of the interview including the participant's perception of the experience during the interview. The results of study using constructivist grounded theory are therefore analytic interpretations of both the participants' world and the processes involved in creating that world. It means that "grounded theorists portray their understandings of research participants' actions and meanings, offer abstract interpretations of empirical relationships, and create conditional statements about the implications of their analysis" (Charmaz, 2005 p.508).

Using constructivism as the ontological and epistemological foundation of grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) argued that:

A constructivist approach places priority on phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data...Constructivist grounded theorists take a reflective stance toward the research process and products and consider how their theories evolve, which involves reflecting on my earlier point that both researchers and research participants interpret meanings and actions...(pp. 130 -131)

In other words, a constructivist grounded theorist considers data and analysis as constructions from the contexts and settings of the participants and from the personal, cultural, and historical experiences of the researcher (Charmaz, 2006). In the process, the constructivist approach in grounded theory enhances reflexivity about one's own interpretations as well as those of research participants. Like many other qualitative, creative and interpretive researches, interpretations are constructed, as there is no single interpretive truth (Charmaz; also see Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

In constructionist grounded theory, the researcher conducts theoretical multiple analyses of data drawn from the experiences of research participants and constructed by interaction with and observations of them. The researcher codes the data with qualitative labels and writes analytic notes or memos. One makes comparison of data and interprets them as analytic categories, conducts theoretical sampling when codes and ideas lead to subsequent data collection, and sorts and integrates memos. Emerging categories become more theoretical and refined as the process moves through successive levels of analysis and eventually abstraction is built from data (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theorists share terms or stages in doing analyses. Although they vary in approaches and techniques, they all speak about concepts, codes, memos, comparison, sampling, categories, and theory.

Qualitative research methods allow flexibility and permits one to pursue the leads that emerge; using a constructivist grounded theory method further increases flexibility and focus. In addition, it is through the combination of rigor, thoroughness, flexibility, and engaging nature of the constructivist approach to grounded theory that attracted me to use it as the method for this research.

Methodological Position of this Study

Charmaz's method is closer to my ontological notion of existence as a construction and to my epistemological view of knowledge as something acquired through one's subjective experience or encounter with other beings, events, or contexts. In this study, the encounter with the participants and their stories led to emerging concepts that provided knowledge and understanding of dispersion and diasporic experience of support to immigrant families. I therefore anchored my understanding and interpretation of the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in a constructivist paradigm and the interpretive tradition. I regarded the participants' data as social constructions developed from their respective experiences. I looked at patterns and connections in their experience of providing support to families rather than causality or linear reasoning. Furthermore, I viewed the realities of the participants as emergent, constructed, and multiple; hence, the construction of theories and prepositions came from my reflexive interpretations of those participants' realities.

According to Charmaz (2006) when theoretical concepts or categories emerge, they are like theoretical frames that provide an abstract understanding of relationships. Her work 'Good days, bad days: The self in chronic illness and time,' which she discussed in her book 'Constructing Grounded Theory' (2006), described how she engaged in

interpretive theorizing that pieced together tacit and implicit meanings of participant's statements and actions, such as, 'living one day at a time.' To understand further the category, she conducted theoretical sampling to find out how people acted on living one at a time. She was able to establish the relationships with major concepts such as time perspectives, time structures, and self in time. Categories were conceptual relationships of realities. In this study, I followed the same process by finding related concepts to categories that emerged in the study.

I have my own preconceptions about Filipino class, race, and identity and I have used them as my starting points in asking the question about the experience of a specific group of immigrants who were Filipino sponsored seniors. I exerted every effort to allow concepts and categories to emerge, asked questions about the categories, made comparisons between incidents and between categories and memos, pursued theoretical sampling, sorted and integrated memos, and diagrammed categories. All these processes build up to knowledge and theories about the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada during the sponsorship period of ten years. To illuminate the tacit meanings from the statements and actions of participants, I used my Filipino background and experience. Just as data were social constructions, the knowledge and theories that evolved from my reflexive interpretations of the categories and their relationships were likewise constructions of my experience with the participants.

Reflexivity and Subjectivity as a Filipino

Constructivist grounded theory is an interpretive approach in qualitative research that is open to reflexivity (Charmaz, 2005; Creswell, 2007). According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), reflexivity is a "conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and

respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself” (p.210). It is an internal conversation around “what it is and what it matters” (Archer, 2007, p.63). It means coming to terms with my own role as researcher and co-constructionist of concepts evolving from the data. My subjective experience, values, beliefs, tradition, feelings, and assumptions, political views, and so on were reflexive interpretation of the data into categories. I was an informed researcher, during my interaction with the participants. Being a Filipino, I was aware of the tacit meaning of Filipino values and beliefs or ideologies that emerged during the encounter. As mentioned earlier, a constructivist grounded theorist takes on a reflexive stance in knowing and representing the study (Charmaz, 2005).

My philosophical and methodological choice of using the constructivist grounded theory of Charmaz brought me closer to my encounter with sponsored Filipino seniors. I did not consider myself an external investigator. I was part of the study and the construction of grounded theory as informed by my own experience as a Filipino. In other words, I co-constructed with the participants to frame the emergent theoretical concepts from the naming of categories to writing the draft of the study. The leading inheritor of symbolic interactionism in the Chicago school, H.S. Becker advised that before engaging in research one should ask “which side are we on” (Filmer et al., 1999). I am on the side of sponsored Filipino seniors not only because of the basis of my experience but also my empathy for them, because they had to wrestle with diasporic experience of their immigrant families. It was a reflexive way of coming to terms with my own identity as Filipino, in relation with the research problem and the participants.

The question of who am I, in the study is a question of subjectivity. I was aware that my identity has been a construction of the many influences that I have acquired in life. Foremost, I was aware of my Filipino values and was deeply sensitive to the nonverbal cues of participants. My race and ethnicity made me feel a part of and not an external observer of the study. Similarly, I was aware that I co-construct the concepts through my values, beliefs, and the perspectives that influenced the naming of categories. As I brought the categories together, I tried to remain faithful to the emerging concepts and yet aware that my identity and worldview interfaced with my interpretation of these concepts.

Interacting with the participants was also a form of becoming. Their stories have increased my understanding of the complexity of their experiences. Coming to Canada was not just the simple submission of a sponsorship application and of living with their children. It was a complex web of realities around ethnicity, identities, values, tradition, economic condition, social expectations, isolation, aging, peace and security, dispersion, and diaspora. The stories of the participants wove into one identifiable reality of being in Canada as sponsored Filipino seniors and merged into the overarching theoretical category that they were foremost diasporas. The participants were a people dispersed from their homeland by various but interwoven realities; and that their experiences in providing support to families were part of their diasporic life in the *hostland*.

Guba and Lincoln (2005) advise that in a researcher's reflexive experience, we need to ask about "our interactions with respondents, in who we become to them in the process of becoming to ourselves" (p. 210). As a migrant in Canada, I realized that I am a diaspora, too. The reflexive view of my diasporic identity further led me to empathize

with them. When I heard them telling me about the challenges of survival and subsistence in the *hostland*, their stories resonated with me, as if they were mine. In the analysis and writing of the draft, I used my knowledge as a Filipino to enrich the discussion. In a sense, I was a collaborator in constructing theory. In constructivist grounded theory, the researcher and participants interact and thus the meaning of data is influenced by what the former observes and defines (Charmaz, 2000; Mills et al., 2006).

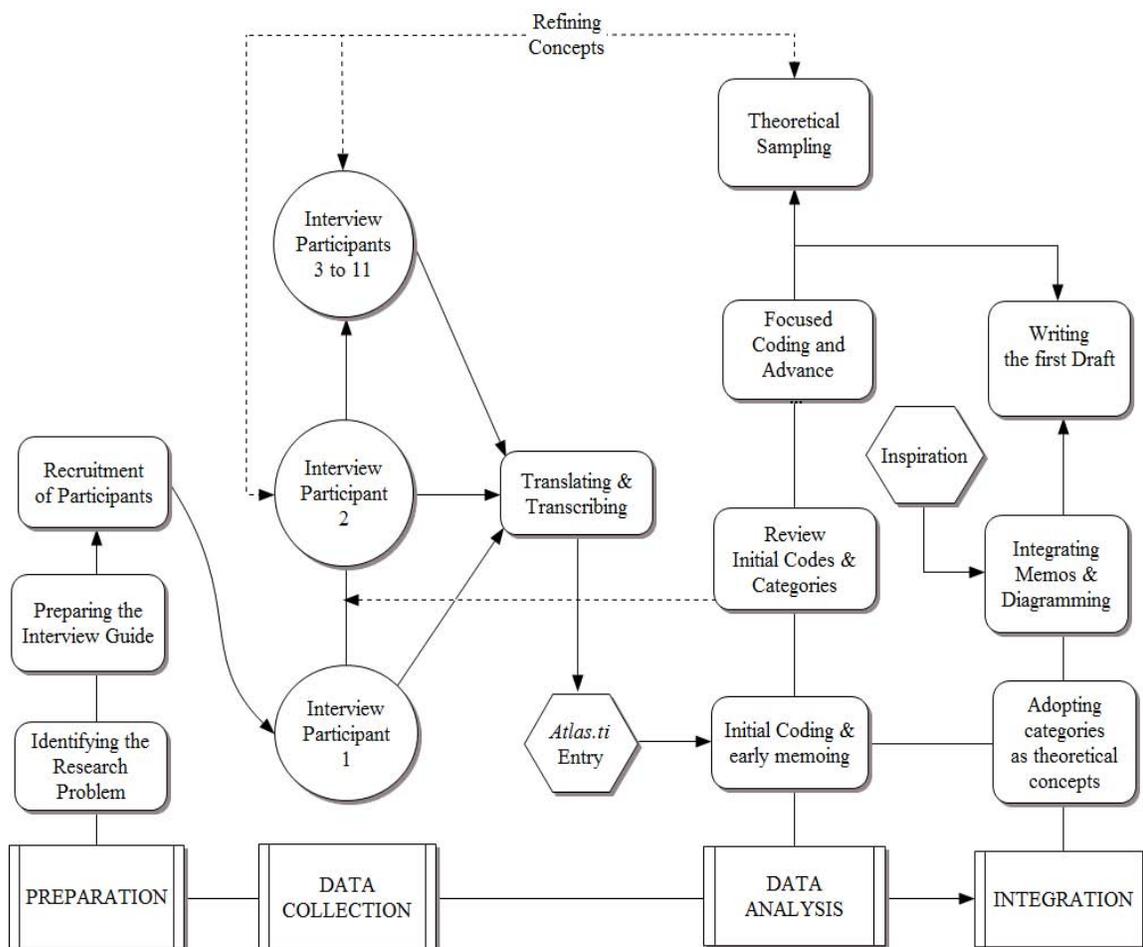
Experiencing the Constructivist Method

In the discussion below, I have briefly presented the research process from identifying the research problem to writing the research draft, which I illustrated in Figure 1. The process that I used was substantially similar to Charmaz's procedure of constructivist grounded theory. However, I have introduced a few modifications of the process, such as, translating transcripts, the use of *Atlas.ti* and Inspiration software, reviewing of initial codes and categories, expanding the notion of theoretical sampling after the first interview, and starting the focused coding and advanced memoing on the third interview.

Identifying the Research Problem

Deciding on a research question or problem generally starts from one's discipline or intimate familiarity with a topic of interest. In constructivist grounded theory method, the researcher's background assumptions and disciplinary perspectives shape the researcher topics and conceptual emphasis. Charmaz (2006) speaks of the notion of sensitizing concepts, a process that enables the researcher in grounded theory to ask particular questions on a topic of interest. Sensitizing concepts that link with studies of interest provide 'the point of departures' to develop research questions and problems.

Figure 1: Modified Grounded Theory Process



Note: Modeled from *The Grounded Theory Process* of Charmaz (2006), Figure 1.1

My identity as a Filipino and my experience in working with seniors heightened my awareness of the issues surrounding the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors and made me more sensitive to exploring those issues. Charmaz (2006) stated, “grounded theorists use sensitizing concepts as tentative tools for developing their ideas about processes that they define in their data (p.17).” I therefore started with my assumption

that the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors were unknown. Looking at their experience in providing support to their immigrant families was a ‘point of departure’ that led to many other questions around the term “experience.”

Collecting Data

A researcher may be guided by loose exploratory topics or semi-structured focused questions during interviews. In this study, I developed a semi-structured questionnaire as starter questions to begin the conversation and elicit data (Charmaz, 2006). The questions led to other related questions geared towards clarifying meanings, assumptions and content saturation. As participants described and reflected on their experiences, I listened attentively. I then asked the questions in English and in a translated version. I made sure that they understood the questions I was asking them, because it is important to elicit the participants’ definitions of terms in the context of their situations and to clarify their assumptions and implicit meanings. I asked questions that started with *how, what, when, or tell me about* to generate more details or to obtain richer data.

Translating and Transcribing: A Gift and a Challenge

In the actual interview, I used Tagalog and English most of the time, although a few spoke in their first languages of *Bisaya* and *Hiligaynon*. Being able to translate the interview transcripts into English is both a gift and a challenge. It is a gift as I speak, write, and read at least four widely spoken Filipino languages: *Tagalog, Bisaya, Ilongo, and Waray*. Being ‘at home’ in these languages is a personal strength. My native-tongue is *Bisaya*, but I learned and have spoken languages of Tagalog and English since childhood and still use them even now. My familiarity with the Tagalog language enabled

me to understand nonverbal cues during the interview, which added to my understanding of the experiences of the participants. I have also reached a level of ease in shifting from English to Filipino language and *vice-versa*. Such skills helped me to write my thoughts either in English or Filipino in my memos.

The participants agreed to my audiotaping the interviews. After the interview, I immediately transcribed and translated the statements of participants into English. Translating was a challenge, as I needed to remain faithful to the story of the participants. I carefully selected words that were the same or least closest to each word for each statement from the participants. The idea was to convey the message in English in the most accurate manner. Doing a literal translation would surely be ineffectual results became either nonsensical and/or inadequate to capture the statements made in the Filipino language.

Of course, I encountered challenges in the nuances of words or terms. For instance, when the participants used the word *awa* ('pity' in the literal translation) to their children, the term does not mean a form of sympathy, regret or a feeling of sadness for anyone external. In Filipino parenting context, the term *awa* can mean love and care or empathy for one's family. In the hope of bridging possible gaps due to differing nuances of words in English and Filipino, I have provided a list of Filipino terms with nuances different from English.

Throughout the process of transcription, I was aware that the acts of reframing the statements of the participants, so as to fit them into the language of intent (English) could lead to forcing data into preconceived categories (Charmaz, 2006). I therefore exercised care in paraphrasing each statement by going through it many times so as not to lose the

meaning or intent of the words. The challenge that I faced was to make sure that the English translations were comprehensible yet faithful to the statements or descriptions of the participants. I reviewed my translations of transcripts several times before I entered the English transcription in *Atlas.ti* for coding and developing of categories.

Analyzing the Data

The processing of interview data went through transcription, translation, and then entered into *Atlas.ti*. Using the software, I proceeded in analyzing the data doing initial coding, early memoing, focused coding, and advanced memoing, integrating memos and diagramming concepts. I used the *Inspiration* software to diagram the concepts. Moreover, part of the process was to conduct theoretical sampling to enrich and fill in conceptual gaps. It is worth noting that, although I did theoretical sampling after the eleven participants completed the interviews, I considered it a step after the first interview as I was already making steps to elaborate and eventually fine-tune the codes and emerging categories.

Initial Coding and Early Memoing

After I transcribed the interview data, I started coding, the first step in analytic interpretations. According to Charmaz (2006), a researcher chooses the words that constitute the codes, defines their significance in the data, and describes what is happening. In like manner, I chose the emergent words that accounted for the code of each statement or sentence of the participant. Every idea was important; hence, doing sentence-by-sentence or line-by-line coding was helpful to capture every concept emerging from the data. The codes were short and concise labels in gerund form to avoid conceptual leaps. Each code was a description of what was happening in the data.

Early memoing is a means of recording what is happening in the data (Charmaz, 2006). When I wrote memos on the codes, I discussed what the participant was saying, what was going on, how the experience evolved, how an action influenced the situation, and so on. Below is an excerpt of a memo that I wrote about the decision of the participants to migrate to Canada.

Code: Dispersing families

The dispersion of millions of Filipinos away from their homeland has been a phenomenon over the last forty - fifty years. The statement from Francis is a classic example of family dispersed for economic reasons. His children had to work as OFWs in Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Canada. They dispersed for lack of opportunities in the Philippines. The sponsorship of Francis to Canada also dispersed him from his homeland.

At this point, it may be worth considering the notion of diaspora as a potential category that might describe the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors – see if this concept comes up in the next interview. The dispersion of Filipinos has become a world phenomenon. Both children and parents migrate to other places in search of 'greener pastures' and living overseas might qualify them as diasporas. Check the meaning of diaspora when doing a literature review. Note that theories and patterns of diaspora may be a relevant discussion in the first question...

The above memo is a combination of a description of the context of dispersion of participants' families and possible exploration of the notion of diaspora as a potential category. It reiterated the importance of the emerging code that Filipino families are breaking up because of the lack of economic opportunities in their country. The act of migration to other countries as OFWs created a reality of family separation, which later evolved into a pulling demand of family reunification in Canada.

In addition, during the initial coding and memoing, I clustered similar and differing codes and started naming categories that were emergent in to a cluster of codes. For example, I initially named three categories that were emergent reasons for dispersion

of participants from their country: living in impoverishment, reuniting with families, and lacking in work opportunities. Note that in the latter part of the analysis these initial categories eventually became part of the family category, which I named as the pushing family demands.

Moreover, while doing the initial coding, I defined what was significant in the data by taking notes or writing initial memos. The memos were descriptions, pointers, and/or conceptual explications corresponding to selected initial codes. The notes that I wrote were reflections and insights into the study. Both notes and memos were useful conceptual sources when I wrote the first draft. Using the *Atlas.ti* software, allowed me to write and label memos, and place them next to the codes, lines or the segments where they belonged. Using the software, initial coding became easy and I was able to save all the codes with corresponding quotations. Searches for codes and their quotations are effortless in the program since a click or two leads directly to the exact line, segments, or incidents.

Focused Coding and Advanced Memoing

A researcher should choose the most significant or frequent initial codes (Charmaz, 2006). One then sorts, integrates, and organizes larger data. I started focused coding and advanced memoing after the third interview, when I am able to make comparisons of codes and emerging categories. As codes were constructed, comparing them with other codes or finding their fit led to other ideas emerging. By comparing similar and dissimilar incidents, making constant comparisons with earlier and later interviews, and staying close to the data, I was able to develop theoretical categories and some properties

of the emerging concepts. With the aid of *Atlas.ti*, I created family codes that served as my focus codes.

The family codes were emergent categories resulting from a re-examination of data, from making comparisons, and focusing on codes that showed similarities or dissimilarities. After reviewing the codes, I grouped, regrouped, and compared them until I found an emergent family code and adopted it as a theoretical concept. In the process, I also reviewed the initial memos and refined analytic notes that explicated the corresponding categories. I added further analysis, elaborating on assumptions, and implicit meanings.

In advanced memoing, Charmaz (2006) suggested that the researcher write a description of how a category emerges and changes, clarify the beliefs and assumptions that support the category, and make comparisons between different participants, categories, and so on. This became the point where I clustered the sub-categories under a major category or theoretical concept. Using the language of *Atlas.ti*, I labelled the theoretical concept as family category.

Theoretical Sampling

To answer the questions or unpack assumptions from the emergent categories, Charmaz (2006) suggested using theoretical sampling as a strategy. She said that:

This strategy is *theoretical sampling*, which means seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories” in your emerging theory... Thus, you saturate your categories with data and subsequently sort and/or diagram them to integrate your emerging theory... Use theoretical sampling as a strategy to narrow your focus on emerging categories and as a technique to develop and refine them (pp.96 & 107).

During this study, it seemed to me that the entire process from interviewing the participants to seeking and collecting data that was missing in previous interviews and/or asking for clarification of statements, was done with a view to elaborating and refining categories, and to move gradually narrowing the emerging categories. From my experience of theoretical sampling, it was not just a fixed process but an evolving one from the first to the last stage of constructivist grounded theory. Interestingly, however, Charmaz (2006) also suggested that theoretical sampling is possible even at the stage of writing the first draft.

After each interview, having transcribed the interview data, I entered it in *Atlas.ti*. I then named codes based on what was emerging from the data, clustered codes into main categories as a way of doing focused coding, and wrote notes and memos. Before I began another interview, I reviewed the codes and emerging categories from previous interview data and took note of them in the subsequent interview. In the process, I also learned what questions to ask. For example, in the first interview with Poly, the emerging codes about his decision to emigrate were impoverishment, a positive view of Canada, and work opportunities for seniors. I noted these categories and checked whether they emerged in the data from the subsequent interview with Joshua. During the latter part of the interview, codes such as living in poverty and lacking work opportunities eventually emerged when I asked her about her living condition back home and the work situation of seniors in the Philippines. The process of reviewing codes and categories prior to any interview continued from the first to the eleventh participant.

After I gathered and processed the interview data, I re-interviewed at least five participants. I used the emerging family categories to ask further questions and fill in

gaps in the data. By focusing the questions on the family categories that needed elaboration, it gave me a sense of direction and enabled me to obtain more data that clarified and developed conceptual categories. Findings in the data further supported the theoretical concepts such as the push and pull of family demands, and the newly constructed realities of participants as they provided support to their families while living as diasporas in Canada. Eventually, I reached a point of saturation, as there were no new insights that could spark a construction of another category. Saturation of categories means “when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113).

I have reservations, however, about the notion of saturation. The term saturation does not seem to fit well with the ontology of relativism or constructivism, because it has an inherent contradiction to a world constructed of relative and multiple, hermeneutical and dialectical meanings and perspectives. Given the multiple realities of this world or of the subject of study, there will always be questions, thus aiming for saturation may end up in frustration. The inclusion of the term saturation in the tradition of constructivist grounded theory is something that may need re-thinking and re-conceptualizing.

Integrating Memos, Diagramming, and Using Qualitative Software

When all the theoretical categories had been established, I was ready to sort and integrate the memos. Using *Atlas.ti*, retrieval of memos was facilitated because I embedded them directly in the codes. When I clustered all the codes and sub-categories under the theoretical category pushing and pulling family demands, for example, all the embedded memos went along too. I then grouped them by contents, edited them, and saved them as documents ready for the first draft.

The *Atlas.ti* software enabled me to establish links relating to each category. It is a helpful tool for researchers because it shows how sub-categories link to each other; however, it has its limitations. With too many sub-categories, lines and signs can congest the diagram, which makes it difficult to decipher. I resorted to using *Inspiration* software because it enabled me to create diagrams or mind-maps of the seven theoretical categories more creatively and easily. I found the diagrams as helpful guides in writing the draft. With the diagrams of each family category in front of me, I was able to modify, add, and/or remove links as I reviewed the categories and corresponding participants' statements. It was easier to make these changes using *Inspiration* software.

The use of *Atlas.ti* also allowed me to store, compare, sort, edit, and import memos. In coding line-by-line and sentence-to-sentence, it was possible to write the memos in a side columnar space. With the software's capacity to establish connections between codes and memos, I was able to analyze relationships and make changes efficiently. It enabled me to cluster initial codes in one abstract heading or category. For instance, I clustered codes like treating sponsored Filipino seniors to dinner, giving them gifts, and affirming their acts of support in a sub-category *experiencing recognition*. The repeated process of clustering, finding relationships, and comparing categories, helped me to refine the categories as theoretical concepts.

The process of sorting, diagramming, and integrating are interrelated as part of the process of analysis in Charmaz's constructivist method. This involves the researcher to establish and refine theoretical links that prompt one to compare categories.

Writing the Draft

In writing the first draft of this study, I went back to the categories and the corresponding statements of the participants, the memos, and the diagrams. Reviewing the categories and memos was inevitable as these were the bedrock of the findings and eventual theoretical integration. As I focused on each category in relation to another in the diagram, I went back and forth between categories and statements of the participants. I found it helpful to use a desktop computer for writing the draft and a laptop on the side where the categories were visible in an *Atlas.ti* document. Whenever I made modifications in the categories or memos, I was able to encode the change immediately into the document. The continuing process of back and forth movement characterized the entire writing process. It enabled me to keep the information I needed close at hand.

Engaging with the Participants

The study had eleven participants from Calgary. All were sponsored Filipino seniors who had been in Canada for 10 years. I recruited them, not at the same time, but one after the other. During recruitment, I defined the extent of their participation with them. I gave assurances of confidentiality and anonymity regarding their identity, and emphasized their right to withdraw at any time. They may not have understood the term *construction* because of its academic context, but they were aware that the data they shared would inform the research and the public about their situation.

Recruiting the Participants

I sought the help of some Filipino friends to connect me with potential participants of the study. From these introductions, participants contacted me directly without further involvement from the friend who told them about the study. I also posted

a research advertisement in selected Filipino stores and distributed some to Filipino groups in the City. A reference from friends worked best, as it facilitated the process of establishing trust with the participant. As I mentioned earlier, initial pleasantries were necessary in order to build rapport and establish trust. Some declined to participate in the study for several reasons. However, for those who were interested in becoming part of the study, I went through invitation letter, the consent form, and the withdrawal of participation form with each of them. I only interviewed those who signed the consent form. As a way of ensuring an informed choice, I reminded the participants intermittently that at any time they were free to withdraw from the study.

Defining Participation

All participants gave their informed consent and knew that their participation was voluntary and without honorarium. They were free to withdraw or discontinue their participation as discussed in the consent form. They were aware that analysis and findings could include their contributions, unless otherwise stated in the withdrawal of participation form; and that all the information would be destroyed immediately, if contributions were withdrawn. However, without any verbal or written notice of withdrawal, the participants knew that I would retain the collected information for use in the study. I informed them further that at the end of the study they would receive tokens as gestures of gratitude and recognition of their participation.

Meeting the participants

There were several stages of data collection. The first meeting was a face-to-face interview with each participant. During the interview, I also jotted down notes. After each session, I transcribed the data, took the time to translate it, and then started the process of

initial coding and memoing. My research supervisor knew the processes I would engage in and the content of the study. Her feedback formed part of the data analysis process every step of the way.

Checking the initial results is what Taylor and Bogdan (1984) referred to as a crosschecking process. During the initial coding and memoing, I had several occasions when I called a few participants to verify or clarify their statements. In a way, it was an early form of theoretical sampling as the new data enabled me to refine codes that led to the development of core categories.

After I had done the initial and family coding of the transcripts, I met five participants for theoretical sampling. At this time, the categories that I had constructed were more directed, focused, and conceptually fine-tuned. I tried to fill in the gaps evident in the data. I stopped the interview after sensing that I was hearing repetitive responses.

At the third meeting, I conducted small group discussions with participants. It was in this meeting that I presented the findings. I attempted to gather all the participants at one time but it was not possible. Instead, I arranged for smaller group meetings to discuss the findings. At this point, I presented the emerging theories and solicited comments regarding the trustworthiness of the developing theory. This meeting also enabled me to check whether the emerging theories made sense to the participants. I integrated the feedback of the participants into the discussion, which added greater texture and depth to the findings.

Using an Interview Guide

Using the preliminary information of sponsored Filipino seniors, I drafted some open-ended questions as an interview guide. I reviewed the guide on several occasions. My research supervisor also reviewed the relevance, depth, and flexibility of the questions, and suggested some changes. Furthermore, I requested a group of volunteer community development workers at the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society to comment on the interview guide. This process helped in making the questions non-offensive or non-threatening to potential participants.

At the start of each interview, it was easy to begin with one of the questions, which I have prepared on interview guide. I asked further questions to generate data, provide clarity, and pursue emerging categories. Asking questions enhanced the density and variation of concepts leading to theory development.

Anonymity of Participants

To protect participants' identities and provide them the freedom to tell their stories, I used pseudonyms of their choice and excluded their families from participating in the study. Before the interview started, I encouraged the participants to use other names to protect them from being associated with any information in the study. All the names used in this study are therefore pseudonyms. I avoided information that could expose or put one's identity at risk. I likewise assured them that my research supervisor and I have sole access to the transcriptions and notes or interview tapes; that I have kept these in a locked filing cabinet; and that I will destroy the materials, two years after the completion of the study.

Participants as Co-Constructionists

How did the participants become co-constructionist? Primarily, the interview data were constructions in themselves. The participants were aware that their stories would be the bases of findings of the study. As cited earlier, theoretical sampling in this study began in the second interview and each subsequent participant contributed to the build up of family categories and emergent theoretical concepts. The inductive process of interpreting and naming emergent categories or concepts from the participants' data eventually led to a construction of an emergent theory of diaspora of sponsored Filipino seniors. The theory of shared diasporic realities of participants who provide support to immigrant families in Canada became the pillar of the emerging concepts. Moreover, coming together in small group conversation about the findings was also a knowledge construction that validated and/or verified the emergent concepts.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW: PROVIDING THE CONTEXT

Against the yardstick not of statistics but of the quality of life, the Filipino people as a whole are melancholy – if patient – mass. Their daily diet is monotonous (rice, fish, vegetables), their clothes are threadbare and their homes primitive and crowded. What could they hope to build on a daily per capita income of just over 25 cents? In sum, the blessings of liberty have not included liberation from poverty -- Benigno Aquino (1968)

There are two ways to approach the literature review in grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998, 2008) approached literature as part of theoretical sensitivity in the entire research process. In contrast, Glaser (1992, 2004) suspended it to avoid contamination and to constrain the use of extant ideas in generating categories, their properties and theoretical codes emerging from the data. Charmaz (2006) did not engage in the dispute. Although she implied delaying of a literature review until a grounded theory emerged, she was consistently open to using the review as a way of constructing the theory. Charmaz emphasized that a literature review is important to help analyze the

divergence and convergence of the research problem to existing literature or leading works.

Literature review in grounded theory is not about testing hypothesis, as verification and descriptive studies do (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998, 2008). It is about integration when theory seems sufficiently grounded in core categories. It is about engaging with ideas or studies in areas that support or contradict, converge, diverge, or relate to the emergent theory being addressed (Charmaz, 2006). I chose to delay the literature review until I reached a point of relative 'certainty.' That occurred when I adopted family categories as theoretical concepts, which formed part of the emergent theory on living as diasporas in Canada. I focused my review of the literature on areas that are relevant to the domains of Filipino identity and values, diaspora and migration, labour and productive aging.

Understanding a Filipino

What does it mean to be a Filipino? Filipinos have a complex history of foreign hegemony. Their ethnicities, values, and traditions are a blend of many influences from traders, seafarers, and colonizers alike. At this point, a short history of the Philippines and the Filipino people provide part of the answer.

The Philippines is an archipelagic country of 7,107 islands. It is the 13th thickly populated country in the world with 97,976,000 people as of July 2009 (CIA World Factbook, 2009a). Its neighbouring countries in the Pacific are Taiwan (North) Borneo (South) and Vietnam (West). Around 500 B.C.E, Indic and Chinese influences through trading were pervasive in the islands. The Islam influence came in 1200s (Nadeau, 2008) prior to Christianity in 1521. For over 333 years, from 1521 – 1898, Spain ruled the

country with a cross and a sword. It imposed its culture, values and tradition on people. Under the Spanish, the dominance of Christian influence in the value system, morals and norms manifested itself in Filipino religiosity.

The British forces took control the Philippines in 1762. However, Spain regained control but its weakening power led to its defeat in 1898. Spain lost the war against the United States and signed away the Philippines (including Guam and Puerto Rico) to the control of the American colonizers for \$ 20 million (Corpuz, 2005). The colonizers quelled all local revolts. Their influence became pervasive. The former Spanish feudal system quickly assumed a neo-feudal character to complement with capitalism as the new feature of colonial rule. Filipinos earned their 'independence' in 1945 but the US retained its economic and military control through the Bell Trade Act. The Act granted the US parity rights and free rent for its military bases in the country (Nadeau, 2008). Nationalists fought against it until its abrogation in 1991. Today, the United States' presence remains visible in the Philippines through the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The VFA allows American forces to be in the country for reasons of regional peace and security.

With a long history of Eastern influence and Western hegemony, the question *Who is a Filipino* does not have simple answers. Filipino identity is a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures, traditions and values. Interactions with the Chinese, Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian, Middle Easterners, Spanish, British, Japanese, and Americans all contributed to what now comprises the Filipino psyche. During the American conquest of the Philippines, Filipinos garnered the title *Little Brown Brother* -- a term that draws hostile reactions from many (Miller, 1982). With idealization of the West, colonial

mentality denigrates or renders inferiors anything that is Filipino. It is an ethnocentric stigma – a result of the dark side of Filipino history – and its discriminating nature has influenced Filipino worldviews and values.

Knowing Filipino Values

The Filipinos, although colonized by Western forces, have not lost their Oriental worldview and norms. They are collectivists. They value the importance of their families, and close family ties. They value social acceptance, smooth interpersonal relationship, and deference for older persons and/or authority (Balzado, 1991; Church & Katigbak, 2000). Many of their values have their roots in Eastern teachings. For example, the value of *utang na loob* has an affinity with the Chinese's filial piety and the Japanese's *giri* and *gimu* (duty and obligation). All these other-centered values have their roots in Confucianism and Oriental philosophy (Hwang, 2001; Wai-ming, 1999). The shared values of duty and obligation may have been one of the values acquired over centuries with the engagement of natives in the Philippines with the oriental traders and seafarers.

Church and Katigbak (2000) worked on reviewing the experiences and orientations, identity, and national consciousness of Filipinos. Part of their study revealed various traits and values that had previous anthropological, linguistic, philosophical and theoretical roots. Their work validated some of the long-held indigenous values such as *utang na loob* (inner debt), *bahala na*, (trust or custody), *pakiramdam* (inner perception), *sumpong* (moody), *kapwa* (kindred), *amor propio* (self-esteem or pride), *pakikisama* (getting along with others), and *hiya* (shame). Filipinos use these traits to understand and describe persons and their behaviour (see also Church & Katigbak, 2002).

Inner debt or *utang na loob* is one of the most widely held values (Church & Katigbak, 2000). In this study, it is also one of the most cited values in the interview data. It is a form of reciprocity, which has some affinity with Putnam's (2000) criteria of social capital. The value of *utang na loob* was one of the emergent conceptual categories that described the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in living with their immigrant families. Filipino *utang na loob* is about social reciprocity, which stands in contrast with western individualism (Hwang, 2001).

Filipino adults expect children to have *utang na loob* or to care for and support their parents. In a family, parents are to provide lifetime support to their children; and in return, the children are to exercise filial piety especially when their parents grow old. Moreover, like the *giri* and *gimu* culture of Japan, *utang na loob* is a form of giving back; it is gratitude and an obligation to return favour or kindness. Some expressed *utang na loob* through gifts and favours; however, in some cases, these are sometime not enough, because the practice of *utang na loob* denotes a lifetime obligation. It morally obliged a person to 'pay back' the favour received in many different ways. It is an entrenched value lived by Filipino families and communities.

Moreover, like many Asian cultures, most Filipinos believe in a supernatural or metaphysical force that determines or provides order in society (Hwang, 2001). Animism was widely practiced, even before the Spanish *conquistadores* set foot in the archipelago. However, Spaniards suppressed it, replaced it with Christianity, and denigrated it over the centuries (Brewer, 2004; Zaide, 2006). The Christian God has now become ingrained in the Filipino psyche, although folk religiosity remains popular in the country. In this study, all the participants were Christians and many mentioned God in their narratives.

This signalled that a deeply held value in life for religiosity is a Filipino value and a part of their identity.

The Caring of Parents and Filipino Family Centrism

Obligation to care for parents is an important concept of filial piety. Filipinos share this same value and tradition with the Chinese and the Japanese. Wai-ming (1999) argued that filial piety and loyalty were fundamental virtues of Confucianism. She cited the story of a respectable Japanese character Tōju who sacrificed his career and even risked his life for the sake of his mother. One of the quotes of Tōju emphasized the primacy of parents in one's life:

The purpose of making our career and pursuing the truth is to bring glory to our parents. This is why the *Xiaojing* reads: "In the beginning, we serve our parents and then we serve the ruler." Here "the beginning" and "then" show the priority in carrying out the Way (Wai-ming, 1999, pp. 104 – 105).

Filipinos may not identify with Confucius, but nonetheless, they share the Confucian value of caring for their parents. Christian Filipinos value the caring for their parents – a Judeo-Christian obligation, rather than a Confucian virtue. Honouring and caring for one's parents is a commandment inscribed in Exodus 20: 12 to "honour the father and your mother so that you have a long life in the land that Yahweh your God has given to you" (Jones, 1966, p.102). At an early age, parents and grandparents teach their children respect for elders and those in authority. In return, children are to be obedient and polite to their parents and grandparents (Gendrano, 1996). When children neglect their older parents, it could cause them 'gaba' or curse. Children who deprive their obligation or maltreat their parents raise the ire of their clan, neighbourhood, *barrio* (village), or their friends.

Moreover, the centrality of family in Filipino life reinforces the obligation to provide care and support to one another. Filipinos value family-centrism (Almirol, 1982; Colin-Jones & Colin-Jones, 2004; Wolf, 1997). Their identity and future life revolve around what family needs. According to Almirol, what is paramount is interdependence and loyalty to family and kin. Each member of the family is to embrace the value of *pamilya muna bago ang iba* (family first before others). The value of giving priority to one's family is rooted in close ties and familial obligation. Even for older parents and grandparents, their family obligation does not cease, as long as their children, grandchildren, and close relatives are in need of help.

Providing support to family is a social expectation. Apart from the parents, everyone has an obligation to help. Traditionally, eldest children bear the tasks of helping the family. They are educated first so they can help their parents in providing support for their siblings. If they fail to perform their tasks, their younger sisters or brothers assume the obligation of care. The hierarchy moves on to the youngest, should none among the elder siblings assumed the responsibility. In many situations, however, poverty has challenged the tradition as Filipino families also expect their children working overseas to support.

Without reference to family, filial piety is incomprehensible. Family is the seedbed of the values of honouring and caring for parents and the elderly in the family. It is the locus of faith where children learn to revere God and respect those in authority in the family, including older brothers and sisters. Giving primacy to families assures one of support, care, and protection. It is also worth noting that as genealogical distance increases, the sense of obligation diminishes (Almirol, 1982). Nevertheless, it is difficult

to talk about Filipino identity without reference to Filipino family value, as there is a strong tie between one's identity and one's future in terms of family needs.

It may be interesting to ask whether Filipino filial piety and family values will persist while living as diasporas. A study in transnational struggles among children of Filipino immigrants in the US certainly reaffirmed the centrality of families in the life of the participants. Family was described as core to their identity and their struggle as 'second generation' Filipinos. Integration and acculturation resulted in a hybrid identity for second-generation children in the US. However, first generation immigrant parents brushed aside cultural hybridity and insisted on their children to live like Filipinos even if they were in America (Wolf, 1997). In Canada, studies in general have shown that second generation youth face cultural conflicts negotiating the expectations of their ethnic heritage and wider Canadian norms (Lalonde & Ciguère, 2008). This conflict raised issues of acceptance and respect from peers and community (Hébert & Alama, 2008). However, whether second generation Filipinos or the grandchildren of sponsored Filipinos seniors will continue to practice the value of filial piety remains a possibility for future study.

Dispersion of Filipinos from their Homeland

Filipinos have been in mass dispersion since the early 1980s when political, economic, and social unrest beset the country. Many of those who left the country were labourers, entertainers, medical workers, teachers, engineers, computer technicians and analysts, and so on. Today there are approximately 11 million Filipinos overseas Filipino workers (OFW) in more than 193 countries (Overseas Filipinos, 2009). Their number even surpasses the population of Israel, 7,233,701 (CIA World Factbook, 2009b) where

the term diaspora was linked to historical movements of Jewish dispersion. While Philippine reports indicate that the recent recession has slowed down the number of Filipinos going overseas, it did not stop the exodus. Many Filipinos who now live and work overseas are mostly foreign workers, a phenomenal case of migration and diaspora that call for deeper study.

Canada is one of the countries that continually bring in more foreign workers from around the world to help spin its economy. The Philippines is second to Mexico in sending foreign workers to Canada. According to CIC's *Facts and Figures* (2008), Canada brought in 19, 253 foreign workers from the Philippines in 2008, a figure close to the 20, 900 Mexicans. Within the period of ten years (1999 to 2008), a total of 74,770 entered Canada; and in 2008, CIC ranked the Philippines as the third among the source countries of foreign workers.

Sponsored Filipino seniors were among the immigrant Filipinos who came to Canada. Applications for sponsorship of parents and grandparents approved for permanent residency consistently remained higher compared to spouses and partners over the last ten years. From 1998 – 2007, 83,873 sponsored parents and grandparents were granted the status of permanent residents (CIC, 2008). Each year more and more sponsored Filipino seniors come to Canada. Persistent and increasing migrancy of parents and grandparents to Canada has become a phenomenon and calls for investigation of their impact in immigrant families and communities, the labour market, and the social welfare system of Canada.

In the work of Samonte (2003) on Filipino international migration, she identified three phases of migration cycle: the pre-departure, the sojourn, and return to homeland.

Prior to their departure, Filipinos were cognizant of their motivation of a better life and the realities of their socio-economic condition. While in sojourn in a foreign land, they worked on ways to adapt to the local culture and yet keep their own Filipino lifestyles. They did this by coming together in restaurants, subscribing a Filipino television channel, meeting in public places like churches and parks, and so on. The return of migrants to the Philippines gave them the privileged title of *balikbayan*, which means entitlement to duty-free and tax waiver on goods for a number of days and a social reputation of a better economic condition. Nonetheless, San Juan (2000) implied that Filipinos going back to the Philippines do not necessarily intend for permanent resettlement in an impoverished condition; hence, the term *balikbayan* refers to a holiday return or to dealing with personal or family concerns.

Diaspora has entered into the common lingua to describe the dispersion of Filipinos overseas. However, are Filipino immigrants and migrants diasporas? Okamura (1998) has conducted extensive research on an anthropological and sociological basis to claim that Filipinos in the US are diasporas. What about the Filipinos in Canada, are they diasporas, too? What does diaspora mean? When will a people be considered diasporas? In the following section, I attempt to seek answers to these questions.

At this point, however, it is important to differentiate immigration from emigration and migration from migrant. The definitions of Marsella and Ring (2003) are beneficial in this discussion: migration is the action or process of movement from one location; immigration is the process of leaving and becoming permanent residents in another country. Emigration is the process of leaving the nation and migrant refers to a person in another country with no legal status.

Understanding Diaspora

The Oxford Dictionary did not provide any other meanings of diaspora except two Semitic-related definitions: 1) the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel; and 2) the Greek word *diaspeirein* or disperse, which is found in the Biblical text of Deuteronomy 28:25 (Pearsall, 1999). The Online Etymology Dictionary (2001) adds the infinitive form “to scatter” (Greek: *speirein*) and the preposition “about or across” (Greek: *dia*). Interestingly, the word disperse is close to the act of scattering, which is a characteristic that has long been associated with people who have been scattered from their homeland either by force or for a purpose. Note that the definition of diaspora has expanded to include people who have left their homeland for a purpose (Cohen, 1997; Tsagarousianou, 2004).

Although the word diaspora has etymological affinity to a farmer’s routine of sowing, scattering, and sprouting, history has made it a horrifying, devastating, catastrophic, and inhuman experience to many in the course of history. Jewish, Armenians, Africans, Chinese, Indians, and many others have had several diasporic epochs in their journey as a people. The many faces of human suffering like violence, poverty, injustice, discrimination, destitution, and other forms of human degradation have forced many to flee from their homeland.

Features and Typologies of Diaspora

The term diaspora had been limited within the experience of transnational Jews, Armenians, and Greeks (Safran, 2004). Although contested, the term has been a widely accepted and expanded term, owing to its recent entry into academic discourse. Clifford (1994) advanced the idea that diaspora should be understood in terms of its constructive

potential as mediating cultures rather than just concepts around forced dispersion. Quite traditionally, Safran cautioned that persecutions and violent expulsion are ever-present forces and thus a context of diaspora (cited in Kokot, Tolöyan, Alfonso, 2004). He was clear to establish that his notion of diaspora has the elements of physical dispersion from the original homeland and links it between the diasporic community and the home country (Safran 2004). Safran (1991) defined the ideal diasporas as:

- 1) They or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions;
- 2) They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements;
- 3) They believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;
- 4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;
- 5) They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity;
- 6) They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (pp. 83-84).

Safran (1991) did not consider legitimate the diaspora status of Armenian, Maghrebi, Turkish, Palestinian, Cuban, Greek, and possibly Chinese. According to him, none of these groups passed his definition of ‘ideal type’ other than the Jewish diaspora. Others have contested Safran’s “ideal type” diaspora. However, his definition became a source of various interpretations and debate over the years. More than a decade after his contentious definition, Safran (2004) reiterated his position saying that:

But diasporas comprise special kinds of immigrants because they have retained a memory of, a cultural connection with, and a general orientation toward their homelands; they have institutions reflecting something of a homeland culture and or religion; they relate in some (symbolic or practical) way to their homeland; they harbour doubts about their full acceptance of the hostland; they are committed to their survival as distinct community and many of them have retained a myth of return (p.10).

Clifford (1994) cautioned the term ‘ideal type’ and remarked the danger of identifying the definition too closely with one group. He claimed that large segments of Jewish historical experience did not meet the last three criteria of Safran (1991); and, that there was little room for Jews who were ambivalent about physically returning home, or those who do not have some sense of connection to the diasporic Jewish history. The fundamental idea of Safran centered on a presumed event of dislocation, the situation of rejection by and inability to find home in host societies, and maintaining support for homeland for an eventual return. The characteristics were delimiting as they focused mainly on the relationship between diasporic groups and their homeland (Clifford; see also Cohen, 1997; Tsagarousianou, 2004). The descriptions did not also consider the relationships and linkages that informed a diasporic condition.

Cohen (1997) proposed some typological descriptions, in addition to Safran’s (1991) features of diaspora. Although he considered the ‘victim’ diaspora as prototypical core, he opened up other typologies like ethnic entrepreneurs and trade diasporas. Cohen also expanded the notion of transnationalism as akin to the concept of diaspora.

Theorists on diaspora fundamentally agreed with Safran and Cohen that dispersion is grounded in the context of physical movements from one country or border to another and denotes a mental state of belongingness to an ‘imagined diasporic community’

linking to or communicating with their homelands (Gray, 2004; Olwig, 2004; Wonneberger, 2004)

Furthermore, Cohen (1997) amended the proposed features or characteristics to understand better the meaning of diaspora. He argued that of the six features of diaspora identified by Safran (1991), four of them focused on the relationship between the diasporic group and their homeland. Cohen proposed amendments to Safran's features of diaspora. He wanted the inclusion of groups who were scattered because of aggression and/or voluntary reasons. He also emphasized the need to establish links to past, and opposition to present and future acts of assimilation, before considering someone or a group as in diaspora. Moreover, he recognized the positive aspects of retaining diasporic identity, and acknowledged that diasporic communities share a common identity with members in the same ethnic communities in other countries other than the collective identity formation in the place of settlement or with their homeland. Cohen's most common features of diaspora are listed below. They are a useful reference to subsequent discussions around the theoretical proposition that sponsored Filipino seniors are diasporas.

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4. An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. The development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;

6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8. A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9. The possibility of a distinctive, creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism (p.26)

Tsagarousianou (2004) highlighted key points of Cohen's typology (1997) in addition to Safran's (1991) definition of diaspora. He said that Cohen included the notion of being scattered not just by force but also voluntarily; that the indications of a transnational community's strong links to the past countered assimilation in the *hostland*; and a recognition of more positive aspects of the diasporic experience. Cohen further argued for an acknowledgment that collective identity might also be formed with members of the same ethnic communities living in other countries. Tsagarousianou continued, however, that while Cohen's ideal definition of diaspora reiterated the importance of the element of linking with the past and re-emphasized the significance of transnationality, his typology needed to recognize the fluidity and dynamic nature of diaspora as well as the volatile character of transnational contexts.

Theorists attempted to bring together concepts surrounding an understanding of diaspora. According to Gray (2004), the definitions of Safran (1991), the typologies of Cohen (1997), the arguments around the relationships of home and *hostland* and multi-local attachments (Brah, 1996; see also: Clifford 1994; Gilroy 1993) are all schematic

attempts to define diaspora. Wonneberger (2004) attempted these strands of thoughts together and clustered them into four general areas.

1. A diaspora consists of at least two communities of one ethnic group who live outside their (real or imagined) homeland in at least two different places.
2. A diaspora consists of a relatively large number of people who maintain a common cultural identity, which they use to distinguish themselves from other groups, as well as the host society. They achieve this, for example, by referring to a common homeland, a common origin, common traditions and a concept of a common history which may be constructed and the elements of which may be selected to fit them into this concept.
3. The country of origin takes on a central place in the process of maintaining a collective memory and solidarity. This country can exist in reality or in memory; its image can be realistic or mystical. In any case, it forms the centre of a diaspora to which its members are to return eventually. In this context, it is the wish to return which is decisive, not the act of returning, although some diasporic members might in fact return. The idealization and romanticization of the image of the 'homeland' can provoke different means of support for the home country, including the fight for and the founding of an independent state.
4. Diasporic communities maintain permanent contact to each other and keep up different kinds of relationships to the home country (if possible). Thus, a triangular relationship is formed and established between diaspora, host country and home country. These relations may have influence on different sides. On one hand, the diaspora may have an impact on the policies in both home and host country; on the other hand, it is influenced by cultural features and events, which take place in the surrounding environment. Therefore, their members' ideas can be very different from those popular in their country of origin. (p.118)

Considering Filipinos Overseas as Diasporas

Are Filipinos overseas diasporas? San Juan (2000) indicated that during the political crises in the Philippines, many Filipinos overseas mobilized their resources in support of the movement against imperial domination and local tyranny. During and after

the dictatorship of Marcos, Filipinos were considered transnationals and transmigrants as they worked on a putative 'Filipino' nation in a neo-colonized Philippines and overseas.

While acknowledging that Jews and Armenians were 'classical cases' of reference and comparison on similar and diverse instances of diaspora, Sökefeld (2004) opened up the understanding of diaspora beyond Jews and Armenians to include the realities or circumstances of other diasporas. In the study by Okamura (1998) on Filipinos in America, his findings indicated that Filipinos were not just an ethnic minority but diasporas. Like other diasporas, they maintained significant cultural, social and economic linkages with their homeland and a sustained transnational relationship through return visits, remittances, and constant communication with families and kin. The work of San Juan (2000) in the US further claimed that Filipinos were dispersed from their homeland because of impoverishment, family reunification, and seeking political asylum at a time of repression. Frideres (1999) insightfully argued that most immigrants came with a desire for social change and viewed Canada as a 'lifeboat' from the environment they fled.

In the subsequent chapters, the concept of diaspora provides an overall context. Looking at previous features of diaspora (Safran, 1991, 2004), typologies (Cohen, 1997), and the discussions (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Gray, 2004; Kokot et al., 2004; Lavie and Swedenburg, 1996; Okamura, 1998; Olwig, 2004; Sökefeld, 2004; Tsagarousianou, 2004; Wonneberger, 2004), there is a link between the experiences of the participants and those documented in the literature. Although the participants do not necessarily represent all the Filipinos in Canada, their experiences mirror a reality that could potentially lead to the unveiling of a bigger reality. The emergent categories were

linked to the theoretical proposition that sponsored Filipino seniors were foremost diasporas, and that their acts of providing support to their families in Canada were diasporic experiences.

Moreover, the eventual return to the homeland is an important notion of diaspora (Safran, 1991; Cohen, 1997; see also Clifford, 1994). Tsagarousianou (2004), however, challenged Safran's and Cohen's notion of returning home using the arguments of the leading thinkers of diaspora like Stuart Hall and Avtar Brah. According to Hall, the concept of returning home is precarious because what was once a 'home' may have transformed beyond recognition. There may be a detour and one cannot return home. Brah (1996) considered home as a mythic place or a diasporic imagination because home is a lived experience of a locality and mediated by social relations or subjectively experienced under given circumstances – characterized by a complex political and personal struggle to belong. For Tsagarousianou, what is seen as important in the notion of home is the relationship between a multiplicity of locations over geographical and cultural boundaries.

San Juan (2000), moreover, discussed Clifford's dissent to Safran's ideal types of diaspora and then later discussed the historical and ideological specificity of Filipino diaspora in the United States. On the thesis of Filipinos' eventual return to their homeland, he argued:

Some Filipinos in their old age may desire eventual return only when they are economically secure. In general, Filipinos will not return to the site of misery and oppression—to poverty, exploitation, humiliated status, unemployment, hunger, and lack of dignity. OCWs (*overseas contract workers*) would rather move their kin and parents to their place of employment in countries where family reunification is allowed: in the United States, Italy, Canada, and so on. Or even in

places of suffering provided there is some hope or illusion of future improvement (p.236).

San Juan (2000) echoed the argument of Hall (1993) that there may be no more homes to return to considering the misery and oppression in the Philippines. I have been providing resource services and capacity building for new immigrants and foreign workers in Australia and now in Canada. I have heard similar, shared aspirations of sponsoring their families with hopes of a 'better future.' In Canada, however, it remained a dream to many because employers under the Provincial Nomination Program (PNP) nominated only a few. Others hoped to become immigrants through the Alberta Immigration Nomination Program (AINP) under the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) but had a protracted waiting time and a costly process without any guarantee whatsoever of approval. Some employers abused them. Many refused to talk about it, fearing repercussions to their migrant status. More than 90% of those whom I met aspired to remain in Canada. Many did not want to go back to their impoverished life in the Philippines and would rather bear the hardships in the *hostland* in the hope of future settlement.

The question of 'who should be considered as diasporas' remains an unresolved question in academic discourse. However, the current definitions, typologies, and discussions of diaspora provide a basis from which to explore the proposition that Filipinos in Canada are diasporas. Akin to the context of diasporic identity is the struggle of Filipinos for survival and subsistence in the *hostland*, as evident in the experience of participants in this study. To consider sponsored Filipino seniors as diasporas presumes that the struggle for survival is part of the diasporic experience of Filipinos in Canada.

Tsagarousianou (2004) advised theorists to maintain an open attitude towards the concept of diaspora and to consider the multitude of experiences relating to diverse patterns of migration and settlement and diasporic experience, including hybridity of identity.

Facing the Challenges of Identity and Home

Identity is a broad domain of knowledge in science. I used rather loosely Erikson's concept of identity as "the ability to experience one's self as something that has continuity and sameness, and to act accordingly (Erikson, 1968, p.42), and applied the notion of continuity and sameness in the collective identity of the participants as Filipinos. My assumptions are: 1) that sponsored Filipino seniors brought with them their collective ethnic values and tradition, which formed part of their personal identities; 2) that they continued to live as Filipinos in a transnational setting; and 3) that they sustained their collective identities through contacts with their kin back home or with Filipino groups and individuals.

The migration of sponsored Filipinos seniors is virtually a transplantation of Filipino culture and tradition to the *hostland* – an addition to the already diverse Canadian culture. They identified with both immigrant and migrant Filipinos living in Canada, and lived with their values, tradition, and culture in their families and communities. With national pride, they also differentiate their collective identity in public places and events, just as Tajfel and Turner (2004) argued that in-groups work for differentiating distinctions of their social identity from relevant out-groups. Social identity encompasses group classifications and symbolic or actual identification with a group (Tajfel & Turner; see also Ashforth & Mael, 2004), and so sponsored Filipino seniors classify themselves as part of collective Filipino identity and may individually

assume the fate and even reputation of the group as their own. It is an expectation for Filipinos to live up to their collective identity even if they are in foreign land. However, the adaptations of local culture and values have caused identity concerns in Filipino families and communities (Almirol, 1982; Samonte, 2003; Wolf, 1997).

Moreover, according to Brewer and Gardner (2004), interpersonal and collective identities are social extensions of the self. The former is borne from dyadic relationships like parent-child or friendships or from small or face-to-face groups. The latter is about group identification, which some social scientists have considered as ‘depersonalized’ or ‘common identity’ to differentiate from dyadic relationship. Collective identity as ‘depersonalization’ may have some issues around the expanded identification of Filipino family at the level of community. In several situations -- as evident in the statements of Poly and Bea -- Filipinos empathize with co-Filipinos who went through discrimination, abuse, terrible suffering or murder and organized collective actions of material, affective, and spiritual support. Others engaged in vigilant actions to assert their rightful place in the land that some considered their home. Their collective actions derived from their identification with fateful situations. As Ashforth and Mael (2004) argued: “social identification, therefore, is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate” (p. 135).

Sponsored Filipinos seniors migrated with collective identity. Their values and tradition became transnationals as they lived with it outside the borders of their homeland. As dispersed race in another land, they too have assumed a transnational identity. However, sustaining collective values and tradition, with daily exposure to the

local culture and values has been a challenge. While there are tensions between ethnic identity and integration into the mainstream culture, Safran (1991) argued that diasporas have the ability to construct and negotiate their identities. In pluralistic societies like Canada, there is a possibility of an enriching experience of diasporic life through integration and adaptation of a foreign culture, as Judeans adapted Babylonian customs (Ackermann, 2004; Cohen 1991). Some use the word “acculturation” (Caliboso, 1998; Schmitz, 2003) to refer to cultural changes or adaptation resulting from the process. According to Schmitz, adaptation can be psychological or socio-cultural. Others used the term hybridity (Hall, 1993; Georgiou, 2006; Gray, 2004; Kataoka-Yahiro, Ceria, & Yoder, 2004; Olwig, 2004; Papastergiadis, 1997; Tsagarousianou, 2004; Wolf, 1997) to refer to mixed cultures and values because of adaptation of the local culture. The influence and use of mass media, telecommunications, and the internet, as well as the local culture, politics, and economic life could be overwhelming, could lead to hybridity identities. In the end, the external realities that shape identities influence the decision to find a home or return to the homeland (Findley, 1987).

The integration of Filipinos with the mainstream culture implies hybridity of identity or a duality of collective identity. It could lead to a construction of a new identity that may be neither truly Filipino nor Canadian. It is not surprising to find that studies on second generation youths in Canada indicated a clash of ethnic heritage and values demands (Hébert & Alama, 2008; Lalonde & Giguère, 2008). I assume that there is a crisis of identity as one may find it difficult to make a decision as to which socio-cultural or ethnic group to identify with. According to Brewer and Gardner (2004),

internalization of norms and characteristics is necessary in order to be the new group identity to whom one identifies with.

The concepts of hybridity of identity and 'imagined homeland' were part of the debate on earlier definitions of diasporas as 'imagined' communities in an 'imagined homeland'. What is an imagined homeland for diasporas? An old Sicilian saying: "when you leave home, you know what you leave behind, but not what you will find (cited in Marsella and Ring, 2003, p.9). In a study on self-identity and meaning, Brochetti, Howel, and Rowles said "places are important symbols of the self, cues to memories of important life experiences, and a means of maintaining, reviewing, and extending one's sense of self, especially in old age" (cited in Weisman et al., 2000, p.12). Memories of home and the journey to the 'land of promise' are all retained and retold for long (Marsella & Ring, 2003). However, finding a home in a foreign land is one of the challenges facing Filipinos in diasporas.

Anthropologists Mary Douglas and Vincent Descombes respectively argued that home is not a fixed space but the control one has over it and that home is a virtual space (cited in Morley, 2000). Home can be mythic and linked to imagined homeland and community. Benedict Anderson considered an imagined community as an enacted space where foreigners play roles and relationships of belonging. Likewise, in Morley (2000), Angelika Bammer talked about the "we-ness" created by stories and narratives is constructed and linked to space rightfully considered as home. In a pragmatic sense, home is where opportunities lie (Findley, 1987; Samonte, 2003). Realities like poverty or economic uncertainty in the homeland influenced sponsored Filipino seniors

to come to Canada. In Findley's (1987) study on Filipino migration, her findings revealed that Filipinos migrated overseas mainly for economic reasons and choose locations that could bring about personal family welfare and the reduction of an uncertain income. Weisman et al. (2000), however, suggested that the modalities of experience or the 'place experience' linked to the notion of home is a seamless and holistic entity. It seems to imply that facets of experiences in a place are essential in the constructions of home.

Context of Seniors in the *Hostland*

Sponsored Filipino seniors are immigrating to a place where it is reported that the population is aging. These seniors may be viewed as burdensome to Canada as it might increase the aging population and future resources of the health and social welfare systems in Canada. But will that be true? This section provides the context and views towards seniors that link the findings to the multiple benefits of labour or employment and motherwork of sponsored Filipino seniors in the hostland.

Aging Population

Our world, now inhabited by 6.5 billion people, is aging. Statistics reveal that older persons age 60 and over comprise about 672 million (UN, 2005) while those age 65 years and over share 7.3% or 471 million of the global population (CIA, 2005). In 2050, there will be two older persons for every child in developed countries (UN, 2005).

Canadian population is aging. In 2009, its population growth was 0.817% (ranked 138th in the world); and its birth rate of 10.28/1,000 population (ranked 192nd) was nearly close to its death rate of 7.61 deaths/1,000 population (ranked 117th) (CIA

World Factbook, 2009c). The baby boom and baby bust affected its population from early 1950s to the present times. Between 1941 until 1961, the fertility rate of Canadians rose from 2.83 to 3.84 and total births increased from 264,000 to 476, 000 during the period of twenty years (Novak & Campbell, 2006). However, the baby bust began in 1961. According to Foot and Stoffman in 1998, there were two reasons for the bust: the use of birth control pill and the increase of participant of women in the labour force (cited in Novak and Campbell). Today, Statistics Canada (2009) revealed that about 13.7% of the population aged 65 and older.

Moreover, reports from CIA World Factbook (2009c) indicated that the median age of Canadians was 40.4; and that as of May 2009, the population of people age 65 and older rose to 15.2% of 33.5 million people. In 2026, Canada's population will increase between 34 – 39 million and the ratio of older persons is one for every five people (Statistics Canada, 2001). The Seniors and Community Support (2009a) in Alberta projected that between 2011– 2021, older persons will increase from approximately 410,000 to 627,200 or about 12% - 16% of its population; and that in 2031, one of every five Albertans would be seniors.

Demands of Care

The increase of older people in Canada is viewed as a fiscal burden in the years ahead. As cited in the work of Novak and Campbell (2006), the editorials of Calgary Herald and Globe and Mail indicated some expectations of astonishing tax increase in Canada due to its aging society and baby boom as a 'massive unfunded liability.' Novak and Campbell further cited the works of Denton, Feaver, and Spencer in 1998 which concluded that "the overall dependency ratio (which decline rapidly between 1961 and

1991) will rise but will still be low by historical standards...” and reassured “those who are concerned about the possible inability of the economy to support its dependent population” (p.73). However, such predictive ratio met objections around economic burden of older persons. Although 70% of Canadians rated themselves in excellent health condition, among seniors, only 30.5% rated a very good health condition (CCSD, 20007c).

A report from the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) (2007a) indicated that about 16.8% of seniors in Canada lived in poverty and that over half a million had low income and most of them or 340,000 lived in the cities. The same report indicated that number, however, declined because of the increase of income of seniors owed to the maturation and their eligibility for Canadian Pension Plan /Quebec Pension Plan. According to CSSD, poverty rates for seniors age 65 to 74 was 17.4% (women) and 11.8 % (men) in Calgary. For ages 75 +, poverty rates were 28.3 % (women) and 11.2 % (men). In regards to employment, about 56% of seniors worked fulltime and another 43.4% worked part-time. There had been an increase of employed seniors by 50% since 2000 (CCSD, 2007d). In 2006, about 331,800 Canadian seniors were in the labour force – a rise of 6% in 2000 to 8.3% by 2006 (CCSD, 2007e). Overall, 5% or nearly 1.7 % of Canadians relied on welfare (CCSD, 2007b).

One response to the demand for more caregivers in Canada has been to import people from other countries. The Philippines is one among the countries that provided exportation of caregivers to Canada. A report from the Community Alliance for Social Justice indicated in the Philippine Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) that since 1992 until 2004 about 90,000 Filipinas entered Canada under the Live-in Caregiver

Program (DOLE, 2004). Filipina caregivers provided care not only to seniors but also to children and persons with disabilities. They provided help to Canadians to live on with their life and activities trusting that someone is looking after their loved ones. However, not all Canadian families can afford to hire caregivers, family members and friends help each other in providing care.

Seniors helping other seniors have become a practice in Canada. In the recent study by Cranswick and Dosman (2008) on *Eldercare: what we know today*, they spoke about the caregiving experience of baby boomers and seniors who provided care to the aging population. The study revealed that in 2007, caregivers aged 45 years and older increased by over 670,000 to 2.7 million; that 1 in 4 caregivers were themselves seniors; that nearly 16% were in age range 65 to 74; and that 8% were 75 years old and over. Caregivers took on multiple responsibilities. The study further revealed that 6 in 10 caregivers were women. One of the major implications of such empirical study is its challenges to stereotypical construct about seniors as burdens of the state.

The Stigma of Dependency

If seniors are stigmatized as dependents and burdens on society, such assumptions could deprive them of opportunities, including employment. Prejudicial understanding of aging refers to a continuing degradation of the body's ability to retain its integrity (Hendricks, 1995), which is believed to affect their ability to engage in employment. The economic concept of the "elderly dependency ratio" views older persons as inherently dependent of support from the working age hence they are seen as dependents and burdens to fiscal budget, without regard to their abilities or desires (Stone, 2002). Such stereotype inexorably put older persons on the periphery.

Dependency is likewise associated with the medicalized model of aging. It has become a well-constructed notion that society has prepared for that day of retirement when one gets to 65. Retirement has pushed older persons to be claimants of various resources at the cost of sustained construct that aging is a debilitating condition (Hendricks, 1995). Claims for life and medical insurances, medical care, retirement payment, elderly pension, and even mortuary planning have all been ‘professionalized’ and commercialized. Carroll Estes (1986) observed that we have processed and treated the needs of older persons as a commodity. Those who benefited most from the commercialization of the needs of the aged are the medical industries. Health care has become a market good like any other commodity. Access to health care and the fiscal budget that goes along with it have all come to the point of commercialization. Dependency, an imposed construct rooted in the ethos of time, now manifests itself in social policies and practices, which discriminate older persons from fully participating in their communities.

To overcome dependency and debilitating condition of aging, ‘successful aging’ has now become the rhetoric of the day. Media promotes ‘successful aging’ through advertising of older persons who are healthy, active, affluent, and admired. Stone (2002) implies that stigmatization and disempowerment is exacerbated when seniors fail to qualify the ‘standards’ around aging well. In Stone (2002), the works of Rowe and Kahn on successful aging suggests that the “cognitive and/or physical decline is not an inevitable result of aging” (p.62). This perspective opens a debate that aging is not about physical decline or detachment from the social world.

The steering committee for the Government-wide study on the impact of the aging population in 1999 advised that independence is about freedom of choice and is realized in several ways, e.g. personal planning for senior years, healthy lifestyle choices, safe and secure living environments, and community participation. We live in a family, a village, or in a large society. We need one another, young or old, rich or poor, white or coloured. Our daily experiences tell us that we depend on each other for some reasons; thus, our community participation expresses our being part of the whole and playing our roles. The social trend of seniors caring for other seniors is a movement away from the constructs of dependency to one of interdependence and intradependence where each one cares for each other and plays a role in the family and community.

Unemployment and Immigrant Seniors

Employment is a dominant source of personal identity and meaning (Muirhead, 2004). It gives a sense of meaning and understanding of who we are and what we want to be. Employment boosts self-esteem and confidence. It also provides a sense of financial security, at least in a capitalist market-oriented economy. Altschuler (2004a) who researched on the meaning of work affirmed the feeling of independence and sense of dedication of older women in performing above and beyond their call of duty – although some experienced discrimination and being in the workplace. In another study on conditions of housework and other unpaid work, older women shifted their perception of housework as work, although there was a decrease of importance of housework to those who no longer had siblings (Altschuler, 2004b).

Despite recent studies showing that older persons are living longer and healthier, (Denton & Spencer, 2000; Gallagher, 1994) many of them are unemployed. Livingstone

(2004) cited that in 2002, unemployment around the world had a record high of about 180 million. Unemployment in industrialized countries was at 7%, while Canada had a slightly higher rate. Previous data has informed us that seniors in Canada have increased their entry in the labour market (CCSD, 2007d, 2007e). However, whether the same thing has happened to immigrant seniors in Canada is something that needs further exploration.

Immigrant seniors have no control or ownership over the results of their labour. Often, their labour is at a cheap price. Those who failed to find jobs have to depend for support from their children or government. They stayed with their children and engaged in housework. Unfortunately, some were victims of domestic abuse, an issue with high familial sensitivities. Those who stay in seniors housing appear independent and self-reliant, but many of them are experiencing loneliness and isolation (Hui, 1987). Even those in group homes experienced abuses, as indicated in several studies on seniors (Hui; see also Ansello, 1996; Levine, 2004). Moreover, unemployed immigrant seniors are in the cycle of dependency. While some are engaged in paid employment, a large number of them are relying on support from their families or relatives. Many may have worked hard to prepare for their retirement, but when illness strikes retirement lump sum and monthly pensions are often less than enough. Those who do not have government pensions, like the sponsored Filipino seniors, and the unemployed are even in a most desperate situation.

It is worth noting that researchers have contested the traditional retirement age of 65 in favour of employment of seniors. Denton and Spencer (2000) argued that the calculation of 65 years old as the age of retirement is associated with the working life-

pattern of men. Life expectancy has risen over the past decades. Based on their calculations age 65 is a definition of old in 1951. In 1991, the mean life span of Canadian male is no longer age 65 but 68.5 while the female population is age 71. Likewise, some studies focused on delaying the retirement, based on the assumption that people are inclined to continue working if only they can have control over the forces that impede them from continuing their paid employment (Greller & Stroh, 2003).

Cutting off the participation of older person in the workforce at age 65, may be worth assessing considering that many are able to perform employment tasks even if they have passed the retirement age. Those who have been working for many years may have honed their skills and have mastered their expertise on the job; hence, their retirement could create an impact on the operation of their organizations. Canada has many unmet needs and unused power resource of seniors including sponsored Filipino seniors. Sadly, many Canadian employers do not recognize home-country credentials or experience. A lot of those who gained paid employment were in non-technical and service sector (Roy, 1997). With regards job displacement, empirical researches showed evidence that there has been limited impact of inflow of immigrants on job displacement. For instance, studies of Roy in 1987/1988 found no substitutability of between immigrant and Canadian-born workers. Likewise, Roy indicated that the study by Akbari and Devoretz on the impact of immigrant workers on employment of Canadian-born workers found no significant effects on job displacement. The rising unemployment and underemployment trend (Livingstone, 2004) and stigma towards seniors as debilitating (Hendricks, 1995) and dependents (Stone, 2002) pose a challenge to hiring seniors in the workplace.

Views Affecting Labour

Negotiating identities and finding a home in the *hostland* is within the continuum of diasporic experience, as informed by this study. However, what does diasporic experience mean to sponsored Filipino seniors in the context of their provision of support to immigrant families? In a neo-liberal/capitalist *hostland*, does their labour of support to immigrant families mean anything at all? In the following section, I have introduced three main perspectives on labour and their relevance on seniors, particularly the sponsored Filipino seniors. The discussions below will focus on neo-liberal, Marxist and critical feminist views on labour.

Capitalist hegemony in the world has gained more strength in the 20th Century (Makhijani, 1992). According to Baldoz, Koeber, and Kraft (2001), the triumph of market capitalism over the socialist system paved way to globalization to advance its stage thus allowing international capital (financial and material resources) and political control. More rich industrial nations are importing labour from former colonies and disadvantaged countries to cater its domestic and care needs. Baldoz et al. claimed that production workers in the US and other technologically advanced countries are encouraged to develop mental work more than physical and manual labour. Canada, for instance, imports thousands of caregivers and nannies each year from many poor countries like the Philippines. The outflow of Filipina working as domestic helpers in no less than 130 countries has been phenomenal – these “women are the quintessential service workers of globalization” (Parreñas, 2001, p.1) until now.

In the book *The Golden Age Illusion*, Webber and Rigby (1996) elaborated the capitalist view on labour and productivity. Productivity refers to the labour value of

commodity, social relations of production, and the technical capacities of the plant, and the equipment in the workplace. To improve productivity, it is necessary to reduce the labour value of the commodity and to calculate the values of productivity based on tons of commodities and hours of labour. In the workplace, productivity and profitability is now the language of promotion (Webber and Rigby; see also Baldoz et al., 2001; Haydu, 2001).

Webber and Rigby (1996) further argued that productive labour should create use values, which exclude housework or household, government, and independent commodity production; and that productive labour excludes non-capitalist production and non-exploited workers. The use value created outside production does not have a market value. Non-marketable labour and produce does not belong to the criteria of productive labour, regardless of its use value. Maximum profitability is the mantra of the global economy. Neo-liberalists abandoned the Marxist theory of labour, production, and capital and called it a fiction (Burawoy, 2001; Haydu, 2001).

Karl Marx saw the oppression of workers and alienation of their labour in capitalist society. Alienation of labour means denying workers ownership of their own labour and produce. In his *Manuscripts of 1844* he wrote that the alienation of a worker means: “the more he produces, the less he can consume; the more value he creates, the less value he has...labour produces fabulous things for the rich, but misery for the poor” (cited in Rius, 1976, p.79). Reiss (1997) cited Engels’ view towards alienation of labour as an ‘alien power’ or something that exists independently and has a power on its own.

In addition, Marx said that “the purchaser of labour-power consumes it by setting the seller to work...” and that “...products are therefore not only results of labour, but

also its essential conditions” (cited in Nichols, 1980, pp.42 and 45). In the words of Braverman (1974), the *differentia specifica* of capitalist production is purchase and sale of labour power. By purchasing labour and using it to expand capital, capitalist deprives workers of control over their labour or his or her creation. Forced by circumstance, workers have to sell their labour to purchase the commodities they produce in order to survive. They no longer produce things for their own immediate benefit but for the owner of production (Rius, 1976). Such cycle of alienation and exploitation provides basis for Marx to claim that social inequality is inherent in capitalism. He spoke about revolutionary struggle of the proletariat as means to produce change (Braverman; Nichols; see also Beamish, 1992; Fine and Saad-Filho, 2004; Gordon, 1990; Rius, 1976; Reiss, 1997).

In addition, labour power creates the famous surplus value or the swelling of capital of the owner of production (Beamish, 1992; Braverman, 1974; Nichols, 1980; Rius, 1976; Reiss, 1997). Surplus value is the gain from buying labour power and selling of produce, which result to the increase of money employed. For Braverman, when a capitalist purchases labour that can do much, he or she is buying an infinite potential, subject of course to factors affecting performance.

On the issue of domestic labour producing surplus and use values, Jackie West (1980) thinks of it as untenable. Domestic labour creates a value only when reflected in wages. However, she recognized that despite the neither productive nor unproductive nature of domestic labour, it still has economic significance in advance capitalism. She argued that wages alone do not suffice for the standard of living of working class; hence, domestic labour contributes and makes up the deficiency. However, Fine and Saad-Filho

(2004) argued that not all use value is a commodity. Some are not freely available for exchange for money. Motherwork of parents and grandparents has use values that are not readily available for commodification.

Interestingly, however, Harrison in *The Political Economy of Housework* argued that when a wife performs domestic labour for a husband, and when the capitalist buys labour power, the wife's surplus labour enters the value of the husband's labour power; hence, she contributed to the surplus value (Maynard, 1985). In like manner, if the older parents are the ones performing the surplus labour, they too contribute to the value of their son or daughter's labour power. Hart (1995) proposes that 'family wage', given the importance of motherwork, belongs to those who take care of children.

Critical Feminist theorists likewise see the alienation of labour. However, they went beyond Marx's alienation of labour, which was generally masculinistic in orientation, and argued on the devaluing, exploitation, oppression, and segregation of women. In a capitalist society, labour may be valued or devalued. A job contracted to produce and generate profit is visible and regarded with value. On the contrary, what does not cost or produce money is considered worthless, e.g., motherwork or housework usually performed by women (Hart, 1995; Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). Most people in industrial society believe that money is the basis of security or good life. According to Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, people draw their attention to money, a lifeless thing believed as the source of life. Critical Feminists proposed subsistence living. In subsistence, labour is delivered and produce is created for self-sufficiency and daily needs. They also argued that motherwork, an essential part of subsistence, is a life-sustaining and life-affirming work (Hart, 2002).

Critical Feminist Views on Motherwork and Subsistence

Capitalism has ignored and considered valueless the most valuable form of work expressed through care giving, motherwork or housework, and emotional labour (Bateson, 1994; Chodorow, 1978; Gallagher, 1994; Hart, 1995, 2002; Maynard, 1985; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999; O'Hagan, 1994; Parris, 2005). According to Gallagher, care is something that happens each day yet it remains invisible. The story of the Little Prince (Saint-Exupéry, 1943) challenges us that unless we open up our hearts to see that caring is integral in us, it will always remain invisible to the eyes.

In a capitalist society like Canada, Canadians hire caregivers to look after the persons whom they dearly valued. Each year, Canada imports caregivers from countries like the Philippines to perform the caring role. However, with the increase of sponsorship of parents and relatives who can provide care to the children of immigrant families implies lessening of commodification of care. There is no price to feelings and works of care especially to one's family. For Gallagher (1994), caring is a form of work that we do to others. It is valuable not in terms of cash exchange value but because of love and responsibility.

Hart (1995) further expanded the notion of work and used motherwork as a critique on the Western, Eurocentric, and masculinistic framework. She viewed work as something that creates and nourishes life involving the body and mind in the context of nature and culture. Work therefore represents a "dense web of cultural notions of competence, ability, skills, knowledge, and ways of knowing or coming to know, all of which are essential concepts within education" (Hart, 1995, p. 101). Motherwork in general is an orientation towards sustaining and preserving life (Hart; see also Mies &

Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999) that goes against the capitalist trend of exploiting labour and disregarding non-profitable or non-marketable endeavours.

One of the issues of neo-liberal capitalist system is its exclusionary regard on the labour of women, immigrants, minorities, older persons, and persons with disabilities. The question, *which works fits whom*, is often influenced by preferences on age, gender, color, race, physical abilities, and so on. Older persons and persons with disabilities are viewed insignificant, deviations, unskilled, and deficient human capital (Hart 1995). Their entry into the labour market implies cheap labour.

Furthermore, industrialization has taken the role of production away from the household. Before the onset of capitalism, family members laboured to maintain the household; however, industrialization created a notion of family as an area that is separate from production and a locus where women are 'privatized' and to perform domestic role as housewives and mothers while the men are in the public sphere (Chodorow, 1978; Hart, 2002; Maynard, 1985; Parris, 2005). Chodorow also suggested that home is not viewed a workplace, even if women labour physically, psychologically, and socially in taking care of men and children. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) used the term 'housewifeisation' to mean the "wageless reproduction of labour power" and "the cheapest kind of production work" (p.34). They disagreed with the Marxists and neo-liberal capitalists' assertion on wage labour relation as the basis for differentiating work from non-work. They claimed that many of the products in supermarkets like orchids, handicrafts, or artistic accessories today stem from motherwork. Capitalism exploits more in the area of production than on wage labour; and this includes the women engaged in motherwork.

It is often overlooked that within the family, economic decisions are made and economic values are assigned to household tasks, e.g., babysitting, cooking, cleaning, and laundering have some economic values with actual and potential costs. Domestic work including reproduction has an exchange value as well as a reproductive use value. Maynard (1985) and Parris (2005) suggest that childbearing and childrearing comprise a vast amount of unpaid labour that is profitable to capitalists. According to Paris, women sustain social order and prepare not just the next generation of workers but also enable their husbands to work full-time. In other words, the production of useful commodities inside a household is benefiting capitalism; however, when domestic work enters into the market, it becomes a 'hidden occupation,' non-specialized task, and cheap labour (Hart, 2002). In addition, Parris (2005) also forwards the notion of emotional labour as a conjunction of sentimentalism and labour. Within the family, household members act within a prescribed emotional disposition that limits social conflict and promotes social harmony. Domestic emotional labour is a woman's contribution to prepare family members for service sector jobs. Emotional work has an exchange value embedded in Motherwork.

Motherwork is about life-sustaining work or subsistence. According to Hart (2002), "subsistence work is rooted in the materiality, the physicality of life, of staying alive, or of simply surviving" (p.2) in an unsupportive and detrimental economic and social condition to the life-affirming orientation of subsistence or motherwork. The spiritual core of subsistence is its life-affirming work. The advancement of capitalism, however, has gradually diminished the life-cherishing component of subsistence and has reduced it to 'survival work' in a context of social and economic deprivation.

Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) viewed subsistence as encompassing from ‘moral economy’ to the many inseparable dimensions of life expressed through historical connectedness and continuity with the nature within and around us. It neither accumulates capital for profit nor produce to acquire money for food. Rather, it is about producing and maintaining food and life. There had been low regard toward indigenous and subsistence economy from colonialism to the current era of economic imperialism. Having regarded it as backward and valueless, subsistence work has been ‘de-economized’ or excluded from the economy.

With globalization, subsistence, motherwork, or housework has become invisible. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) proposed an iceberg model of capitalist patriarchal economics where the *capital wage labour*, executed through a labour contract and reflected in the gross national product, is the only visible economy at the tip of the iceberg. The rest of the invisible economy without labour contract are (arranged from bottom – up) nature, colonies (internal and external), housework (women), subsistence peasants’ work, and home workers, informal sector, or child labour. Furthermore, class analysis is inherent in the discussion of subsistence labour and production. The notion of “class” is linked to a position in economic structure or the financial assets, the economic power or control over surplus product and the corresponding relations (Hart, 2002). This suggests that subsistence work -- regarded as unimportant, non-marketable, and non-profitable -- belongs to the lower class category of economic structure. Zaratsky claimed that the “housewife emerged, alongside the proletarian” (Maynard, 1985, p.131).

The inequality of distinction of class and social functions cuts across race and gender as well as age and disabilities. Citing the work of Patricia Collins, Hart (2002) links race, ethnicity, or nationality with class and economic segregation, exclusion, and exploitation. Ethnicity and aging always have concern with issues around social justice and equality (Driedger & Chappell, 1987). Estes (1986), moreover, speaks of fragmentation, privatization, and corporatization of aged needs, which associated with constructs of dependency. Michael Oliver (1992) observed that the dominance of medical model has categorized people with disabilities as unproductive, thus argued that disability should be understood on basis of rights, and not care, choice instead of control, experience instead of expertise, collective and not individual identity, and self-help and not medicalization.

Critical Feminist theorists warn that capital accumulation and the transformation of work and nature into commodities and increasing the accumulation of money is polarizing and irreversible. Nature has its own limits, which capital and money cannot replenish. Money and capital grow from life but not vice-versa (Hart 1995, 2002; Mies & Bennholdt, 1999).

Motherwork and Gender Differentiation

Over the years, motherwork had been associated with women. Babysitting, cleaning the house, washing dishes, and providing emotional care and so on were roles labeled on women. They assumed universal roles as carers and protectors and put on heavy responsibilities on the wellbeing of others (Glenn, 1994). On the contrary, while gender-differentiated roles exist, many men are doing life-caring work by passion, by

background and training, by natural inclination, by consent, by preference, or by necessity.

Subsistence as sustaining life and motherwork as part of its life-caring and affirming work has a gender-free value performed by men and/or women or husband and/or wife. Unfortunately, many take for granted the life-caring work, which happens each day (Gallagher, 1994). In this study, I borrowed the term subsistence and modified its definition to mean motherwork support of sponsored Filipino seniors to their immigrant families in their struggle for survival within the context of diasporic experience. Motherwork support includes life-caring work that includes financial and material support that alleviates the living condition of the children of sponsored Filipino seniors. It is not necessarily a gender-differentiated role.

Studies suggest that many immigrant seniors provided unpaid domestic tasks, life-caring work, financial contribution, or emotional support to their kin (Durst 2005; Hui, 1987; Leung & McDonald, 2007; Parenñas, 2001). It is disheartening to see the disregard of domestic labour within the realm of production (Chodorow, 1978; Hart, 2002; Maynard, 1985; Parris, 2005). The definition of labour within the confines of production and market has therefore *type-cast* other forms of domestic work as secondary, and peripheral. Critical Feminists like Hart (1995), and Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999) insisted otherwise that domestic work has its value and traced in subsistence, where labour is delivered to sustain life and produce is created for self-sufficiency and daily needs. They advocated the value of work beyond the realm of capitalist framework of labour, capital, and wages and advanced the notion of

‘subsistence’. Motherwork and subsistence or the ‘other economy’ is often associated with poverty and backwardness; however, it produced and maintained life and central to economic and social activity (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). It is not about alienation but integration of work as part of maintaining life with its source of power from within and around us.

Motherwork and Family Care

Motherwork does not necessarily vanish with age. It is part of ‘subsistence work’, and is oriented towards sustaining life rather than extracting profit from it (Hart, 2002). Previous studies of Hui (1987) and Gallagher (1994) indicated that more men and women seniors are engaged in motherwork. The notion of motherwork influences a positive regard for older persons because of the valuable contribution to their families. The practice of motherwork may differ from culture to culture, but it could be assumed that the power to affirm and sustain life remains a common experience. If this is true, then motherwork has the actual and potent power to catalyze a change in the stereotypic view that seniors are a burden to society. Interestingly, however, the concept of family has become heterogeneous and diverse. In North America, for example, same sex marriages, couple/partnership arrangements, and single-parenting are part of the challenge of understanding the meaning of family. Hart (1995) calls for the demythologizing of the concept of traditional ‘family’ and ‘family orientation’ and reframing it as *living and working with children*. It means dismantling the dichotomy between feminine and masculine qualities. Hence, mothering becomes the concern of

everyone. In the workplace, the definition of worker would include the reality of mothering. Concepts of 'fatherhood' then becomes like 'motherhood.'

Giving quality care to children and other members of the family is something that money cannot buy. For working parents, it gives them a sense of relief to leave their children to someone they can trust. The research suggested that the quality of family life (including the stability and maturity of parents) is more important in the development of children (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001). For spouses providing care to sick spouses, the values of commitment, nurturing, responsibility, and devotion all come together (Russell, 2001). Older persons are among those who find meaning in caring for children and family (Treas & Mazumdar, 2004). Although the changing concept of 'family' maybe an issue for some, older persons generally 'mother' their children and their children's children. The studies of Gallagher (1994) confirm that seniors find meaning in providing family care; and that while caring relations or greater sense of connectedness (Gilligan, 1982) was found more in older women, both men and women older persons provide care and help to their kith and kin. Atchley (1972) in her *Continuity Theory* refers this caring attitude as a continuation of the past caring life of older persons. Among immigrant seniors, studies also revealed that many of them are engaged in childcare and domestic chores for their children (Hui, 1987; Kim & Lauderdale, 2003; Leung & McDonald, 2007).

Productive and Successful Aging

Under the capitalist notion of work, productivity means producing goods or something of economic value. It must be measurable, quantifiable, or with economic valuation in terms of return of goods or market value. Older persons are to assume

productive roles like anyone else. Bass and Caro (2001) defined productive aging as “any activity by an older individual that contributes to producing goods or services, or develops the capacity to produce them” (p.39). This definition is quantitative and associated with economic value. It excludes activities that are simply enriching.

In Hinterlong, Morro-Howell, and Sherraden (2001), *The Encyclopedia for Aging* defined productive aging as “the capacity of an individual or population to serve in the paid workforce, to serve in volunteer activities, to assist in the family, and to maintain himself or herself as independently as possible” (p. 7). The definition assumes a dynamic community life of seniors and supports the findings around active motherwork support.

On the contrary, Bass and Caro (2001) later argued that productive aging is a lifelong engagement as against the language of conservatives and liberals in public policy that associate productive aging as postponement of retirement date and creating financial incentives. In other words, older persons still have productive capacities. Hinterlong et al. (2001) also cited the work of Sterns, Sterns, and Hollis in 1996 that older adults have the physiological and cognitive capacity to engage in productive activity later into life. In addition, Svansborg (2001) claimed that older people retain the productive capacity or can regain functioning when provided with assistance. Certain functional impairments are not genetically determined but by exogenous factors like personal lifestyle, living circumstances, and availability of adequate medical care.

To counter related constructs of ‘inactivity’ and dependency, some social constructivists and gerontologists have redefined productive aging (Taylor & Bengtson, 2001). They spoke of the ‘myth of unproductivity’ and argued that productive aging is a positive response to the gap between the rising individual capacity and the availability of

institutionalized productive roles. Likewise, Ogburn and Riley remarked, “the institutionalized structure of opportunity has failed to keep pace with increases in the capacity and desire of older adults to fill productive roles” (cited in Hinterlong et al., 2001, p. 4). Critics, however, say that productive aging obliged older adults to be productive and forces them to think that their participation in society is necessary and thus eliminate the form of leisure as a form of later-life activity (Hinterlong et al., 2001).

Taylor and Bengtson (2001) viewed productive aging using some sociological frameworks. To mention a few, they considered the structural-functionalism framework of Emile Durkheim’s concept of society as a self-correcting and orderly system, where each one performs a function to contribute to the system. Moreover, using the framework of symbolic interactionism, people could redefine a dysfunctional symbolism of aging to one of productive aging could change people’s views toward older persons; and from a social constructivist perspective, seniors make meaning in the construction of their realities. Moreover, Taylor & Bengtson argued that there are theories that could help us see the influence of social structures on experience and behaviour towards aging. The theory on political economy of aging looks at structural factors and the influence of these on the experience on aging. Economic and social class, gender, race, and ethnicity are often institutionalized and reinforced. Furthermore, the Critical Theory questions the quantification or valuation of the contributions of aging. It argues that there is more meaning to later life than the economic, political, and social quantitative measures and the traditional positivistic assumptions.

The critical theorist Harry Moody (2001) redefined four ‘ideologies’ of old age. He said that successful aging, which traditionally focused on the health of older persons,

is now shifting to finding meaning in the last stage of one's life that entails high quality of life and satisfaction. He also spoke of productive aging that envisions older persons not as burdens of society but as actively generating income to support themselves and/or actively non-monetized roles in the community. Moody considered that radical aging is essential in addressing social justice and equality at the fore of society's social welfare agenda. Finally, Moody described conscious aging as engaging in personal growth and consciousness and finding meaning. Tornstam calls it as 'gero-transcendence' where one goes beyond self-actualization and ego-integrity toward a dimension of contemplation. Likewise, Koenig speaks of the importance of spirituality and meaning in later life – an aspect of older persons life that is now of interest to many gerontologists (Moody, 2001).

In the capitalist society, there is a dominant distaste for aging and seeing old age as a time of weakness and unproductivity (Novak & Campbell, 2006). Capitalists are exploiting 'ideologies' of productivity aging or successful aging in the guise of saving seniors from exclusion and extinction from productive service. Health-related programs and products, promoted by advertising, are catching the eyes of many seniors to regain their physical vitality and productivity from sex to brain enhancement. What is often unseen in this 'aging enterprise' is the subtle segregation of seniors who cannot meet the criteria of vitality and productivity.

So, if 'mainstream' means a society that only embraces older persons who are productive (producing goods with market value) what is the future of seniors whose work is not considered productive? Aging is a reality of life, and if our value as persons is gauged according to ability to produce for market use, we make ourselves valueless when all of us aged. It is unthinkable to live in a "Soylent Green" society – a movie on the

world governments who decided to process seniors into biscuits and wafers for public consumption. A disregard of the value of older persons and their contributions leads to a grim future.

Furthermore, successful aging is associated with productive life. Mass media has created images of successful aging: working older persons, strong and healthy, dynamic, and engaged in various facets of life (Stone, 2002). The images, however, are part of the aging enterprise that Estes (1986) argued in today's understanding of productive and successful aging. They are short of describing the true reality of many older persons who are unemployed, living in poverty, isolated, in domestic servitude, abused, terminally ill, and dying.

Bearon (1996) claimed that successful aging is central to gerontology. What does successful aging mean? Who determines a life of successful aging? Rowe and Kahn in the early 1990s conducted a study on the predictors of successful aging and came up with characteristics: "(1) low risk of disease and disease related disability, (2) high mental and physical function, and (3) active engagement with life" (Franks, 2005, p.2). However, I do not see this as very helpful at all. Foremost, it is discriminating and delimiting. Older persons, with or without disability, are equitably successful as anyone else. Secondly, there could be other factors that can make life successful in senior years, e.g., spirituality, family relationships, aesthetic engagements, financial resources, philanthropic endeavours, paid labour, among others.

A further theory on successful aging is the "disengagement theory" of Elaine Cumming and William Henry (1961). The theory suggests that in the normal course of aging, people are getting less interested in social engagement and thus disengage or

withdraw from participation in the family or community. Older persons willingly retire and live an inactive and passive life (Decker, 1980; Gallagher, 1994). Contrary to “disengagement theory” is the “activity theory” of Neugarten, Havinghurst, and Tobin. The theory proposes a busy and active life among seniors for successful living (Decker; see also Novak & Campbell, 2006). Some regarded the theory as narrow and implied only one advocacy of lifestyle; hence, many gerontologists disregarded it (Bearon, 1996). Robert Atchley (1972) discussed about the “continuity theory” of aging. He proposed that people who experienced successful aging carry with them their midlife habits, preferences, lifestyles, and relationships. Bearon suggests that the theory gained support from later studies that measured the variables in mid-life as strong predictors in later life. In the area of bio-medical research, there have been endeavours to extend the number of years of ‘active life expectancy’ (Fries & Crapo, 1981).

It is important to note that the meaning of successful aging, based on financial resources and luxuries in life in economically developed world, does not necessarily accepted in similar notion in poorer countries. In addition, a middle-class and elite understanding of successful aging may not mirror the same understanding among the homeless seniors in the streets or among those living in poverty amidst plenty in ‘rich’ Western nations. Austin (1991) makes sense in pointing out that aging well will continue to be unattainable if the multi-faceted issues around aging are not addressed e.g. lack of health insurance and medical care, poverty (particularly among minority populations), social and economic discriminations, malnutrition, and sub-standard housing. Expanding a number of models around successful aging may be necessary as the population of seniors become diverse and complex (Bearon, 1996). The problem, however, with the

rhetoric of successful aging is that it segregates older persons that do not meet the criteria. Segregation could only lead to more forms of stigmatization and disempowerment among the older persons. To insist on the notion of successful aging is an imposition on the psyche of people that there is such thing called unsuccessful aging (Stone, 2002). It segregates people who do not pass its mythical criteria. Moreover, contrasting the view of successful aging is the persistent regard of seniors as liabilities and tax burden of the state. Such deficit model does not spare sponsored Filipino seniors.

Reviewing Sponsorship Policy

The participants came to support their children. Sponsoring parents to come to Canada was a significant attempt of settlement of Filipino immigrant families. In this section, I have discussed briefly the CIC's sponsorship policy and its synchronicity with the welfare policy and the questions around the entry of sponsored seniors to Canada.

Sponsorship of Seniors

Sponsored Filipino seniors come through CIC's Family Class program. Sponsors and their sponsored relatives have to sign on a sponsorship agreement that commits the latter to provide the necessary support for subsistence. The sponsorship policy requires that sponsors shall provide the basic requirements for sponsored parents. In the Sponsorship Agreement, support shall be 10 years following the time when the sponsored father, mother, grandparents, or dependent child of the sponsor's parents became a permanent resident. The policy states that:

As sponsor or co-signer, I promise to provide for the sponsored person and his or her family members' basic requirements for a period that begins the day on which the sponsored person enters Canada with a temporary resident permit, if already in Canada on the day on which the sponsored person obtains a temporary resident permit following an application to remain in Canada as permanent resident, and in

any other case on the day on which the sponsored person becomes a permanent resident and ends... Basic requirements include food, shelter, clothing, fuel, utilities, household supplies, personal requirements and health care not provided by public health, including dental care and eye care... Elderly parents or grandparents are not expected to look for a job to care for themselves (CIC, 2009c, p.1).

The policy does not expect sponsored elderly parents and grandparents to look for job. The agreement mandates sponsors to provide the necessary means of survival for their sponsored parents. Failure to observe the agreement could cause sponsors a default in future sponsorship. Among other reasons, default occurs when sponsored parents received social assistance within the period ten years or during the prescribed period of support of sponsors. It means that the sponsor cannot sponsor again when in default of the previous sponsorship. To redeem from default, one needs to pay the full amount of any social assistance (CIC, 2009c).

Sponsorship further mandates that sponsors must be able to show proof of income no less than the minimum income required. For example, the minimum annual income required to sponsor both parents is \$ 26,972 based on the notice of assessment issued on the most recent taxation year by the Canada Revenue Agency (CIC, 2009c). CIC Manila further required that everyone included in the application for sponsorship must undergo medical examination, upon its advice (CIC, 2009g). It is necessary that applicants must pass the medical examination with its own designated physicians.

Synchronicity of Immigration and Welfare Policy

The ten-year prescription has been a source of debate. Sponsored seniors have mixed view about the prescribed period, though many found it too long. Others wanted a

more contingent approach based on immediate health needs of sponsored seniors. Some have questioned the embedded discriminatory stance of the policy.

In a focused group discussions that the Community and Neighbourhood Services in Calgary (2005), it revealed concerns of sponsored immigrant seniors who could not receive financial support from government within the prescribed period of 10 years. Security and elder abuse were among the concerns raised. Sponsored seniors depended on the good will of their sponsors. Without the support from sponsors brings them to an unsecure and difficult situation. They are also vulnerable to abuse because of their unfamiliarity with the systems, and services, and the inability to adjust immediately with the Western culture.

Many seniors in Canada have public pensions, e.g., Old Age Security (OAS), and Canada Pension Plan (CPP)/Québec Pension Plan (QPP) and the International Social Security Agreements -- the third kind of pension assumes that a sponsored senior has contributions to the Social Security System in the Philippines. However, within the prescribed ten-year period of sponsorship agreement, sponsored Filipino seniors are not eligible to receive pension support. Service Canada (2006) prescribed that:

A sponsored spouse/common-law partner of an OAS pensioner with less than 10 years of residence in Canada after the age of 18 is not eligible for the Allowance for the period of his or her sponsorship (up to a maximum of 10 years) (p.13).

The synchronization of the immigration and Canada's welfare policies with the prescribed 10 years waiting before one could avail of the government support was perceived as a systemic burden that beset sponsored Filipino seniors. With a very limited knowledge on how to access services for seniors or not knowing whom to ask for help could be a despairing experience for senior who was evicted from the household of his or

her sponsor. In the absence of support from sponsors and government, life of sponsored Filipino seniors could be miserable in Canada. CNS (2005) further cited that sponsored seniors and immigrant seniors alike faced health issues, emotional and social changes, and loss and vulnerability to mental and emotional problems as consequence of uprooting them from their tradition.

The policy of Alberta Seniors Benefit program, however, has delighted sponsored seniors. Today, they are able to avail some monthly cash benefit from the government. In this program, sponsored Filipino seniors can avail the assistance if they are 65 years old, have lived in Alberta as permanent residents for at least three months, and have income level within allowable limits (Seniors and Community Support, 2009b).

Are Sponsoring Retirees Liabilities?

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008) reported that 16,597 sponsored parents and grandparents were welcomed to Canada as permanent residents in 2007; and for the period of ten years, 1999 to 2008, a total of 172,848 of them immigrated to Canada. There were mixed feelings or perceptions about the entry of older persons to Canada. While the Western practice and influence suggests that at age 65, people retire from work, many sponsored Filipino seniors did not necessarily come to Canada to retire. Many came to provide support to their children who ironically struggle for survival in an affluent country of Canada. Moreover, previous studies have already indicated that immigrant seniors in general have made their contributions to their immigrant families (Durst et al., 2001; Durst, 2005; Hui, 1987; Leung & McDonald, 2007).

Questioning the capability of sponsored seniors in their ability to contribute in Canada is no different from doubting about their ability to produce. As discussed

previously, critical feminists argued that motherwork support of parents and grandparents is a life-sustaining value that surpasses the notion of labour and capital and profit. I have also argued in the findings that motherwork support of sponsored Filipino seniors has a two-tiered value: 1) non-measurable care and emotional support; and, 2) the measurable value of return of their support, taking into account the time, cost, and access to economic opportunities of sponsors. Having passed the medical screening, they came with active mind and physique. Many found work and became active builders of Canadian economy. In addition, while some may have retired, it may not be part of their agenda, not at least after the period of ten years when government pension begins.

As cited earlier, sponsored Filipino seniors provided support to their immigrant families and did not come to Canada to retire. The notion of retirement has superimposed a socially constructed worldview that being and becoming a senior means loss of productivity and dependency. While some believe that retiring at age 65 is a way of life and promises financial rewards, others perceive it as the cause of economic and social insecurity and resist the thought of retiring from job (Onyx & Pam, 1996). Today many are pushing an open debate on the question “Do people really have to retire from work?”

Proponents from the biophysical and medical field claim that people decline as they age (Cavanaugh, 1997; Comfort, 1976; Decker, 1980; Stone, 2002; Svanborg, 2001). Furthermore, the mechanistic model of aging parallels the human body as a passive machine. Likewise, Cavanaugh suggests that in the wear and tear theory, the body is like a machine that deteriorates over time. Since physical decline is believed to affect productivity, retirement appears to be the best option. On the contrary, some social gerontologists argue that aging is not just about biophysical decline. It is also about

psycho-emotional maturity, personal responsibility and commitment, and community participation (Chen, 2001; Hinterlong et al., 2001; Kim & Lauderdale, 2003; Moody, 2001; Russell, 2001). Harry Moody criticized the dominance of the notion of inactivity and blamed it on modern society's fear of old age.

Distaste of aging as a period of weakness is dominant in capitalist societies. Novak and Campbell (2006) used the term ageism – a concept coined by the gerontologist Robert Butler -- which regarded older persons as dependent, fragile, vulnerable, and dependent on external support. This construct is evident in the economic concept of the “elderly dependency ratio” that views older persons as inherently dependent of support from the working age and are therefore dependents and burdens to fiscal budget, let alone their abilities or desires (Stone, 2002). The persistent construct of older persons as dependents and unproductive members of society also influenced perspectives on who should be welcomed to Canada. Welcoming non-skilled and potentially welfare-dependent sponsored immigrants always raised questions.

Summary: Relevance of Context

The literature provides the context of the subsequent discussion of this study. In this review, I have attempted to cover topics surrounding an understanding of Filipino identity and values, dispersion of Filipinos from their homeland, the context of seniors in the *hostland*, views affecting labour, and a brief review of the sponsorship policy. All these have theoretical relevance in the construction of findings that sponsored Filipino seniors are diasporas and that their experiences in providing support to their families in Canada is part of the diasporic experience of survival in the *hostland*. As cited at the beginning of this Chapter, I mentioned the relevance of the literature review in grounded

theory. Its purpose is to analyze works relevant to the research problem and the developed grounded theory (2000). In Chapter 5, I will consider the relationship of the reviewed literature and the emergent concepts from the findings of this study.

I have discussed Filipino values as a way of understanding Filipino identity. One of the emergent values in the study is *utang na loob* – a Filipino way of reciprocity. I have been theoretically sensitive to the other emergent values and examined the existing literature for theoretical or conceptual relationships. The concept of care was further emphasized as part of Filipino culture and linked to the value of family centrism, which influenced one's identity even as diasporas in the *hostland*.

The notion of diaspora nurtured the emergent concepts mirrored from the experience of participants in this study. I discussed the mass migration and diaspora of Filipinos to foreign countries as way to context the reader on the relevance of the concept in the findings. The literature review also covered the foundational understanding of diaspora from leading theorists such as Safran, Cohen, Clifford, Hall, Brah, and others. Diaspora as a concept has remained part of academic discourse in the areas of anthropology, sociology, political science, and development studies. In Chapter 5, I will argue and challenge the existing definitions and propose that Filipinos overseas are diasporas, including sponsored Filipino seniors. Finding a home is an emerging concept of the study; and *per se*, it is a diasporic experience for sponsored Filipino seniors.

In the discussion of the context of seniors in the *hostland*, I attempted to describe the aging population in Canada and the demands for care that goes along with constructs of aging. However, the discussion also argued that the notion of dependency of seniors is

a stigma and that statistics have shown that seniors are providing care to seniors. Despite the changing view towards productivity of seniors, many remain unemployed.

Moreover, I have also explored three of the notions of labour from the framework of capitalism, Marxism and critical feminism. In contrast to the notions and implications of the capitalist view of work and productivity, I emphasized the use of a critical feminist lens towards motherwork and subsistence. These link to the emerging concepts of care and subsistence support of sponsored Filipino seniors in the subsequent chapters.

I concluded this review with a contextualized discussion of the current sponsorship policy of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. I discussed some details of the sponsorship agreement, particularly the prescribed waiting period of 10 years before one can avail of the government old age pension support. CIC and Service Canada have imposed the ten-year requirement, which spares government from spending on aging-related health issues of sponsored seniors. Care and support for sponsored seniors has been handed on to sponsors, who probably do not have the full capacity to provide financial support. The discussion of sponsored seniors has gone beyond concerns around individual retirement and liabilities, to support and care not for themselves but for their families in Canada.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A Filipino's sense of self is derived from his or her family: I am who I am because of my family; their success is my success, and my shame is their shame.

-- Graham Colin-Jones and Yvonne

Colin-Jones (2004)

What made the sponsored Filipino seniors decide to come to Canada? Early works of Aranas (1983) indicated that Filipinos settled in Canada in search of better opportunities and professional advancement. Sponsored Filipino seniors immigrated to Canada with expectations. Were those expectations similar to Aranas' claim twenty-five years ago? This chapter discusses the findings of the study. It attempts to answer the research question with the categories emerging from the interview data. The overarching category is the concept of diaspora, which provided a theoretical framework of the six emerging family categories below.

- Family sponsorship: pushing and pulling realities
- Grounding the basis of support
- Encountering daily challenges
- Re-examining roles and expectations
- Finding meaning in support: personal and material
- Pondering the overall experience

These theoretical family categories emerged as related concepts within the continuum of diasporic experience.

The *diaspora* of families is a world phenomenon. Families migrate to other places because of unbearable living condition. Economic crisis, calamities, war and political instability, social disintegration, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of human rights violations drove millions of people to places where there is peace and security, economic stability, freedom, and respect to humanity. It is a common aspiration to seek a place that they can call their home.

The classical understanding of the meaning of diaspora was in the realm of displacement, dispersal, migrancy, and minorities. Over the past years, the term has expanded to include concepts around transnationalism, connectivity, hybridity, spatiality and locality, and identity in age a globalized age. The concept of diaspora also includes the spatial notion of being in an interim or provisional place – a view that people in diaspora will soon return to the homeland. Rethinking initiatives on the concept of diaspora has included the question of finding home in ‘imagined communities’ far away from ‘homeland.’

In this study, I have proposed that the participants – and Filipinos in general – are diasporas in Canada. How did the concept of diaspora evolve? Questions around the decision to come to Canada have drawn data that are emergent of concepts of push and pull realities (see Figure 2). These are economic and social constructs that led to their dispersion to the *hostland* Canada and are close to the debated concept of diaspora. Using constant comparison of codes and emergent categories of each participant, I was able to establish the pushing and pulling realities as a theoretical family category and then, along

with other family categories cited above, link with concepts and debates around diaspora through literature review. Diaspora eventually emerges as the overarching supra category as it conceptually represents the six family categories.

Moreover, the experiences of the participants mirrored through the voices of the participants, clustered around the concept of finding a homeland or hoping to have an 'imagined home' in Canada. For some sponsored Filipino seniors, it may not feel like home anymore to return to the Philippines. Canada, a once '*diasporic* home' may have become the permanent home of many sponsored Filipino seniors. Amidst challenges of finding a home, however, providing support to their immigrant families was a necessary action to meet the demands of subsistence and survival in a foreign land. The participants' acts of support were forms of motherwork and subsistence interwoven with Filipino values and tradition.

The Question and the Emerging Categories/Concepts

When the research question was devised, it was intended to be faithful to the fundamental tenet of grounded theory as emergent (Charmaz, 2000, 2005, 2006; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2008). The question 'How do sponsored Filipino seniors describe their experience of providing support to their families in Canada within the sponsorship period of 10 years?' was designed to be open to concepts that would gradually evolve in the process of digging information around the experience in providing support to their immigrant families (sponsors). While processing the data and asking the question over-and-over again, the emergent concept of living as diasporas became apparent as a newly constructed reality that resulted from participants' decision

to emigrate to Canada. Key to understanding the background of the diasporic experience was the pushing and pulling of family demands that necessitated the migration act of sponsored Filipino seniors to Canada.

In the beginning, there were constructed demands in the homeland. I called them pushing because they 'pushed' the participants to dispersion. The pushing realities were around family demands and social condition of seniors, e.g., the impoverishment of families, social disintegration because of the on-going dispersion of families, the lack of opportunities for seniors, and experiences of uncertainties in the homeland.

The pulling realities, which interplayed with pulling factors, were expectations of a better life in Canada, family reunification, meeting the needs of immigrant children, and ability to sponsor parents and siblings. The persistent interaction of pushing and pulling realities eventually led to migration of sponsored Filipino seniors through family class sponsorship. Immigrating to Canada fulfilled the demand for survival and subsistence support to immigrant families and transnational families back home. It likewise fulfilled the aspiration for family reunification and expectations of 'better life.'

While in Canada, the participants constructed their respective realities in a new milieu. They faced new challenges and had to deconstruct their preconceptions and expectations. With preconceptions of an easy and convenient life in Canada, providing multi-layered and multi-dimensional motherwork and subsistence support to immigrant children struggling for survival was least of their expectations. They also had to comply with their lifetime obligation to provide subsistence support to their families back home. Having no job or finding no match to homeland profession and training demanded them their patience and letting go of expectations with regard to work. To make sense of their

existence, they endeavoured to live in an ‘imagined community’ in an ‘imagined homeland.’ They constructed ‘imagined’ realities, and relates to these as if living in their homeland. They prepared ethnic food, spoke their own language, met with Filipino families and groups, celebrated special Filipino social and religious events, practiced Filipino traditions and values, connected with families and friends in the Philippines, and subscribed to international Filipino channels and magazines. Despite these, however, they faced the challenge of persistent push for integration into the mainstream culture. The participants experienced significant adaptation of the local culture among their children and grandchildren that caused some concerns in family relationships embedded with ethnic values and tradition.

As diasporas, the participants found meaning and renewed their perspective as Filipino parents and as seniors in providing support to their families. They have attained some sense of self-fulfillment for an ‘accomplished task.’ Pondering on their experiences, they revealed an acceptance of their newly constructed context and that they considered life in the *hostland* ‘better’ than the homeland. However, while some had come to accept their new reality, others continued to aspire to go back to the Philippines and considered themselves as transients in Canada. The notion of eventual return remained prevalent in the aspirations of some participants. Longing for home and frequent return to the Philippines was perennial. The perceived proximity of the homeland became blurred. It was as if a home just a ride away.

The discussion below covers the six theoretical categories in this study. The first theoretical category is the Family Sponsorship: Pushing and Pulling Realities with sub-categories of saving from impoverishment, disintegrating from families, living with

limited work opportunities, experiencing uncertainties, expecting a better life in Canada, reuniting with families, providing support to immigrant children, and sponsoring parents and siblings. The subsection ends with a summary.

Family Sponsorship: Pushing and Pulling Realities

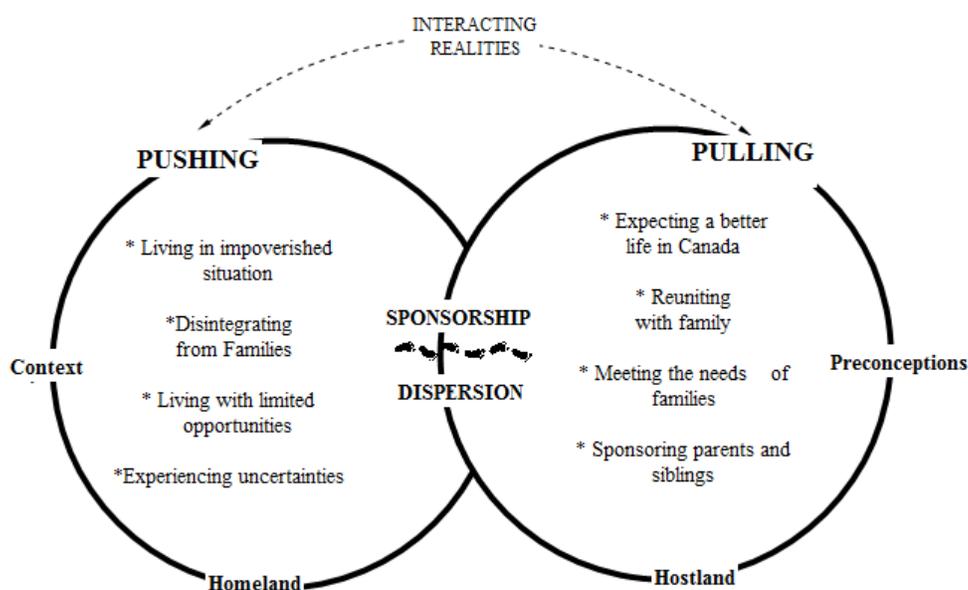
In an age of globalization and transnationalization, the world has seen more and more Filipinos leaving their country in pursuit of a better life. Sponsored Filipino seniors or parents were among those who left the Philippines in search of this ‘better’ life, not necessarily for themselves but for their families. Their decision to come to Canada was complex and linked to the pushing and pulling realities that were borne out of necessity. In Figure 2, the multiple realities of impoverishment, family separation, lack of opportunities for seniors, human rights violations, political instability, economic uncertainty, and unemployment pushed sponsored Filipino seniors to emigrate. The categories of pushing realities were interrelated and formed part of a continuum on the journey to *diaspora* in Canada.

Initiation to diaspora began upon sponsorship. Pulled by expectations of better life, family reunification, and the needs of their children in Canada, the participants decided to leave their homeland. Along with the pulling demands were expectations of affluence, peace and order situation, work and opportunities for seniors, other preconceptions of Canada, and the ability to support their kin in the Philippines. In the *diaspora* to Canada, the realities of pushing and pulling demands complemented each other.

Saving Family from Impoverishment

Poverty pushed Filipinos to dispersion. Many of the participants left their homes to save the impoverished condition of their families. They dreamt of a 'better life' in Canada. Nine of the participants (Poly, Fely, Del, Francis, Joshua, Gloria, Romeo, Lorna, and Bea) had impoverished lives in the Philippines. Among them was Poly who used to

Figure 2: Complementarity of Pushing and Pulling Realities



work in Germany as a member of a shipping crew. When he returned to the Philippines, he opened a fishing business but his savings were too little to sustain his entrepreneurial endeavour. He lost his investment and lived in poverty. About eight years ago, his daughter sponsored him to Canada. Poly came in pursuit of a dream to free himself and his family from poverty.

I came to Canada to alleviate the living condition of my family. It is better to live here, especially if one works and earns. (Poly)

Preconceptions of Canada were properties of the decision to emigrate (see Figure 2). Canada was viewed as a place where milk and honey flows. Nationalists may be quick to label a preconception of a better life in the West as part of a neo-colonial mentality, but it was a shared notion among the participants. The promise of economic opportunity attracted not only the participants, but also millions of Filipinos who hoped for a better life in Canada. The quote of Eddie provides an example of what he had considered prior to emigrating.

My wife and I decided to come to Canada because I already retired from job. Our children also advised us that job opportunities are a plenty in Canada. I am still strong and they told me that I could find work there. They said that life is better in Canada and that we should go there. Opportunities are all there and all these (advise) drove me to come. I am able to work here. **(Eddie)**

Participants heard about job opportunities for seniors in Canada. Their children told them that they were hireable and that their work would pay better, which would allow them to support their impoverished kin in the Philippines. Unfortunately for some, the promise of job opportunities was not as rosy as their expectations. Many remained unemployed. Finding jobs in the Canadian labour market was difficult amidst a global recession and in a place where social prejudice existed towards people who are aging. Upgrading skills to 'match up' with the Canadian standard was also costly and time consuming.

Disintegrating from Families

Children left their parents in search of opportunities in Canada. Separation brought loneliness and isolation from family members in the homeland. The reality of disintegration was a pushing-demand that influenced sponsored Filipino parents to move to Canada for reunification. As shown in Figure 3, a chain of migration in the family

happens through sponsorship. One or more members of the family resulted in more disintegration of family units. The interview data suggested that disintegration and re-creation would be resolved when sponsored Filipino parents have brought as many, if not all, members of the family to Canada. However, disintegration will persist, as not all family members are eligible to come to Canada.

The hope for a grand family unification in Canada was a worthy sacrifice. Francis, Del, Poly, Joshua, and Lorna exerted concrete actions to bring their children to Canada. Francis had asked his sponsor to help his other children to immigrate to Canada. Del had successfully assisted her other daughter to acquire a work permit whereas Poly asked his sponsor to sponsor all his children and their families to immigrate to Canada. Others like Joshua and Lorna exerted various means to help their children to immigrate but unfortunately applications failed during the screening process. However, this failure did not deter them from finding other means to alleviate the living condition of their families back home through financial assistance.

I supported my children through my bakery and grocery store. I was a teacher but I quit because of low salary - thus I tried engaging in business. I taught in public school for 22 years. Until now, only one of my children has a family with three children. My other two children have none. I help him because he does not have a regular source of income. I send a monthly support of \$ 500 for their utilities, education of children, and something like that.

I now have one child in Canada, another in the US, and three in the Philippines. My other children in the Philippines are no longer eligible for sponsorship. Although we were not able to bring them all here, we managed to bring our 16 year-old son. We did everything we could so they can come here - they just could not make it.
(Joshua)

My daughter could not look after her son because she has to work to support her family. She wanted her younger sister in the Philippines to take care of my grandson but my other daughter in the Philippines failed to pass the immigration interview. **(Lorna)**

The quotation of Joshua suggested a continuing aspiration of sponsored Filipino seniors wanting to bring all their children to Canada. Like a hen that relentlessly looks for a safer and abundant ground for her chicks, sponsored parents may find ways to gather their children together in a safer and better place. Many of the participants seemed informed about other ways of bringing families to Canada such as coming as caregivers, temporary foreign workers, and skilled workers through the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP), and family sponsorship.

Living with Limited Work Opportunities

Finding work in the Philippines is difficult. Millions of Filipinos, including seniors, are unemployed. Seniors were often the last, if chosen at all for job screening. The repetitive statements of the participants suggested the extent of unemployment of seniors in the Philippines.

I decided to come to Canada because of job opportunities. In the Philippines, Life is difficult and work is hard to find. It is one of the reasons of my coming to Canada. Given my age, I do not have work there. Here, I am accepted and able to work decently. **(Francis)**

Given the choice between the Philippines and Canada, well, I like it here because I have work. However, if I am unable to work, I will decide to go back to the Philippines. **(Gloria)**

There is a big difference between the two countries. It is advantageous to stay here. In Canada, seniors are able to get employment while in the Philippines older persons do not have work, as employment was limited for people age 35 and below. Opportunities are all here and these encouraged me to come. I am able to work here. **(Eddie)**

Unlike in Canada, Filipino seniors in the Philippines do not have the opportunity to work. If younger ones are finding it difficult to find work there, seniors are even in a difficult situation... It is better here because, at least, there is work. You are also able to help the Government. Therefore, I think it is better here. You do not find work in the Philippines. **(Fely)**

Although the Philippine government passed the Senior Citizens Act, many seniors in the country lived on the periphery and had very limited access to gainful employment and income-generating engagements opportunities. The Act entitled seniors to discounts on transportation, medicine purchase, and a few other privileges, but did not touch the 12% expanded value added tax (EVAT) on top of purchases made by seniors. Prejudicial constructs and attitudes towards older persons continued to segregate seniors from access to potential opportunities. Filipinos viewed seniors as dependent, helpless, retired, fragile, absent-minded, sickly, pitiful, and so on. In the Philippines, changing views towards seniors and their condition entail both attitudinal and systemic change.

As illustrated in Figures 1, 2, & 3, unemployment of seniors was one of the realities that pushed participants to emigrate. Participants who were over the age of sixty-five were persistent to work and thus challenged the construct of retirement. When does a Filipino senior retire is a crucial question that has implications to continued support of families in impoverished situations. As Eddie indicated in one of his quotes, he said that he will continue to work until he becomes weak and needs support from his sponsors. Among the eleven participants, only Francis had a job that matched his home experience.

Experiencing Uncertainties

The concept of uncertainties covers the experience of peace and security, economic security, environmental concern, and perceived future of the family.

As I have said, I am not comfortable with the peace situation back home. There is always trouble. You can read it in the newspapers. Right? I like it here better. There is peace. I hope that I can bring all my children here. **(Francis)**

When I was in the Philippines, I always had to find work to feed my family but not as good with what I earn now. With poverty in the Philippines, I am not sure about

the future of my children there. It is a good thing that my daughter brought us here...of course, there is no place like home **(Poly)**

I really found the Philippines so hot. When I went home the last time, I could not stay long there. There was so much traffic, people, noise, and dust is just all over. There is always storm there. I am glad I am here. Besides, my family is here. Canada offers good future to my grandchildren. Education is good. They will have a good future here.... **(Fely)**

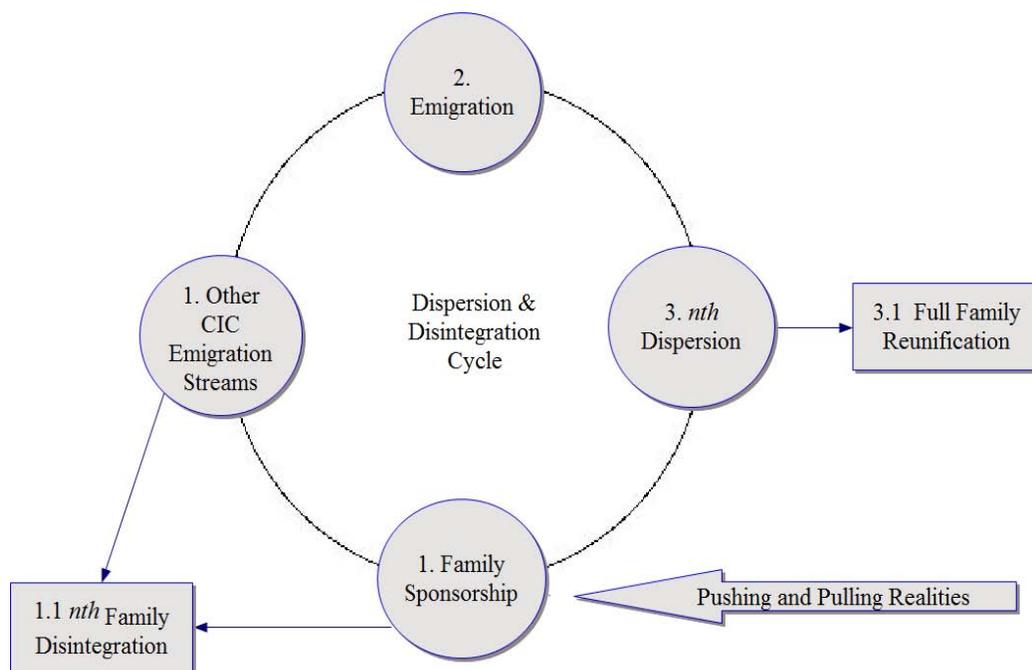
I am here in Canada for my children and grandchildren. I was hoping that coming here would make me more able to help my family in the Philippines. I also want to earn, but what I can do? My grandson with disability needs me more. **(Lorna)**

While not all participants had the same reasons of emigration to Canada, uncertainties around their condition in the Philippines were evident in their statements. The shared uncertainties were around the future of their families in their homeland. Francis had around peace and order condition in the Philippines and contrasted it with his experience of Canada in his latter quotations. The participants' dispersion to Canada also suggested about their concern for their families, particularly their grandchildren, as evidenced in the above quotations of Poly, Fely, Lorna, and Francis.

Expecting a Better Life in Canada

Participants expected the fulfillment of their dream for a better life in Canada. This means access to income opportunities, having a job, being able to support their poor families in the Philippines, and having a home. Categories that were associated with the notion of a better life were family reunification, being able to support the needs of sponsors, and the fulfillment of personal dreams. As shown in Figure 2, all these were composites of the pulling realities to immigrate to Canada.

Figure 3: Overview of Dispersion to Reunification



Having a job was central to the concept of a better life in Canada. The quotes of Del and Joshua explicate the importance of work among sponsored Filipino seniors like them.

My daughter sponsored me to come to Canada. I came here to work and be with my family... Although I worked in the Philippines, I still wanted to come to experience working here... Now that I have a busy job, I cannot help my family – but is it now that I also need them. My work income helps them. Sometimes, I still consider my work a hindrance to be with my family especially when the workplace gets busy. My supervisor would not allow me to take a leave when busy. I need to give a two-week notice. **(Del)**

I came to Canada to have a better life. I wanted to be sure that I have a job before deciding to come... I cannot afford not to provide support to my children in need. My daughter was insistent that I should come because there was so much work in Canada but few workers. I agreed. **(Joshua)**

When Del's daughter migrated to Canada, she hoped that one day she could be with her. She believed that going to Canada signalled the end of her financial misery. Del immediately found a job but it was a very demanding one, which deprived her from being with her family. As years passed, quitting that job was no longer an option, as she needed to support her sponsor's monthly mortgage and provide financial support to her children in the Philippines. Del's situation depicted a contradiction of priorities involved in providing both family support and achieving family reunification. Moreover, Joshua reiterated that she expected a better life in Canada in exchange for what she had in the Philippines. Joshua's daughter guaranteed her jobs that would enable her to sustain family support. The participants like Poly, Del, Francis, Joshua, Gloria, and Lorna did not intend to save the monies they earned. Like Joshua, they used their income to support their sponsors and their impoverished kin in the Philippines. It is important to note that before coming to Canada, sponsored Filipino seniors underwent a thorough medical screening. Passing the medical test did not just mean sponsorship application progress but also an expectation that one was physically qualified to work in Canada.

Sponsored Filipino seniors may find it difficult to find jobs that match their skills. While CIC recently developed programs to accredit professions immigrants, many skilled workers including sponsored Filipino seniors, were unable to get jobs that matched their skills and training back home. In addition, the stigma of aging and an economic recession also contributed to their difficulties in finding jobs that matched their training. Eddie was among those who did not find it easy to apply for another job after his termination from a meat factory. Nevertheless, although finding a job was one of his unfulfilled expectations, Eddie was pleased to be reunited with his family.

Reuniting with Families

Family reunification was one of the pulling-demands that brought the participants to Canada. Fely and Bea were widows and no longer had children in the Philippines.

They preferred to stay with their children in Canada than to live in isolation.

My son came in 1997. Three years after, he sponsored me to come to Canada. My daughter also came with me. I only have two children. One was already in Canada; I had no choice but to come here. My husband passed away in 1961. **(Fely)**

I had two children, but my daughter died in the Philippines. I only have a son left, who is now here in Canada. My daughter did not marry. When my son left for Canada, she was still alive. She used to work in a Bank but suddenly got sick and unexpectedly died. She used to give me some money.... I no longer have children in the Philippines. I am here in Canada because I pity my son. I care for him and such feeling comes from within - of course, he is my son and they are my children. **(Bea)**

Moreover, Eddie and Romeo were 'retirees' and decided to live with their children. After retirement, Eddie decided to come to Canada and immediately found work. He came to reunite with his family. Romeo also retired from his job. His daughter sponsored him so he could help babysit the children. The situations of isolation and retirement also contributed to the preconditions of pulling demand for family reunification.

Family visit also facilitated reunification. Some who came as visitors may decide to remain in Canada as sponsored parents. Gloria came to Canada to visit her family. She wanted to be with her children and grandchildren, as she had not seen them for seven years. She later realized that her daughter and son in-law had applied to sponsor her.

I came first as tourist. At that time, I wanted to see my grandchildren and the whole family, as it had been seven years since my daughter last visited us in the Philippines. I did not know that they were working on sponsoring us (including my husband and youngest son). When I came here as tourist, I then realize that they have submitted the documents to sponsor us. **(Gloria)**

Older parents who come to Canada on visitor's visa may not necessarily come as tourists, as the term connotes. Like the experience of Gloria, some may have come to renew and strengthen relationships with, and provide respite support.

Providing Support to Immigrant Children

When the participants came to Canada, they came to provide support and care for their children and their families who could not afford to hire babysitters, housekeepers, cook, and caregivers in Canada. Lorna, Bea, and Rosa were among those who came to respond to the needs of their sponsors, as indicated in the quotes below.

I came to Canada because I wanted to support my daughter and her family. My grandson with cognitive disability needed me. I am willing to sacrifice my life, share my love, and care for my family here in Canada. **(Lorna)**

I came because I want to help my son to look after his children. My son and his wife are working. No one could babysit my grandchildren. I pity them. I have no other motive of coming here. I do not work. I engage with my grandchildren. I babysit them. **(Bea)**

Since I came to Canada, I have been helping my children in house chores. When they work, I babysit the little ones and help prepare the others for school. **(Rosa)**

Lorna came to Canada to provide care to her grandchildren. In the narrative, she claimed that her love for her daughter and grandchildren drove her to come to Canada. In like manner, Bea had one surviving son with children and had no family in the Philippines. She decided to be with them because of love and concern. She pitied them. In Tagalog, the term pity is '*awa*', which is not just about expressing sympathy or regrets or feeling sadness for someone but has nuances of love and sacrifice or even acts of self-denial. The term *awa*, when predicated with care, becomes a property of the fundamental concept of love that has affinity to *agape* or the Greek term for self-giving love.

The pulling demand that led Lorna, Bea, and Rosa to Canada was not to gain employment. Lorna brushed aside job opportunity and focused on how well she could provide support to her daughter and grandchildren. She was willing to offer personal sacrifices. The same concept of loving and caring was evident in the quotes of Bea and Rosa. They provided the support voluntarily and did not expect payment for their efforts. Bea and Rosa emphasized that their sole intent in coming to Canada was to provide help to immigrant children. What it meant to Poly was to provide subsistence support to his children for as long as they needed it, which suggests that Filipino parental sacrifice was a necessary property of expressing love to children beyond the limits of time.

Many immigrant families leave their children to babysitters, or in day-homes or day-care centers, to be able to work. The demanding lifestyle, high cost of living, non-child friendly atmosphere in workplaces, and other circumstantial conditions left parents putting their children in the care of other people or institutions – a ‘taboo’ to many Filipinos who are used to having a kin or a hired nanny to look after their children at home. For new immigrant families, balancing the demands of work, caregiving/babysitting, domestic chores, family and social relationships, payment of mortgages, and so on could be challenging. Participants who came to provide family support in various ways enabled their children to become active contributors to the Canadian economy. Their care and housework support eased the stress of sponsors. They enabled their children to spend more time in work and social engagements.

Sponsoring Parents and Siblings

Statements of the participants suggested that sponsorship was not just for parents but also for other siblings and kin who may be eligible to immigrate to Canada.

My son came in 1997. Three years after, he sponsored me to come to Canada. My daughter also came with me. I only have two children. **(Fely)**

I came to Canada with my wife and youngest child. Our eldest daughter sponsored us. She has a family but I live with her now...we hope to sponsor my other children soon. **(Francis)**

My daughter petitioned me to come. However, three of us came including my wife and my youngest son. **(Romeo)**

I came here with my wife on December 5, 2006. My daughter and my son-in-law sponsored me. **(Eddie)**

I did not have a clue about coming to Canada. Nevertheless, my daughter needed us here. She sponsored my youngest son and us (including my husband). I could not anymore sponsor my other children because they are now ineligible. **(Joshua)**

Fely came with her daughter. No one was left in behind. Francis and Romeo came with their respective wives and younger children but left behind the other members of their family in the Philippines. Francis, however, hoped to sponsor his family someday. Eddie and Joshua came with their respective spouses. Both also hoped to sponsor their children. Based on the above quotes, those participants who had families in the Philippines had the intent to sponsor their kin at an opportune time.

Summary

Canada ranked as one of the most popular destinations of Filipino immigrants. Filipinos generally perceived the country as a place of affluence and abundance. The rising number of Filipino immigrants and Filipino foreign workers in Canada is self-evident of the impression that jobs are available in the *hostland*. Despite the realities of unemployment, homelessness, and poverty in Canada, participants retained a positive view of the place as a land of economic opportunities.

In this section, sponsorship of parents to Canada was a form of dispersion linked to the theoretical categories of pushing-demands, such as impoverishment in the family, limited opportunities for seniors in the Philippines, and the disintegration of families. The other realities that further pushed participants to opt for sponsorship were discrimination, human rights violations, economic uncertainties, and political instability. Moreover, the pulling-demands of family reunification, providing support to immigrant families, and hope for better life contributed to a firmer decision to emigrate to Canada. There were expectations of affluence, better opportunities, peace and security, employment, better capacity to support kin, and a pleasant weather. Expectations or preconceptions of some, however, did not come true. Nonetheless, the hope for a better life continued. Participants intended to bring their families to Canada, which signalled a continuing dispersion of Filipinos to Canada.

Grounding the Basis of Support

Living as sponsored Filipino seniors was a challenging experience not just in terms of the pushing and pulling demands but also in grounding one's identity. Participants knew that their acts of support had their bases on Filipino tradition and values. Amidst the challenges of hybridity, they were aware of their collective identity that bore social expectations of Filipino parents. It means that the integration of the constructs surrounding collective identity and their personal identity became the bases of their unconditional support to families and kin in need of help. The relationship of the participants with their families was no longer just dyadic but also collective identity. This section endeavours to present the findings on participants' bases of support in areas around grounding identity, sustaining Filipino identity through Filipino values, and deciding to provide support.

The second theoretical category is Grounding the Basis of Support. It has three categories, such as, grounding identity, sustaining identity through Filipino values, and deciding to provide support. All these are discussed in sequential order. The section ends with a summary.

Grounding Identity

Why did the participants provide support to their families? Three sub-categories emerged from the analysis of data linking to the conceptual category on grounding identity, such as living daily as Filipinos, living daily as seniors, and living daily as mothers. It is important to note that the discussion in this section is not about separate and independent identities. Being Filipinos, seniors, and mothers were identities interwoven as one in the experiences of participants in providing support to their families.

Identity as Filipinos.

The experiences of the participants suggested that even if parents were aging and living as diasporas, providing subsistence support to family persists. If it is so, however, does culture or tradition have anything to do with the concern for subsistence? A lifetime subsistence support and labour of care to children and extended families, regardless of age and marital status, is a tradition collectively shared by Filipinos, a socially constructed identity, and an expectation. It is a common sight in the Philippines to see households with three or four generations living together and supporting each other. Living as transnational parents in Canada, nonetheless, did not curtail the social expectation and tradition. Participants indicated a high level of awareness and desire to help their children as evidenced in the statements below.

It is our Filipino attitude, right? Helping others in need is endowed and cannot be taken from us. Not all my children need help because some have affluent life. In fact, they help us when needed. We help each other. It is our family tradition to help one another. Our parents raised us this way. I am a Filipino and I would consider it our tradition. I can see the same value lived by other Filipino families. **(Eddie)**

For as long as I have the strength, I will help my children who are still in the Philippines. For Filipinos like us, helping others will always be there. I will work for as long as I am able to help. I provide support even to my relatives. **(Poly)**

I know that only the Philippines has the tradition of providing (prolonged) help or support to children. **(Francis)**

Participants suggested that providing support would continue for as long as one is able. Family support is not limited to children but includes grandchildren and closest relatives – a manifestation of a collectivist culture of Filipinos. Participants reinforced and the tradition and value of lifetime support to families in their immigrant families. Depending on the depth of Filipino values in immigrant families as well as the strength of

the family 'imagined community,' the practice of providing lifetime support could change through time, as it is constantly challenged by the 'culture' of individualism and consumerism.

Moreover, providing lifetime support to families was also about necessity to alleviate the living condition of children or when circumstance demands. For Romeo, neither poverty nor aging could stop him from giving help to his family. Likewise, Bea affirmed the concept of helping the children in need.

In Iloilo, most retired pensioners, like me, are poor. Despite their impoverished condition, their families continue to expect help from them. That is how we do it in the Philippines. It is not about being poor. It is about helping one another. I may be old and weak but I still help my children because I pity them. **(Romeo)**

Filipino parents help their children who do not have the means to survive. If children do not have work, or have very little salary, parents pity them and help them. Concerning my nephews and nieces, we help them with their education. I pity them. If children have work, they do not need financial support from their parents. It is a Filipino tradition for parents to help their children. Those who have none should receive help. Of course, you cannot enjoy eating while your children are hungry. Work is difficult in the Philippines yet even those who work do not get enough. Children are unable to go to school. Income is inadequate to cover the cost of food or daily needs. So parents tend to help their children even in little ways... **(Bea)**

The above quotes further emphasized that it is part of Filipino identity to provide lifetime and extended support. The normative action of helping is consistent with the tradition and expectations from Filipino parents. It means that poverty, scarcity, or inadequacy could not deter the practice of helping each other in the family. Living in Canada with income was a necessity to support their families in the homeland.

In addition, providing help as a lifetime support means without a definite end. Helping as a lifetime obligation is an interesting concept because on one hand, it means an in-depth commitment or oath of support. Not even death could break such

commitment. Surviving members of the family still get the support from their parents, grandparents, brothers or sisters, and closest kin.

It is my choice to help my children. They do not like what I do for them because they are grown-up now. I told them that supporting my children is an obligation for life. There are many in the Philippines who support their children. **(Joshua)**

I am not sure on the kind of support that children expect from their parents. I met several working seniors in Wal-mart who still send financial support to their children in the Philippines. Married and working children do not necessarily expect support from their aging parents. It would be up to the parents on how they could make their children happy -- like giving them something that they do not expect to receive. **(Gloria)**

You need to help your family. Helping one's family is a common thing in my country. I have not seen anything like that in Canada. It is a Filipino tradition to help the family. **(Del)**

Supporting the children is a Filipino tradition. We do not expect them to return our support or help with favour. We help them freely. We want them to be happy. **(Rosa)**

Joshua indicated the concept of freedom to choose to help her children and yet in the end she claimed that the act of helping the children is an obligation for life – a seeming irony in her statement. She claimed of giving her support freely and yet was obliged to help. She clarified in her later statements that the obligation to help was a normative action expected from a Filipino parent – an expectation woven in Filipino parental identity. Moreover, the above quotation of Gloria did not mean that parents do not want favour from their children. Her intent was to make the children happy. Having to expect a return favour, of something understood as parental obligation, was not a Filipino norm of parenting. The statement of Del and Rosa likewise re-emphasized the obligation of parents to provide support to their family based on tradition. It means that the collective identity of Filipinos to provide lifetime support to their families is a family

norm and thus a social expectation. Helping families is more than just giving tuition fees to children, or sending some gratuitous amount for an occasional need or want. It means almost every form of subsistence support that sustains life of the family from childhood to 'forever.'

It is worth noting that the value of filial piety does not diminish even if parents do not expect their children to return their support with favour. The concept and practice of filial piety is not a favour returned to parents but a tradition or a social norm built into the identity of Filipinos. Giving a favour connotes some form of externality from the dyadic relationship of parents and children. Providing support to family bears some expectations, not necessarily in terms of money, but in living up to the purpose of support. For example, when parents sent their eldest children to higher education first, the latter should help their younger siblings later on. Fulfilling such purpose is not necessarily a returned favour but a meeting of social expectations to alleviate the family condition.

Lifetime obligation is something not necessarily appreciated by other cultures. Filipinos do not cut-off parental support when children reach the age of maturity or the normative age of eighteen. Filipino parents continue their support and allow their adult and married children to live with them and continue receiving their support. Adult children do not necessarily find work and live independently or separately from their parents.

Identity as Seniors.

Respect is akin to one's identity as seniors. In Filipino households, seniors occupy key roles. Traditional views considered Filipino seniors as wisdom-holders and decision-makers. Respect to their authority is evident in many Filipino families. Children and

grandchildren alike do the ‘mano po’ (putting on the right hand of a senior on one’s forehead as a sign of deep respect) to seniors in the family. It is important to respect seniors and not to denigrate them. Filipinos believe in *gaba* or curse to the denigrator.

Filipinos detest actions that denigrate seniors in the family. Bea was horrified to learn experiences of eviction of some senior parents from the homes of their children. She narrated the event as intensely as if it was her own story. The other participants like Poly, Lorna, and Del could not imagine how other Filipinos could neglect their aging parents and considered it an act of disrespect and perversity. In general, Filipinos would find it unimaginable to evict parents or grandparents from the home. It is contrary to Filipino tradition. Even the decision of putting senior parents in home care facilities could cause resistance from kin, friends, relatives, and community. The identity of a Filipino senior is synonymous with respect, acceptance, and care in the family.

Furthermore, the participants encountered the experience of respect from their immigrant families in moments when they were recognized and their contributions or support were affirmed. Subsistence support or giving gifts or present was a further manifestation of respect towards the participants. Fely and Gloria claimed that:

When I am old, I also expected my children to look after me. I do not have a husband anymore. He left me when our children were little and eloped with his woman. Without my children who else will care for me later? **(Lorna)**

Seniors or grandparents earned their respect in their families. In our family, our grandparents did not work. My parents gave them money - just like what my children did to me when I was still in the Philippines. Unlike here in Canada, Filipino seniors in the Philippines do not have the opportunity to work. If the younger ones are finding it difficult to find work in the Philippines, it is more so to seniors. **(Fely)**

Filial piety remains a value and a tradition of receiving long-term support from children. When parents become seniors, adult and married children have the obligation to support their parents. Lorna and Fely were among those who emphasized Filipino filial piety as an important Filipino tradition and value that children must learn, as it is an expectation in later part of one's life.

Identity as Mothers.

Women participants claimed that long-term support was not just a Filipino tradition, but also part of the identity of being mothers. Lorna, Fely, Del, Joshua, Gloria, Bea, and Rosa considered it a tradition and an expectation for mothers to provide care and love to their children at all times. All shared a common response that support and care is a Filipino tradition.

It is a Filipino tradition, especially among Filipina mothers. We love our children very much. We are there to support them and be responsible for them through thick and thin -- that is the culture of Filipinos. Even if their children have families, they will support them and take care of them. Yeah, that is the culture of Filipinos. That is how much they love their children! (**Lorna**)

Concepts that emerged around being a mother were about providing unconditional support, loving and caring, showing pity to children, and managing domestic work. It appeared that Filipina mothers share the universal mothering acts of loving, caring, and selfless acts of rearing the children. In transnational setting, the distinctiveness of identities of Filipina mothers is the tradition of providing lifetime mothering to immediate and extended families and kin.

Interestingly, however, male participants were doing the same nature of support for their families in Canada. Among other roles, they prepared meals, cleaned the house, taught values and disciplined the grandchildren, washed and dried the laundry, prepared

the children for school, and accompanied their grandchildren to and from school. They were playing roles that were socially constructed identities of a mother. They babysit and performed housework because of necessity. In the Philippines, these tasks were mostly women's – a construct loaded with gender stereotypes.

The findings did not claim that male participants were gender-sensitive and had freed themselves from stereotypical gender roles. The findings, however, acknowledged that the socially constructed roles of care and housework support were identities of 'mothering' that could be assumed by all in the family in diaspora. In diasporic experience of survival and establishing a home in a foreign land, there seems to be a blurring of gender roles and definitions about supporting children. Motherwork, a traditionally expected from women and mothers, could become a shared experience of both men and women. In the latter discussions, the use of the term motherwork is not gender specific. Regardless of gender expectations, the participants continued providing support to their children for reasons around tradition, role expectations, necessity for survival, "awa" or pity, and love.

Sustaining Filipino Identity through Ethnic Values

Metaphorically, Filipinos are part of the ocean of people sharing a common identity yet uniquely shaded with cultural specificities. They are like a school of fish in the ocean of Western culture that demands integration. There are limits to their identity in an ocean of vast cultures and traditions where hybridity is in the offing. They needed to survive in this ocean of risk and opportunity. Some found little nooks in the ocean bed, which they called 'homes' where Filipino identity is lived, though at times imagined, amidst currents of change, at least within a fleeting moment. Living in a foreign land

exposes ethnic values, tradition, and identities to risk of ‘desertion’ at some point in time. It is a social expectation that immigrants, such as the participants, will eventually integrate with the ‘mainstream culture.’

To sustain the tradition and culture that make-up the essentials of identity, one needs a social milieu that nurtures identity through the continuing embrace of the values embodied in that tradition and culture. In the experience of most of the participants, their immigrant families became their little ‘homes’ where they lived and kept their identity and values as Filipinos. At home, they spoke Filipino, ate Filipino food, and lived their Filipino values and practices. Outside the home, however, was a different world. They struggled to integrate into the mainstream culture by thinking and acting like Canadians. There were participants who suggested that the Filipino culture in Canada might not survive if their families did not live with its values. A “neo-Filipino” identity was beginning to emerge among their children and grandchildren, as evident in a mixed language, and in lifestyles, perceptions, and values. In their daily life, however, they continued teaching Filipino values to their grandchildren.

At home, my son in-law wanted to maintain Filipino values. He wanted the children to behave like Filipinos. In the family of my daughter, we practice the values of *mano po* or respect to elders, coming together to pray, speaking the Filipino language at home, eating Filipino food, and sharing household chores... We did all the help because they are our children. They are good children. Parents give good examples to their children so that they too would do the same to their children. **(Eddie)**

At home, we still speak in our local dialect or sometimes in Tagalog because of the influence of other Filipinos in the workplace who mostly speak the Tagalog language. Of course, when we are at work, we speak English but my family is still very Filipino. We love cooking Filipino specialties like *kare-kare*, *adobo*, *dinuguan*, and other delicacies. I like when we come together with Filipino friends because each one brings in Filipino food. I guess we just love to eat. Even our grandchildren like Filipino food. **(Del)**

I am happy that my grandchildren, though they speak in English, are still Filipinos. We are all Filipinos in this house and she has learned from what and how to live like one. **(Poly)**

My grandchildren have already adapted part of the Canadian culture. They speak English and do not seem to know much about the Philippines. I live with my grandson and granddaughter-in-law ...But we still eat Filipino food. My grandson still practiced *mano po* and showed deep respect to me but he seemed to have changed. **(Fely)**

I would consider my presence as important for children to understand the culture of Filipinos. I taught my grandchildren about the Filipino ways of respecting the elderly like “*mano po*.” That is what I am teaching them. **(Bea)**

Efforts to sustain Filipino values were evident in the statement of the participants.

The above quotations further suggested the values of *pagmamalasakit* (deep sense of sacrifice for family) through acts of sacrifices for the sake of the children and *tularan* (role modeling) by living as a good example to children. Filipinos adopted the cliché *kung ano ang tinatanim ay s'ya ring aanihin* (what you reap is what you plant) a concept that gives essence to the value of *tularan*. The continuing Filipino practices by participants in their families also influenced the lifestyle of their grandchildren, along with an appreciation of Filipino food, and learning to speak their ethnic language. The presence of the participants with their families was important in teaching Filipino values to their grandchildren. According to Eddie, living with grandchildren meant the opportunity to tell stories, sing songs, speak in their dialect, practice *mano po*, have reverence for God, teach the value of *kasipagan* (being industrious) through house chores, and inculcate the importance of respect to elderly at all times.

I told my grandchildren about Filipino values, especially if they asked. I think it is important that my grandchildren should learn the values of cleaning the house. As Filipino, you should learn on how to work, and not to depend on parents. You need to help and learn in the process. When you marry someday, you know how to do house chores and you bring it with you wherever you are. Is it not a good Filipino

value? At home, I am teaching my grandchildren how to work in the house. I know that it is difficult to get a helper here in Canada because it is costly. In the Philippines, one has house helpers.... However, if you know how to work and do not depend on parents, you can help yourself when the time comes.

Concerning respect to elders, we should not forget that. If you reach home, you need to show respect to elders. We have the practice of *mano po*. My grandchildren do it when they reach or leave home. They say *Tatay, aalis na po kami* (Dad we're leaving now). It's nice. Respecting the elders is a form of respect. I notice that many children no longer have the respect for elders, is it not? We are teaching our grandchildren to respect – never to forget to respect the elderly.

Fear to God is also part of our tradition. Every Sunday the whole family goes to the church. My son-in-law would not want to go to Church if one members of the family is absent. Everybody must be in the church. **(Eddie)**

Filipinos have a deep sense of religiosity. Eddie suggested that religious expression is not just an individual engagement with God. It is a family activity on Sundays or on days of Christian obligation. Many Filipino families value going to church as one family. The experience of religiosity emerged as a concept in the narrative of Lorna, Gloria, Eddie, and Romeo. Lorna sought for divine healing for her disabled grandson with disability; Gloria interpreted her experience as part of God's plan; Eddie feared God and believed in coming together to pray; and Romeo trusted in an omnipresent God for blessings. Acts of piety, therefore, appear to be part of the Filipino psyche.

Furthermore, *utang na loob* (inner debt) was a value that also emerged in the participants' stories. It is a Filipino-specific value, which has an affinity with the Japanese *giri* and *gimu* practice of giving back favour or kindness. It comprises a tradition constructed around social reciprocity or the giving back, at an opportune time, of a favour received from someone. One feels 'indebted' through time and recompenses the other by 'paying back'.

I do not want them to have problems - they sponsored me to help them. Whatever the problem is, I will help them – it is my ‘inner debt’ to them, which I will pay through life. “Inner debt” is forever. It is forever. **(Del)**

Well, I owe them something (inner debt) because had it not for them, I would have not been here. **(Poly)**

I help here in the house. I do not contribute in matters of finances but I do help here. I would feel embarrassed if I don’t. **(Romeo)**

I did not expect to come here in Canada. It was good to know that my child whom I educated had interest to go overseas. She was lucky that she came to Canada. She also sought ways to sponsor us here. **(Francis)**

The quotations of Del and Poly were examples of *utang na loob*, which is akin to a lifetime obligation. The statements of Del and Poly indicate an unceasing support to their families due to *utang na loob*. Inner debt could be ‘eternal’ -- a social obligation that could bind relationship of reciprocity. Romeo and Francis also echoed the same feeling of indebtedness for being in Canada. Parents are forever grateful for the perceived benefits of being here in Canada, through the sponsorship of their children. It is important to note, however, that *utang na loob* was not the prime mover of participants’ support of their families in Canada but an attribution that further enriched the dyadic relationship. Helping back or giving support in return is an element of reciprocity that may have positive implications in building social networks and developing communities. However, *utang na loob* could be counterproductive as it could compel and force one to help to pay back a favour owed.

Bridging Generations.

The participants were powerhouses of Filipino stories, beliefs, symbols, mores, and norms. They handed down Filipino tradition to their children and grandchildren. The presence of sponsored Filipino seniors also sustained the ‘imagined home’. They bridged

the gap of knowledge and appreciation of Filipino identity, values, and tradition. Their presence and Filipino practices bridged value-based relationship between transnational parents and children. They acted as role models to their children, storytellers, and teachers to their grandchildren.

Maybe they would take me as a role model in dealing with their children. Maybe they would follow what I have done for them as a mother - understanding, love, and everything that I have done for them. Of course, they will say that "my mother was like this" and they would do the same to their children. At least I am able to teach them how. **(Fely)**

I taught my grandchildren to pray and told them Bible stories. I want them to know and love God. My hope is that they will live a good life because they fear God. Although they are growing as Canadians, they have at least retained the Filipino value of religiosity. **(Lorna)**

My youngest granddaughter really amazed me. She still learning to speak but she had very little English words. We all speak *Hiligaynon* language at home and so she is learning our language fast – better than my eldest granddaughter probably. I think that it is important for them to learn our language so they will remain Filipino even if they in Canada. **(Poly)**

Fely hoped that through her examples her children and grandchildren would learn how to be a Filipino parent and mother. She hoped that children would learn from her examples. Lorna emphasized the religiosity, which she considered as an important Filipino value. Moreover, Poly was concerned about teaching his grandchildren with the ethnic language and thought it necessary for one to be a Filipino. Overall, their stories, lived-values and tradition, beliefs, and their presence became constant reminders to their families that they are Filipinos and diasporas in Canada. After all, living in another land did not mean an end to the tradition and social expectation of providing support to children and kin.

Deciding to Provide Support

In previous sections, I have established the pushing and pulling family demands as a conceptual category that contributed to the decision of sponsored Filipino seniors to come to Canada. Confronted with the reality of differences in culture, practices, and lifestyles, the participants needed to anchor their traditional practices and norms to find meaning of their diasporic existence. They relied on their identities as Filipinos, as seniors, and as mothers to make sense of their acts of support to sponsors. In this subsection, I have discussed the findings around motherwork and subsistence-based support that the participants provided to their families. The level of support provided was multi-dimensional (see Figure 4).

Living in diaspora pushed participants and their immigrant families to struggle for survival. They came to provide help and voluntarily offered a *malasakit* or a deep sense of sacrifice for the sake of their children. The reunification of participants with their families in diaspora hastened the challenges of survival that beset their children. They alleviated the living condition of their children through multi-dimensional support, weaved with Filipino values. Moreover, the contradictory concepts of affluence and indebtedness also emerged as a construct of reality in the *hostland*, which moved participants to support their families. Participants dreamt of Canada as a place of affluence and abundance but woke up to the shocking reality of indebtedness to their families and having to work to support them.

In Figure 4, I have illustrated the relationships of concepts to the category of multi-dimensional support. Among others, multi-dimensional support involved labour of care, housework, moral and spiritual advice, financial assistance, provision of material needs,

and building Filipino identity. All these form of support were inherently a part of the epistemology of motherwork and subsistence.

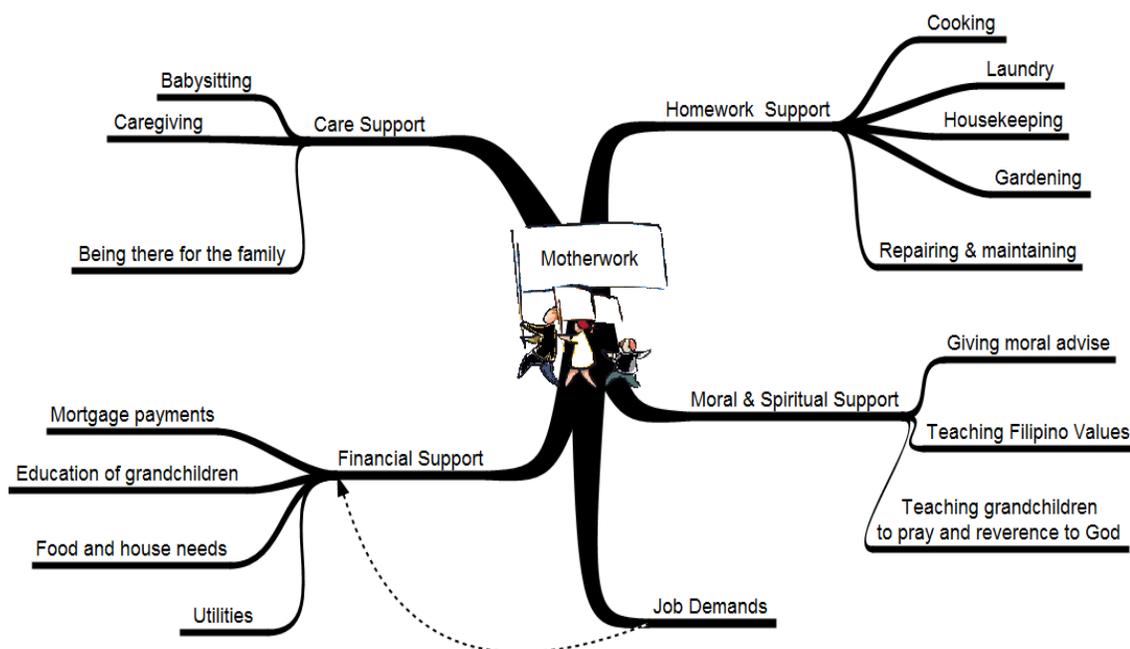
Filipinos do not have a word for *he* or *she* but use the third person singular *siya* to mean either male or female. Understanding motherwork and subsistence means viewing it from a gender-inclusive perspective, which makes sense when used in the context of the participants' experience of providing support to their families. I use the term motherwork to mean a parenting act of care and subsistence support that is not just by tradition or social expectations but by the necessity of surviving in a foreign land. In this study, I have also attached to it the concept of 'transnational', in order to include the diasporic life of the participants. I have assumed that motherwork and subsistence support has become transnational, that is, it goes beyond the boundaries of homeland in the context of diaspora.

Motherwork, as understood in the Filipino context, has an affinity to the Filipino concepts of tradition and the concept of 'malasakit' (deep sense of sacrifice) entrenched in love for one's children. It is a tradition because of a social expectation that parents should help their children in need. The concept of "malasakit" represented the efforts of participants to help their children manage the demands of survival. Being in diaspora was already a form of "malasakit" as they had to leave their homes, property, friends, social groups, and even memories and sentiments. Dispersion from their homes was an act of diaspora with their children. Moreover, being in Canada with their immigrant children necessitated a continuing motherwork support beyond the borders of their former home.

As the support of the participants provided opportunity for sponsors to alleviate their living condition, any form of support in the context of survival was a form of

subsistence. Helping sponsors through surrogate parenting and managing domestic chores enabled them to work for survival. By sharing payments of mortgages and house expenses, it eased the cost of living and financial burden of kin. By enlivening Filipino values and teaching moral and religious beliefs at home, immigrant families especially the grandchildren learned to appreciate Filipino tradition and acquire some Filipino values. In addition, by providing affective support and advice to sponsors, it helped them find meaning in their daily diasporic existence. From the perspective of the participants, their multi-dimensional support helped their immigrant families find their homes in Canada.

Figure 4: The Multi-dimensionality of Transnational Motherwork Support



Providing Multi-dimensional Support.

The nature of support that each participant provided varied. As discussed earlier, sponsored Filipino seniors provided multi-dimensional support as a way of helping their

sponsors cope with the challenges of survival of immigrants in Canada. Below are some quotes showing the multiplicity and extent of their support.

Any type of house or domestic chores, I do it. If there is anything that I could help, I will do it - any housework. I do car repair, drive the children to and from school – that's everyday – do some grocery, and babysit. If my children go somewhere, they leave their daughter with me and I took care of her. I also share in paying the house. We divide the mortgage. I support in several ways. I almost do everything...my sponsor knows it. I don't lose anything if I help my daughter (sponsor). **(Poly)**

I am looking after the life of my children. Since I found a job, I have been giving some amount to my grandchildren. However, it is voluntary, as they do not ask for my support. When my son was sick, I cared and assisted him. Moreover, when he and his wife went somewhere, I stayed in the house and look after their children. **(Fely)**

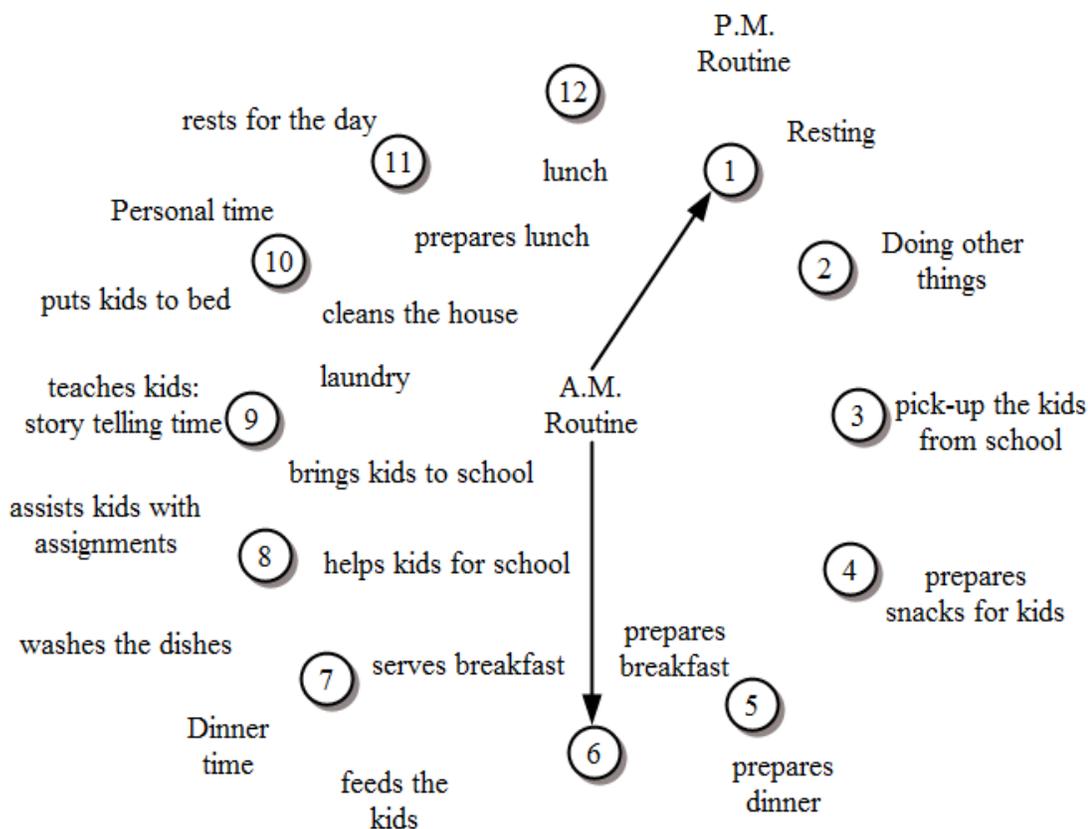
Actually now, I am staying in a house that was mortgaged by my daughter who sponsored me. She mortgaged the house so we have a place to stay. After she got married, she went to the USA, and left to us the house. We are giving her money to help her in the monthly payment and the house utilities. Although she is in the US, she administers the payment of everything. We do not share half of the house's mortgage and utilities. We give what is affordable to us, although it is a fix amount each month. Our share includes everything.... Of course, I also provided them emotional advice. When her husband calls, I would know that he has issues with my daughter because he tells me. Surely, I give them my advice. In general, however, their relationship has been fine. Surely, there is misunderstanding because they differ in nationality and views. **(Joshua)**

Although Poly, Fely, and Joshua varied in the extent of their support, their efforts brought ease to the lives of their immigrant families. Poly would do anything to help his daughter; Fely voluntarily offered her support to ease the life of her family; and Joshua provided financial help and emotional support to her daughter. The nature of support of these three participants did not really differ from the others. They were '24/7' workers who worked throughout the day for their children. Even the employed participants were full-time house helpers. After work, they assisted the house chores and provided care needs, and other forms of support to sponsors.

The multi-dimensional motherwork support became a long-term engagement in a daily cycle. For Romeo, his recurring daily schedule revolved around the activities in the house and looking after his grandchildren. While the grandchildren were in school, he spent most of his time cleaning the house, doing the laundry, and preparing the meal.

Figure 5 is an illustration of care and housework support of the participants.

Figure 5: A ‘Clock’ of Daily Repetitive Activity



Rosa’s daily round-the-clock schedule resembled the routine activities in Figure 5. She was first to wake up to prepare breakfast for the family. She fed her grandchildren and sent them off to school. She then prepared breakfast for her children before they left for work. Just when everybody was gone, she cleaned the house, washed the laundry,

mopped and vacuumed the floor, and performed other house chores. Before four o'clock, she prepared snacks for her grandchildren. An hour later, she prepared dinner and served her children. During the evening, Rosa cleaned the dishes and the kitchen area and put her grandchildren to bed. She then relaxed for a little bit, before retiring for day. Rosa's round-the-clock activity was literally *around-the-house* work.

Helping with Housework.

This was as an important support of participants to sponsors. Being in the house never gets one 'unemployed.' When the participants claimed that they provided housework support, it means performing tasks like vacuuming, mopping, dusting, sweeping, making-up beds, washing dishes, laundry, ironing, cooking, gardening, car cleaning, and mini-repairs.

During the day, my children are working, and our grandchildren are in school. We are the ones left in the house. My wife and I do the housekeeping, except when I am at work. My wife does all other work including babysitting our grandchildren. **(Eddie)**

My grandson is helping me clean the house but often I am the one cleaning it. It is my house too. Right? I need to make sure that everything is orderly. **(Fely)**

Like the other participants, Eddie and Fely engaged in housework, not just to support their families but because they found it in their home. By helping in housework, participants lessened the housekeeping concerns. Their presence enabled their sponsors' mobility and flexibility of schedules and enabled them to take advantage of potential opportunities. In the classic language of labour and capital, home tasks do not have productive market value. However, in an era of globalization, housework has been commodified, e.g., Philippine export of nannies and housekeepers. It has become a labour with equivalent value of productivity.

Caring for Grandchildren.

Babysitting was the most common way of providing help to sponsors. It went along with housework. With the exception of Joshua, who had no grandchildren in Canada, the rest of the participants were babysitting their grandchildren and assumed surrogate-parenting roles.

I focus on providing care to my grandchildren. If my daughter in-law is not here, I cook. Now that she is on maternity leave, she cooks. However, I clean the house. After school, I pick up the children at the bus station... I would consider babysitting as the most important form of support that I have given to my family. I want to care for my grandchildren. I want them attended. **(Bea)**

The most important help that I have provided is housework. If they work, no one can look after the house and babysit their children. It would be very difficult without my presence in the house... With my presence, there is always someone to look after the house and the children when they are not around. **(Romeo)**

A related concept to babysitting is that of caregiving. The latter term, however, is broad enough that it includes adult, aging, and disability care. Lorna's daughter sponsored her to provide care to her two children. One of Lorna's grandchildren had a physical and cognitive disability. In her narrative, she said that:

Now that I am here in Canada, I am taking care of my two grandsons. The eldest has disability. Providing care to my grandsons was an important contribution that I have provided to my daughter. I am willing to help my grandson... His condition is very challenging. His disability gave him much difficulty. I am here therefore to support my grandson. I am praying always for God's blessing (crying) and for his healing power to work in the life of my grandson. I provide such support to my grandson. I pity him so much. **(Lorna)**

Lorna's support was more than just allowing her daughter to engage in fulltime work. It was genuinely caring for her grandsons, particularly the one with a disability. It means that in providing care the depth and extent matters. Lorna gave all that she had to offer based on love for her grandsons. Her grandparental love, coupled with her

religiosity and training in caregiving enabled her to do what she thought was appropriate. Lorna's competence in care-giving, her ability to express love for her grandchildren, and her dedication in providing care, empowered her to keep hoping that one day her grandson would recover or his condition would be alleviated.

In addition, the participants understood babysitting as a shared obligation of parents and grandparents. Kinship came across as an important part of the relationship of care; that grandparents were better able to provide care for their grandchildren than nannies or day-care centers.

If my grandchildren are hurt, nannies do not report it to my son. I pity my grandchildren. I do not want them to get hurt. **(Bea)**

The service of a hired caregiver cannot be the same with the care of a grandmother. A caregiver does not necessarily understand what the child wants. However, a grandmother knows and gives what the children want -- although I know that sometimes it is not right to give all that they want because it could spoil them. **(Lorna)**

Knowledge on the needs of children may not be enough to provide better care.

Giving care to children is also about familiarity or affinity with them, the experience of providing care, and understanding their language. Participants indicated that they were able to provide care and love for their grandchildren beyond financial and material needs.

Financial and Material Help.

Amidst 'affluence' and indebtedness, the presence of the participants helped their families with the demands of settlement in the *hostland*. Sponsors worked day and night to meet the high cost of 'affluent' living and pay their financial debts on time. Some seemed to have joined the race to grab income opportunities, consequently leaving very little time for their families. The participants lived in the same situation of contradictions

and socially created demands of survival. They too sought ways to support their sponsors. They provided financial support by paying a portion of sponsors' mortgages and cost of living expenses. In many cases, there were no payback arrangements. As discussed earlier, the support of sponsored Filipino seniors to their immigrant families were viewed as parental 'obligation' or an expression of gratitude for a favour owed in the past – the Filipino practice of “utang na loob” (inner debt).

I also share in the payment of house mortgage. We divide the mortgage. **(Poly)**

If my sponsors have financial problems, I help them... And each month, I am giving them some amount. I share the house mortgage. I help them with their finances to lessen their expense and improve their financial condition... This is a big help to their budget. It is just that I am doing it out of concern for them. It is a Filipino tradition - to care for those who need help. By helping my sponsor, it would help them reduce their expense. I am budgeted my salary to be able to help. **(Del)**

To be honest, I bought a Honda van for my daughter. I paid it all. It is for her family - a kind of my gratitude toward them. The act of giving it to her is heartily and it makes me happy... I'm also paying the vehicle for \$ 700 per month. I am the payer and they are the guarantors. They did have a car but it was old. I told them to change and sell their old car because I will buy them a new one. They were happy. **(Francis)**

Poly and Del shared some amount of their income for house mortgage and utilities of their immigrant children. Interestingly, Francis pleased his daughter (sponsor) by purchasing a van. He himself had no car and yet he was happy with his decision. It is worth noting that the sharing of resources was free and voluntary, as stated in the quote of Gloria below.

In addition, my children work and have their own income. Nevertheless, if I have some money, I also give them. They do not expect anything from us. They do not need it, but I give it because I choose to. **(Gloria)**

Freely given support is part of the Filipino tradition and parents are expected to assume the obligation of providing help to their children for life. In the light of diasporic experience, participants saved their children from difficult situations by helping where necessary. The participants unanimously indicated the cost benefit of their support.

Additional statements of Bea and Lorna indicated that:

How could I support them (financially) when I do not have an income? The help that I am able to do is to take care of my grandchildren. It is, of course, important. It would be costly if they were to hire a babysitter - especially that they have three small children. **(Bea)**

If she (daughter) will hire a nanny, that is going to be expensive. Therefore, as a mother, I will be the one to help her... **(Lorna)**

The notion of translating the support given by sponsored Filipino seniors to a monetary value is indeed possible. However, it faces the challenge of determining the criteria for conversion and how this process would work. Support or contributions of sponsored Filipino seniors could be quantified using the criteria and measures of social and labour capital. Their support had monetary implications that brought advantages to their families and to the economy of the *hostland*.

Affective, Moral and Spiritual Support.

Support is not only about financial and physical care. It is also about affective, moral, or spiritual support. It could be an isolating and lonely experience to uproot from one's homeland and transplant oneself in a completely new environment. Survival seems the only choice of this new existence. The presence of participants who had ears to listen to their feelings of uncertainty and who provided moral or spiritual encouragement and guidance assuaged their children's angst and emptiness.

I did what I should for my children, so now I am happy. The emotional support that I gave to my children was important for me. It is not about having money. Emotional support is something that money cannot buy... The most important thing that a mother can offer is emotional support. It is something that children would not forget. It is not about money. Unfortunately, not all mothers provide emotional support to their children. **(Fely)**

I also provide them with the love of a mother. A mother will always love her children. She will always take care of them even if they have affluent life. My grandchildren will always remember such motherly love. **(Lorna)**

Fely was pleased with the support she gave to her children. She regarded it dearly. She believed that her support would remain through time; and she was pleased to do that. Likewise, Lorna held on to love, and believed that it was something that mothers should readily give to their children. She reiterated that a mother's love could be as important as the financial and physical support that sponsored Filipino seniors provided to their immigrant families. The inclusion of moral and spiritual aspects makes this multi-dimensional support more holistic. Although needs varied from one family to another, the completeness of the participants' support was always there and was freely given. As their support enabled their sponsors to find ways toward economic stability, it expedited the settlement of their children in Canada. For their immigrant families, sponsored Filipino seniors have played a considerable role in co-creating the conditions necessary in order to find and build a home in a foreign land.

Subsistence Support for Families in the Homeland.

Subsistence is about sustaining life and the essence of motherwork. When translated to the experience of the participants, it means an essential support to immigrant children struggling for survival. Sustaining this support is part of the concept of alleviating the condition of impoverished families in the Philippines.

I have been supporting my children in the Philippines until now. I feel good if I support my family - and it would be nice if they alleviate from their situation. Now that I am still strong, I am pleased when I am able to help my children. I want them to be happy. I want a happy family relationship -- I love them. All that I do is for them. **(Francis)**

Francis continued providing support to his grandchildren and relatives in the Philippines by sending them money and boxes of goods periodically. The other participants like Poly, Joshua, Gloria, and Del also send monthly remittances to their kin. Lorna's remittances went to the education of her grandson and the daily consumption of her daughter's family. Moreover, Romeo used his Philippine pension to support his children, as he was unemployed in Canada. These participants immigrated to Canada to provide support subsistence needs of their impoverished families back home.

Summary

While living in diaspora, grounding acts of support provide a sense of meaning and identity. The decision to provide long-term or life-long support to children is rooted in Filipino identity and tradition. Participants understood that as parents, they needed to provide help to alleviate the living condition of both their immigrant families and their impoverished kin in the Philippines. Their children in two different countries were struggling for survival. One lived in indebtedness amidst affluence while the other lived in poverty.

Awareness of their identities as Filipino seniors was important in sustaining Filipino values, particularly that of respect to elders. They were aware that they had the influence of 'authority' in the family. Honour and respect is an embodiment of their identity as seniors or elders in the family. Moreover, acts of "pity" (akin to love) and

prolonged care and support by the women participants were all part of their identity as Filipino mothers. They managed the house, and cared for their children and grandchildren. They linked their acts of care to tradition and love. The study, however, did not intend to compare with the Canadian way of mothering.

This multi-dimensional support was beneficial. It reduced the daily cost of living and eased the finances of sponsors. The presence of Filipino seniors also enabled their sponsors to avail of economic opportunities. With all that they contribute to their immigrant families, their presence becomes valuable in the current settlement and future survival of new Filipino immigrants in Canada. However, sustaining multi-dimensional support may be a concern over time, as sponsored Filipino seniors face the growing cultural hybridity of their families. As Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992) put it concisely, “transmigrants draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their society of origin and in the host societies” (p.11).

Encountering Daily Challenges

Uprooting oneself from home and being rooted again in another place could be a thorny and difficult experience. Participants decided to leave their homes with memories and sentiments that they had cultivated and valued for years. Willing to take on risks and uncertainties, they unfurled their mainsails of hope and set off on the voyage to a land believed to be a place of affluence and abundance with flowing rivers of opportunities. Coming to Canada meant the hope of alleviating their children's impoverished condition, reuniting with families, and being able to save their children from the challenges of establishing a home in another land.

Finding a home and settling in the 'promised land' were not without challenges. There were challenges around the components of their new lives, which included a longing for home, as well as those around survival, security, reciprocity, conflicting values, and sustaining support to immigrant families. These challenges all became part of day-to-day living as diasporas providing support or help to the children in need. For some, the 'promised land' did not live up to their preconceptions of it. Finding a home seemed difficult and the longing to return to the land from which they had uprooted themselves, persisted. Others, however, decided to settle down and accepted their realities as a new chapter of their existence. In this section, I have discussed the findings around these challenges as part of participants' daily living experience as they took on roles and expectations embedded in their support to immigrant families.

This section discusses seven sub-categories of the third theoretical category Encountering Daily Challenges: longing for the homeland, making it through challenges of survival, living in and hoping for security, living up with *utang na loob* (inner debt),

living with conflicting values, sustaining support to immigrant families, and experiencing recognition. The section ends with a summary.

Longing for the Homeland

Finding a home means living in a place that they considered 'their own'. That some participants considered their living condition in Canada 'better', does not necessarily imply that they had finally found a home. For others, a job was what made life better. Del was among those who would rather be in the Philippines only if she had work and money. It was a struggle for some participants to adapt to a new home, especially when their longing to return home remained persistent.

I am looking for a life like in the Philippines. Back home, I can buy whatever I wanted to eat. I could not do it here. What I want is not available here...Between the Philippines and Canada, I have a divided heart. If I am in the Philippines, I could not help but miss my family in Canada. After a month, I feel so uneasy. I miss my grandchildren. However, when I am in Canada, I would miss the Philippines. I miss the Filipino food. I miss the house. I miss my brothers and sisters who are all there. There are five houses within our family compound. I also do not like staying here during winter because I am stuck at home. I like going out for exercise but I am old and I am unable to walk on outside during winter. **(Bea)**

Bea lived in her present home with her immigrant family, part of her longed for that home in the past. However, there was no way for her to bring back the past or ask her family in Canada to go back home. Unfortunately, there was no home to go back to. The ability to adjust in a new environment varied. For those who found the adjustment difficult, the longing for home and Filipino lifestyles persistently recur.

Longing for home was further exacerbated when the adjustment to work, culture, and weather became challenging. There was very little choice not to work. One had to work in order to survive. Participants had to do labour of care and housework. Some had

to work to assist their children in paying the mortgage. Del's work situation was a difficult one as it deprived her of living with her family.

Of course, it is nicer to live in the Philippines. If I only have the money, I would have no problem living there. In Canada, you have to work all the time. You cannot just say you 'I don't want to work.' I feel happier working in back home than in Canada.... Here, I find work to be difficult – it is different the Philippines. Here, you are obliged to work. Back there, if you do not want to work, then you rest. I did not have a problem because I had no boss to tell me 'if you do not work you will be fired out.' Here, I have to work even if I am tired. **(Del)**

Del spoke of a freer work schedule in the Philippines. Work was demanding but she managed her own time. Situated in a structured work environment in Canada, she longed for those times when she could make decisions without fear of termination. In the Philippines, the Labour Law demands due process and sufficient time before termination, which gives a worker the chance to have a grievance heard before the management or in labour courts.

While some sponsored Filipino seniors preferred to live in Canada and be Canadians, others had plans for eventual return. Gloria was among those who did not want to remain in Canada. She wished to go back to the Philippines when she could no longer work.

Canada is different from the Philippines. We differ in culture. In the Philippines, you can go outside the house and talk with your neighbours. Here, you are always inside the house. You cannot just go out there and chat with anyone because you have much housework to do. You also have to work to earn so you do not have to ask money from your children. **(Gloria)**

Gloria viewed Canada as a lonely place. She did not know her neighbours and found it difficult to be a neighbour to them. In the Philippines, neighbours knew and visited each other without making appointments. Gloria found it socially engaging to live in the Philippines. In Canada, "you just can't go out there and chat with anyone". While

the Canadian way of *knowing thy neighbour* is through community gathering or through associations, Filipinos are used to finding time to chat. The absence or lack of a social network within the neighbourhood could mean loneliness and isolation. One has to remain in the house of sponsor.

The difficulty of participants to adjust to Canadian weather conditions exacerbated the longing for home. Winter made Bea dislike Canada. With limited mobility, the cold and snowy weather kept her in the house. Eddie also knew about some friends who went home, as they could not bear the cold weather and their limited mobility during winter.

Moreover, disciplining grandchildren in Canada could be disappointing. Lorna could not help but compare her experience of disciplining her children back home. She invoked the need for all Filipino seniors to have patience in disciplining their grandchildren.

Some of them claimed that living in the Philippines is better. They said that, unlike in the Philippines, you could not physically discipline the children here. In some instances, in providing care to hyperactive children burdens them. Yes, they are right in saying that you cannot physically discipline the children here in Canada. The culture here is different and we need to be patient. **(Lorna)**

Some Filipinos still practice the traditional way of training children to obey their parents or respect elders in the family. To rectify misbehaviour and inculcate values, they inflict physical punishment on children. It is a common sight in the Philippines to see parents spanking, pinching, or twitching their children's ears when they misbehave. While it is not a practice in Canada, some consider physical discipline as a form of helping children to be obedient, respectful, and responsible.

The struggle to adjust to economic, social, cultural, and physical demands made it more difficult for some to find their home in the *hostland*. Despite the claim that life is better in Canada, some have planned to go back to the Philippines or at least ‘imagined’ doing so. Romeo was experiencing a better living condition but was unsure as to whether he should retire in Canada. According to him, if his immigrant children no longer needed his support, he might return to his homeland.

Making it through Challenges of Survival

Being in Canada could mean living in survival. Participants also struggled for survival with their sponsors. As previously discussed, they laboured to provide subsistence support to their children in the midst of adjusting to new realities. Poly witnessed how difficult it was to find work in Canada for sponsored seniors.

I had a friend who came to Canada. He was 67 years old. He wanted to work but no one accepted him - that was hard on him. Yet he was still strong at 67. He decided to work in a cleaning agency because there was no employer who wanted him.

It is difficult for seniors to work in Canada. No one accepts them. Among hotels, the chance to work is slim for those over 60 years old. That is the problem here. Many Filipino seniors want to work but no one hires them. Several employers in Calgary also refuse to hire seniors...

I know of a couple who applied to work as cleaners at the airport. However, because they were 67 years old, they did not get the job. Cleaning the washroom or mopping the floor is a light job! Now, the couple stays at home. They babysit their grandchild. **(Poly)**

Poly realized that, although Canada offered work opportunities for seniors, not all employers welcomed seniors in workplaces. The silent exclusion of seniors from hiring because of age, language, or health is a painful reality. Poly regretted that even cleaning

agencies were reluctant to hire older persons. Age discrimination had not been among the preconceptions of the participants when they first came to Canada.

In addition, some participants spoke of occurrences around physical and psychological maltreatment of sponsored Filipino seniors. Misunderstandings between sponsored Filipino seniors and their children happened and maltreatment emerged as one of the manifestations of conflict. The eviction of sponsored Filipino seniors from the homes of their sponsors pushed them further on to struggle for survival in an unfamiliar place.

I told those who left their children, ‘Why did you want to leave your family when you had grandchildren?’ Many of them had misunderstanding or quarrels with their children in-law, which made them decide to live separately. Although they were old, they had to work in food courts. I knew all these because I talked with Filipino seniors in the malls. I feel blessed because I have a good relationship with my daughter in-law.

It is difficult to live with someone else. I know of a Filipino senior who cried because her daughter in-law had attitude problems. I asked her ‘why did you decide to live separately?’ She replied, ‘you just don’t understand my situation - each day my daughter in-law maltreated me and would not even tell me to eat.’ She said that all she could do was to cry.

When seniors left their sponsors, well, I guess they had reasons. If each clashed each day with their children in-law, not invited to eat, or uncared for by their children, then it is right for them to live separately. Now that they are on their own, no one can tell them what to do. I told them not to worry because, after all, they have work and are able to support themselves. No one will stay longer in a sponsor's house if a daughter or son in-law is maltreating a parent. I advised them that their decision was right. **(Bea)**

Living separately from sponsors could be difficult for those who came to Canada with expectations of family reunification. Separation could be devastating. Bea, however, advised that separation is necessary when maltreatment occurs, although living separately without a job could be difficult. Separation implies that sponsored Filipino

seniors have to work in order to survive. Without a job or government pension support, leaving the homes of sponsors is a high risk action.

Eddie, however, discouraged sponsored Filipino seniors to return home. He wanted them to remain in Canada despite the challenges of survival. He challenged them to make use of their stay in Canada.

They should make use of the opportunity while they are here in Canada. If they go home, and would come again, the process may be arduous. In fact, now you have to wait long to be sponsored. It may take four to six years before one gets the sponsorship approval. I would therefore advise them to make use of their stay here, as opportunities in Canada are plenty. **(Eddie)**

Giving up immigrant status and going back to the Philippines is a costly option. Francis further suggested that in difficult situations when sponsored Filipino seniors are unable to support themselves, they should approach the Government for help. The ramification of this action brings problems to sponsors for non-compliance of the CIC sponsorship agreement. Amidst the challenges of survival in the *hostland*, Lorna advised sponsored Filipino seniors to remain resilient; to take the joy of being with the people they love and to find ways to make it through any problems.

Living in and Hoping for Security

Peace and security is a problem for many people in the Philippines. Participants who came from Southern Philippines may have seen internal displacement of people, extreme poverty, and sporadic bombings of warring factions and armed political groups. In Canada, despite the occurrence of crime and the proliferation of gangs, it remained relatively 'peaceful' compared to the daily skirmishes, bombings, killings and social unrest in the Philippines. Being in Canada meant living in peace and security. Poly and

Francis found the *hostland* to be a peaceful place. Francis had not seen dangers on the street with people he met.

One does not live in fear here. In other countries like the Philippines, one's life is in danger especially to the well-to-do in the community. In Canada, life is safe. I feel secure here. I have not seen anyone walking with scary look. People are just different. I have not seen poverty here. My life here in Canada is better than my life in the Philippines. Here, you would not feel anxious about others harming you. It is what makes Canada a better place. **(Francis)**

Francis had not been in Canada for long. His perspective of security was due to the absence of a difficult and precarious life. He considered Canada as a secure place. On the contrary, Gloria felt insecure with her unknown neighbourhood.

The best grandparents are those who are able to ensure the safety of their grandchildren. This is the greatest form of help that we can do here in Canada because adults should accompany children. Unlike in the Philippines, the kids here cannot just go wherever they want. Grandparents like us want to ensure that our grandchildren are together and intact because their parents are at work. Grandparents should be here to help their children. That is important. **(Gloria)**

From the perspective of some participants, the unfamiliarity of neighbourhood and the reality of abuse towards children in Canada was an issue of security. The fear was part of the context of living as 'strangers' in the community. While abduction and abuse of children also happens in the Philippines, children played openly in the neighbourhood. Most noticeably, children run freely around the neighbourhood and do not have to stay within sight of their parents.

Added to the challenge of security is financial stability at the period of retirement. The participants hoped to receive old age pensions and other government support after completing the ten-year period of sponsor support. They did not have a unified view about the policy on non-eligibility of sponsored seniors to government pensions within the prescribed period of ten years. Categories that emerged from interview data were

around accepting the policy, advocating for policy change, examining the purpose of sponsorship, and feeling ambivalent and unconcerned about the government pension plan.

Those who favoured the non-eligibility of sponsored parents or relatives to receive old age pension had various reasons. Del did not want to change the policy. She preferred to limit the sponsorship to parents below sixty-five years old. Del did not mean to discriminate. She was pragmatic about the issue of the unemployment of aging sponsored Filipino seniors and the implications of supporting them when illness occurs. Having seen the struggle of others, she advised that immigrant families could alternatively send financial support to their aging parents instead of sponsoring them to Canada.

Gloria found the policy hard. She believed that she could not change it and thus advised sponsored Filipino seniors to wait for the right time with patience. She also encouraged them to call on God in times of difficulties. Moreover, Romeo would rather wait patiently for ten years. He also believed the policy would not change; either one accepts or rejects it. Likewise, Lorna accepted the prescribed waiting period, although she was not very happy with the waiting time.

On the contrary, some favoured changes to the policy. As mentioned earlier, Fely and Poly favoured a change to the prescribed period. Fely and Gloria specifically suggested changing the sponsorship support to five-years. The period of 10 years was seen as disadvantageous for aging sponsored seniors, who may no longer get the chance to enjoy their pensions. Francis, Rosa, Bea, and Joshua also wanted to shorten the time. Francis was concerned for sponsored Filipino seniors who were sick and unemployed.

He suggested that the government of Canada should help them through an early pension. He wanted to change the prescribed time to three years. Joshua further argued that sponsored Filipino seniors paid their taxes and were productive residents of Canada; hence, they deserved to receive benefits and support from the government at the soonest.

There were also views that were ambivalent. Fely, for example would say that the prescribed ten years did not affect her because she still had a job. Poly, on the contrary, argued that giving an early pension to newly arrived sponsored seniors could be costly and tough for the Canadian government. He believed that providing immediate pensions to new sponsored Filipino seniors could cause the influx of more elderly immigrants to Canada. New comers need to wait for a while.

The other participants were less concerned about government pensions. Bea and Eddie did not really care about the pension. Bea came not for the pension but for her son and grandchildren. She felt more secure being with her family. Eddie came to Canada to work. He was not concerned about the Canadian old age pension. As he was not in a difficult financial situation, the policy did not concern him.

The policy surrounding the non-eligibility of sponsored parents or relatives to receive government pension within the prescribed of ten years was accepted not because the participants liked it but because there was no choice. The participants were caught in a “take it or leave it” situation and felt powerless to change the policy. Accepting the policy means waiting patiently until the pension comes. Sponsoring parents older than sixty-five was discouraged as it could burden both the sponsored and the sponsors. For others, a change to the policy was necessary, such as shortening the waiting period from ten to three or five years, and giving support to sick and unemployed sponsored Filipino

seniors. As taxpayers and productive residents of the country, they deserved government support. However, having jobs and feeling secure made others nonchalant about the policy and government pension support.

Living up with Utang na Loob (Inner Debt)

The tradition of *utang na loob* is pervasive in many Filipino families. It shares the concept of reciprocity particularly in the exchange of giving favours or obligations. However, in *utang na loob*, it is not given without an expectation of return. A favour has a string attached to it. While the expectation of a return favour could be high sometimes, there is no exact measure of how much or when a favour would be ‘fully paid.’ Poly and Del were among those who strongly believed that coming to Canada was a form of *utang na loob* and thus must be reciprocated with favour.

It is necessary that sponsored Filipino seniors should reciprocate whatever favours their sponsors gave to please them. It does not mean that just because sponsored Filipino parents are here in Canada, they no longer work. They should show it to their sponsors that have work. They should give consolation to whoever sponsors them. Moreover, for those who do not give consolation or favour to their sponsors? That is a difficult matter. **(Poly)**

I have just said that a sponsored parent has to help the sponsor. I am obliged to help. One has to find ways – even to find lighten up the work of sponsors. You have to find ways to help. I do not mean that you have to be handicap. For as long as you are able to move, you have to find ways to help them. You cannot just leave them behind. That is not how things are... I do not want them to have problems - they sponsored me to help them. Whatever the problem is, I will help them - it is my “inner debt” to them, which I will pay throughout my life -- ‘inner debt’ is forever. It is forever. **(Del)**

If I do not come here, how would I survive with my family in the Philippines? Life is difficult there. I also come here to take care of my grandson so that my daughter does not have to hire a caregiver. If she hires a caregiver, she has to spend a \$ 1,000. With me as her mother, any amount would do just fine. With the money that my daughter gives, I am able to support my other daughter in the Philippines. **(Lorna)**

The challenge is not just about being able to pay off with kindness but also the ability to please sponsors reciprocally. Poly and Del believed that financial help was a way of repaying sponsors for the effort of bringing them to Canada. Both shared a similar concept of the necessity of returning the favour by helping their children. Helping meant finding work. Del was emphatic in saying that *utang na loob* is forever. Having employment income to support subsistence was a norm of reciprocity in the relationship between sponsors and sponsored parents in the struggle to survive in the *hostland*. By providing support through inner debt, it became more than just an act of reciprocity as it trickled down to many others and had a positive impact on the life of sponsors and their Canadian communities. Lorna suggested feeling grateful towards her daughter as she would have been living in impoverishment had she remained in the Philippines. For providing care to her grandchildren, she received a minimal sum of money. Sponsored Filipino seniors like Lorna who received financial support from their children do not necessarily keep the money for themselves, but may use it to support their family and kin in the Philippines.

As previously cited, participants regarded *utang na loob* as an obligation. Support to children was part of the character of obligation and something that must be done. Joshua shed further light on the meaning of obligation as support, such as making the life of sponsors less burdensome.

I feel that it is our obligation to help our sponsors and make their life easier while we are here. Of course, they fed us and housed us; and thus, I want to make sure that I help her so she would not feel the burden. Life is difficult in Calgary, without help from the family. A sponsor could be indebted if a sponsored parent will not help him or her. **(Joshua)**

Do not neglect your sponsor so they will be pleased and they would have no regrets. You have to find ways to help them. If you do not have work, find other ways to help them. You have to help them. You cannot just stay in their house, you have to find ways to help them -- they sponsor you so you can help them.

(Del)

Working and helping their sponsors are important actions in living up to the expectations of reciprocity. Joshua was aware of the challenges of survival in Calgary and thus performed acts of reciprocity to save her family from debt. Moreover, Del spoke of the concept of obligation of sponsored Filipino seniors to seek ways to help their sponsors to avoid future regrets or misunderstandings. In accounting terms, providing financial support was an investment returned to sponsors and it pleased the latter as it alleviated their economic condition; however, in the language of subsistence and survival, it was a necessity in saving immigrant families from poverty and indebtedness.

Neglecting reciprocity in supporting the needs of sponsors negates the notion of being good parents. Del did not want sponsored Filipino seniors to be staying in the house at all times. She disliked passivity or inactivity. One should work to help the children in need. Likewise, Rosa and Gloria suggested that sponsored Filipino seniors should be good parents by helping and by doing good things for their children. Providing support or help to kin is a form of reciprocity and an important part of the whole gamut of understanding of what it is to be good Filipino parents. However, living up to these expectations could be challenging for sponsored Filipino seniors.

Living with Conflicting Values

Filial piety is one among those values challenged in the *hostland*. Participants were unsure as to who should take care of them when they could no longer work or when they become ill or advanced in years. Should they expect their families in Canada to provide

them with care in their homes? As cited earlier, it is a Filipino tradition to support parents who are unable to work or support themselves. It is socially offensive for children to ignore their aging parents. Children are to take care of their parents until their last breath. Bea cited the reality of sponsors' neglect of their parents.

Most (sponsors) have changed their attitude when they reach Canada. They do not seem to care for their parents anymore. Old people had to work. I witnessed it. I told them 'you're elderly and yet you're still working?' They work because they do not get money from their children. **(Bea)**

Sponsored Filipino seniors had to work in order to survive, as children's support may not come when they need it. For those evicted, they may live a life of poverty until they find help. Moreover, institutional care is not attractive to new elderly Filipino immigrants. Participants did not want to be in seniors' housing. With the tradition of close-knit and family-centered relationships, sponsored Filipino seniors find it difficult to understand staying in homecare or hospices as they expected their families and kin to provide them with care.

I expect my children to care for me when get old. I do not want to live in seniors housing. It would be better to go back to the Philippines. I have many children and grandchildren back home who can provide me with care. Why should I stay here? There is not point. **(Gloria)**

Where will I be when I get old? I think that my children will not abandon me. I believe that they will take care of me...If they put in that place where seniors stay, I do not know. I will not be happy. **(Poly)**

It is therefore not surprising that some participants preferred to retire in the Philippines. They neither wanted to live in institutions for seniors nor wished to be isolated from their kin. Participants like Gloria and Poly hoped that their sponsors would care for them as they age. Being cared for is not just about tradition and expectations but

also a concern for security. Evicted sponsored Filipino seniors would have to may live a life of poverty and have to survive until help was provided.

Another conflicting value was the concept surrounding the age of maturity. Joshua dismissed the culture of sending off children who reached the age of eighteen years. She did not agree with this aspect of the Canadian way of life or of allowing them to be whatever they want. She argued that parents still have the obligation to provide support and care even to grown-up children. There are ways of understanding the concept of obligation. Some would consider it an obligation to help the children through life by reasons of affinity, tradition, social expectations, and notions around motherhood. Others understood obligation through faith that children are gifts from God; and thus assumed parental obligation. The phrase "must help" was reiterated and linked to conceptual bases of obligation. Regardless of the circumstance and age of their children, participants continued their support.

My daughter is thinking differently now. She is my daughter but she seems different. Back home, we used to spend time talking with each other but here in Canada she looked busy at all time....They respect me still but I wish we could spend the time together, I mean something like that. **(Del)**

I have a teen granddaughter. She is still Filipina -- maybe. I wonder if she still understands me because sometimes when I say something she does not seem to respond. She also has words that I do not understand. Maybe they were just deep English or teen expressions. **(Poly)**

Conflicting values and practices in immigrant families were evident in the participants' lives. Issues around hybridity of values and language of their growing grandchildren were perceived as challenges. Inculcating Filipino values was not an easy thing to do. Del noticed the changes in her daughter and was surprised about it. Time for each other in the family seemed difficult because of the demands of the busy world of

Canada. Moreover, Poly also noticed changes in his granddaughter's attitude. Spending little time with grandchildren may have its price. Teenagers could be influenced more by peers than their parents or grandparents because they spend more time with their friends outside their homes. It may be difficult for grandchildren to acquire Filipino values as their families adopt the local Canadian culture.

Sustaining Support to Immigrant Families

A life of diaspora is a life of multiple challenges. In a place where values and lifestyles, language, and weather are different, establishing a home even in the house of immigrant families proved difficult. To survive, the participants needed a sense of meaning as to why they came to Canada and how they could sustain the lifetime obligation of supporting their children. Firstly, participants indicated the need to go back to their purpose in coming to Canada. Like many others, Gloria was asked about her reason for being in Canada. She came to be with her family, particularly her grandchildren. She valued her work because it enabled her to save money and send some to support her family in the Philippines. Gloria was not as concerned about becoming poor again should she go back to the Philippines. Affluence was not her priority. She was more concerned about harmonious relationships in the family. Secondly, amidst challenges, participants like Lorna appealed for patience and sacrifices in living with sponsored Filipino seniors.

I advise patience to Filipino seniors who are now here in Canada. When you encounter problems, sometimes you give up. You should not! Keep serving your children because in the end they will recognize your sacrifices or your support. They brought you here to be with them and thus share your love and care to your families. Sponsored Filipino seniors seem strong, but when problems come, some give up. **(Lorna)**

Patience played an important part of the life of sponsored Filipino seniors. It means that if children no longer recognize their parents' efforts and sacrifices, and tradition, it is necessary to be persistent; when life gets unbearable, one needs determination; when grandchildren are unruly, discipline them with love and patience; and when misunderstanding occurs, endeavor to keep the family together and focused on the purpose of being in Canada. Gloria and Bea were among those who found a purpose in being with their respective immigrant families and grandchildren.

Thirdly, to sustain support is to anchor it in spirituality. Behind the sacrifice and challenges, a few participants found meaning in their spiritual life. The experience was not about fatalism but a unique understanding of their reason for being – an ascent to faith. Religious piety remains strong among Filipinos overseas. It plays a role in finding meaning amidst difficulties.

Participants appealed for understanding of their condition. While their work and support ease the burdens of their immigrant families, they needed some support from the government, especially those who were advanced in age and could no longer work. As immigrants and/or citizens of Canada, they too deserve the government care given to others.

Experiencing Recognition

Sponsors expressed their gratitude for the continuing support and care provided by the participants. Their actions were acts of recognition of, and reciprocity for, the sacrifices participants made for their immigrant families. In the context of this study, this refers to acts of recognition by affirmation and reciprocity and also to the respect afforded the participants' identity. However, the study also identified cases of the

denigration of sponsored Filipino seniors as observed by the participants; this aspect of the data is therefore included in this sub-section.

Recognition by affirmation had various manifestations. One was by affective gestures of families to the participants. Poly and Lorna spoke about affective gestures from their families, which gave them a sense of value or importance. Laughter and smiles from his children and grandchildren were likewise a form of affirmation that was more than enough to please Poly. Being cared for did not always have to be verbalized to be experienced. Lorna also knew that her family loved her and appreciated her support.

Well, I can see it in their smiles. As you live with them, you know it. You know it when someone does not feel good towards you by his or her smile or gesture towards you. Sometimes we make fun of each other. It is like this, if we have hurt feelings in the house, then we would not be making fun at each other.

They always ask me to go out with them but I would rather stay in the house. I refuse the treat. I do not like going out. I always receive gifts from them. However, I do not watch movies. The last time I saw a movie was 11 years ago in the Philippines. They invited me many times. They even give tickets, but I just do not like it. They often invite me too to hockey games but I refused. I am happy staying here in the house. With beer in the house, I am okay. **(Poly)**

They shared their love to me. If I am sick, they brought me to the doctor; and if I need some amount, they give me money. Just to make me happy, they bring me around to beautiful places in Canada. These are ways on how they showed their love for me. **(Lorna)**

These expressions of appreciation or gratitude reaffirmed and sustained the participants' support of their families. There was less likelihood of family separation if sponsored Filipino seniors experienced love, acceptance, and recognition from their immigrant families. Poly and Lorna experienced happiness and fulfillment through the love and caring of their sponsors.

Giving gifts and treats was the most common way of showing recognition by reciprocity. Sponsors provided the participants with money, gifts, and travel treats. Participants were specific about the forms of appreciation that their sponsors gave them through gifts and compliments.

My son did not like going to movies and he did not bring me there. Do you know where he brought me? We went out for dinner, and to places as far as Vancouver. We went to panoramic places during summer. He brought me to so many places. **(Fely)**

Sometimes, my daughter treats her dad and me for dinner. She gives us gifts and some incentives to travel. Recently, we went for a vacation to her cousin in Seattle. My daughter and her family were pleased with my support. They appreciated my support and gave me some treats. **(Del)**

They brought us to places that we have not seen. They gave us treats at restaurants. Moreover, when we arrived to Canada, they brought us around to make us feel happy. They appreciated the help what I provided. **(Gloria)**

They treated me well and it pleased me. They sometimes brought us to movies and malls, and bought us clothes. **(Rosa)**

Some sponsors articulated explicitly their gratitude to their parents and it made the sponsored parents feel valued. Bea, Eddie and Francis indicated a direct initiative from sponsors to provide recognition.

Sometimes, they bring us around; and then we eat somewhere. They told us “you know Mom and Dad; you have done huge help...without you, who would look after our kids.” One cannot just leave the little ones by themselves. There is a law that prohibits that. Someone has to babysit the children. This is what we have been doing for our sponsors. They are so grateful for what we have done. We do everything possible to please them. Their kind treatment to us is a form of gratitude. It is about giving value to what you do - it is a give and take. **(Eddie)**

To please us, our children sometimes treat us for dinner. They would not let us pay. They told us that it is a way of expressing their gratitude. They also buy clothes for me, my wife, and for their sister. They also brought us to places like Banff. **(Francis)**

It is up to them. It is up to them if they love me or not. When my son is on day-off, he would offer to drive me around. He would ask if I would like to go to the mall or if I want to have dinner somewhere. On Mother's Day, they gave me a treat. They also bring me along to birthday celebrations. They show their love at all times. **(Bea)**

Treats and gifts therefore were expressions of love and care that recognized the support of the participants. The notion of 'give and take', as Eddie's quote indicates, speaks of the reciprocity of relationship between sponsored Filipino seniors and their sponsors. Moreover, showing respect was another act of recognition. Fely regarded the recognition that she received from her family as a form of respect; respect earned through years of struggle to feed her children.

I can see how they love me and they are grateful for what I have done for them. They respect me so much. They do not complain when I tell them something. I am pleased that they showed me respect - maybe because of what I did for them.
(Fely)

Traditional Filipino values would consider it impudent or disrespectful to talk back to parents or any senior in the family. It is a form of insult to Filipino parents if their children argue with them or speak to them too frankly. The Filipino value of *pagbibigay galang sa mga matatanda* (giving respect to elders) thus remained an expectation among the participants.

The opposite of recognition is denigration. Lack of respect is a denigration that leads to frustration and ultimately to family break-up. While sponsored Filipino parents like Fely, Del, Francis, and Joshua decided to live separately from their sponsors, this was by necessity or choice and not because of any misunderstanding. However, Bea, Eddie, and Gloria spoke of the experiences of other sponsored Filipino seniors who decided to live separately from their families due to misunderstandings with their

children-in-law. Experiences of denigration were apparent. Some sponsors also evicted their sponsored parents not because of any misunderstanding, but because of a clash of values and lifestyles. Their efforts of support or help were not recognized. Work and social life had caused some sponsors to neglect having time for their children and parents – a reality that contributed to distant and strained family relationships. In addition, when separation occurred, living as diasporas became more difficult and challenging.

Summary

This section has focused on concepts that emerged in the data as challenges that beset the participants while in diaspora. One of the great challenges was around a persistent longing for home. Although some participants had found their homes in Canada, others still longed for it. Different lifestyles, work demands, lack of a social network in the community, cold weather, and the inability to discipline their grandchildren have all contributed to this persistent desire to return home.

The participants also struggled for survival with their families. They worked to help their families achieve a Canadian standard of living. They also faced challenges in providing supporting to their sponsors due to unemployment and discrimination, family misunderstanding and conflict, and the lack of an option to return home because of the unbearable living conditions there. Nevertheless, in the midst of these challenges, they were pleased with the peace and relative security of Canada. However, they also experienced a feeling of insecurity in their unfamiliar neighbourhoods, and worried about their grandchildren's security. Moreover, the challenges of financial security and non-eligibility of sponsored Filipino seniors for a government pension within the prescribed ten-year period provoked great apprehension in the event of sickness or age-related

illness. Participants lacked the choice and felt powerless to change the waiting period's duration.

A further challenge for sponsored Filipino seniors, one which the participants considered compelling, was that they believed they owed something to their children for favours received. The challenge was not only about returning material or monetary favours to their sponsors, but also the duty to please them. 'Utang na loob' or inner debt was about obligation and the tradition that links it to filial piety. This was not merely about tradition but was an expectation of reciprocity, something that concerned participants who were aging.

Moreover, participants were also aware of the conflicting values in their families that continued to challenge them each day. There were suggestions about how to sustain support. It was important to remember the purpose of coming to Canada, to have patience and perseverance and to anchor acts of support in their religious beliefs. Participants also appealed for support from the government when they might need it. Sustaining support to sponsors was important, as it was essential to survive until their immigrant families had fully settled down and made their new home in Canada.

Re-examining Roles and Expectations

Amidst the challenges, the participants were aware of their *raison d'être*. They spoke about the purpose of being in Canada and the roles and support for their families that were embedded in their decision to immigrate. Their level of awareness helped to make sense of their experiences with the new realities they faced in the *hostland*.

This section has three sub-categories in the fourth theoretical category Re-examining Roles and Expectations. The sub-categories include the going back to the purpose of dispersion, caring and helping by necessity, and considering other expectations of support. The section likewise ends with a summary.

Going back to the Purpose of Dispersion

As already discussed, pushing and pulling family demands influenced the participants' decision to leave the Philippines. One of the important concepts that emerged from the interview was the sense of 'othering' or concern for others and not for themselves. In other words, the participants' decisions to immigrate were not primarily for their personal interests but for the good of their families in Canada and in the Philippines. This suggests acts of altruism or sacrifices for the sake of their children.

Well, I did that (provide financial support) to assist them. I want them to alleviate their living condition. We do not want them to go through the same experience like when we were still children. At that time, we were living in the quagmire of poverty. If there was food, we had to eat as much as we could, as there may be no food in the next meal. It was also difficult to find money in the Philippines, as we lived in the farm. At that time, we had very little income from the farm. In Canada, sacrifice is necessary. I do not want them (children) to be like us when we were still children. I do not want them to suffer. I love my children. **(Francis)**

Francis assumed a heroic role in saving his children from the quagmire of poverty and suffering. He would not want his children in Canada to encounter a similar

experience of hardship. He spoke of his parental sacrifice as something necessary, an expectation that he has placed upon himself. In like manner, Lorna assumed the role of saving her children through sacrifice.

My daughter is now in Canada, she is my eldest child. My daughter in the Philippines was the youngest; she had a son in second year college. I decided to retire from job to give priority to the needed support that my daughter needed in Canada. She needed my help for her son with disability. As I told you, I was an employee of the Philippine government but I got very little salary. It was not enough to support my daughter and her family. My daughter and her family in Canada needed my help, so I decided to retire and be of help to her.... Instead of paying a caregiver to look after their children, they give me some amount so that I could help the college education of my grandson in the Philippines - we belong to a poor family. Helping my daughter in Canada enables me to provide financial help to my children in the Philippines... **(Lorna)**

Dispersion from the homeland had a purpose. It was about reuniting with families, supporting them with their needs, and saving them from an impoverished condition.

Lorna was a retired government employee. She opted for early retirement to help family in Canada. Although her decision to come to Canada meant separation from her family in the Philippines, she hoped that by immigrating she would be able to better support her daughters and grandsons in both Canada and the Philippines. It was necessary for the survival and subsistence of all her family.

In the course of the participants' experience in the *hostland*, new realities evolved that had an impact on their living arrangements. The participants who lived with their families fulfilled their desire to be reunited reunification with them. However, living with immigrant families did not mean this would go on forever. Fely and Del chose to live separately from their immigrant families. Fely managed to support herself and then began to find her own home. Del lived separately from her family because of work demands. While doing this, both women provided support in different ways. Fely

offered affective/emotional support, as her sponsor no longer needed her financial help. Living separately gave her independence and a sense that she had completed her support. Nonetheless, living independently from children did not mean indifference. She was always there to help them. Moreover, it was not by choice that Del lived separately from her sponsor, but because being closer to her work was necessary in order to sustain financial support to her children in Calgary and in the Philippines. Living on their own did not mean an end to their role in providing support, because they believed this was a lifetime obligation, which continued beyond spatial conditions.

The role and expectations of parental support remained pervasive and embedded in the intent and actions of many sponsored Filipino seniors. In situations where conflict and irreconcilable differences occur, providing support may end but Filipino tradition expects parents to make the first move toward reconciliation or to open their doors when children come back and ask for help.

Coming to Canada meant embracing the roles and expectations that came along with being sponsored. Participants had high expectations because of their preconceptions about Canada. Confronted with the realities of subsistence and survival in their families' lives, they were quick to assume unexpected roles such as working to help with mortgage payments and the cost of living in Canada. Changing and adopting new roles was necessary for an appropriate response to family needs. Gender-differentiated roles were no longer a concern when the focus changed to a struggle for survival. Along with financial assistance, providing care and domestic support were priorities in terms of roles. Participants enabled their families to gain stability and economic security.

Caring and Helping by Necessity

Understanding the roles and expectations of sponsored Filipino seniors is not just about Filipino tradition and practices. It is also about the diasporic condition of subsistence and survival that necessitated acts of multi-dimensional support. Caring and helping due to necessity, provides an understanding of how the participants understood their roles.

If I will not provide help or support to my family, who will? You know that it is very difficult to get a house helper here in Canada. As we are together in one house, we might just as well help each other. Well, I owe them something (inner debt) because had it not for them, I would not have been here. **(Poly)**

Poly helped because it was necessary. While his immigrant children worked during the day, he cared for his granddaughter and cleaned the house. Toward late afternoon, he got ready to work until midnight. Likewise, Romeo also helped his immigrant family by necessity. When Romeo came with his wife and son to Canada, he did not expect to assume the role of a babysitter and housekeeper. During the day, he was alone at home with his grandchildren while the whole family, including his wife and son, were out at work. In the past, he was the provider for the family. Now he takes on new roles in Canada out of necessity and has no qualms about assuming housework and babysitting roles.

The necessity to survive in the *hostland* brings a further perspective on gender-differentiated roles. Gender roles by tradition and practice may experience reversals or changes. Social milieu is definitely a factor to consider, as not every culture welcomes changes to long-held gender-differentiated roles that reify men as the head and provider of the family and assign women to secondary roles. The archaic view imposed the

stereotype of women as *housewives* because they should be in the house while men are ‘hunting’ for food. Taking the role of a *houseman* then, is not necessarily acceptable among cultures that uphold men’s superiority. However, the experience of the participants revealed a reversal of gender roles. It indicated that the survival of their families was the fundamental consideration. Out of necessity, sponsored Filipinos seniors may therefore be willing to reverse gender-differentiated roles for the sake of their children and grandchildren.

Considering other Expectations of Support

It is a widely accepted value to care for one’s children. Viewed from the experience of the participants, Filipino parenting means family-centrism, “utang na loob,” lifetime support for children, extended family ties and support, and ‘malasakit’ and ‘awa’ (altruistic forms of sacrifice). As evident below, Fely expected parents to be almost everything in terms of lifetime support.

Parents cannot leave their children. They should look after their needs. It is not just helping them in their finances but also in their emotional needs. If they have health problems, it is inevitable for me not to help. I think all parents are like that. If children need financial, physical, emotional, or spiritual support, you must help them. I do not know how others do it, but for me, I really cannot neglect my children. No matter what, they are still my children. I do not know why others are not supporting their children. Maybe they have a different way of doing things.
(Fely)

For Filipinos, supporting the children is an ‘eternal’ commitment. There is no end to parental support. Fely found it unimaginable for parents not to support their children. The longevity of support has no clear timelines or indicators as to when it should end. In many instances, parents continue to support their adult and married children. The close-knit and family-centered characteristics of Filipino families may explain the existential

umbilical cord connecting Filipino parents and their children, as embedded in the quotes below.

I love them so much. My grandsons really need the care of a mother - a mother who is always there, who gives them help and support. **(Lorna)**

It is because I love them that I continue to support them. I love them... they are my children. A mother would offer even her life for the sake of her children. **(Gloria)**

The demands of my job separate me from my family. However, I am not really separated...you know what I mean. I make sure that I talk to them or at least be with them every time that I am on leave or during off-days. I also send them money because I do not want them to suffer. The families of my children in the Philippines needed my support, too. I need my job to support them... **(Del)**

I saw their needs and so I have to help...My income from work, I send most of them to the Philippines to support my children and their families. **(Joshua)**

I no longer have children in the Philippines. I pity my son. I care for him and such feeling comes from within - of course, he is my son and they are my children. **(Bea)**

I do not want just to sit in the house. I want to help. I can see that they are tired. When they come home, they look very tired. I am doing all the help that I could. They are my children. I pity them. **(Rosa)**

When we are in the house, we have nothing to do. We are free. Whatever help or support we do, we do it because they are our children, right? When my children go to work, my wife and I do all the house chores. Just before you came, I was grooming their garden. Garden maintenance is costly here. Indeed, parents who are here in Canada provide huge support to their children. Parents give good examples to their children so that they too would do the same to their children. We did all the help because they are our children. They are good children. **(Eddie)**

In such close-knit and family-centered relationships, support for each other is not only expected, it is necessary. Gloria was willing to offer herself for her children so they may live life. Del realized that her job was necessary to help her children survive. Love for their children was the reason for their sacrifices. The dyadic relationship of parent –

child remained even in one's senior years. The participants identified and connected themselves very closely with their families. It seemed that their reason for being was entirely about their children.

Summary

The roles and expectations of the participants were redefined when they reached Canada. Roles were modified based on necessity and the demands of survival. Upon reaching Canada, they saw at first-hand how their children struggled in their new lives. Out of necessity, they assumed the role of provider, carer, and helper, even though these were not the roles they had expected to fulfill. Some male participants had not expected to become babysitters and housekeepers, as these had not been their roles in the Philippines. Nonetheless, they managed to adjust to their new challenges, including a gender-differentiated role. Moreover, as support for subsistence was necessary, they assumed unexpected and unarticulated roles and expectations so as to be able to provide financial and material support to their immigrant families. Further descriptions of their roles and expectations came from the realities of care and sacrifice, which drove parents to support their children. Family-centrism and close-knit relationships were key to sponsored Filipino parents continuing to provide support to children even in adulthood or married life – an uncut existential umbilical cord. Interestingly, the cord provided mutual sustenance.

Finding Meaning in Support: Personal and Material

In the previous sections, I presented the findings and discussed the concepts of the pushing and pulling realities that brought the participants to Canada, their awareness of their identity in Canada, their multi-dimensional motherwork and subsistence support, along with the challenges of survival in the *hostland*. This section further explicates how the participants found value, satisfaction and personal benefit, and a sense of meaning in their experience of providing care and subsistence support to their families. The fifth category around finding meaning in their experience has two emergent sub-categories such as personal and material support.

Finding Personal Meaning

Finding a sense of meaning was key to survival in the *hostland*. A meaningless life could cause adverse effects in personal life and family. As diasporas, finding meaning in the experience of living with their immigrant families was crucial in deciding whether or not to return to the homeland. On a personal level, they experienced meaning through a sense of joy, accomplishment, care and acceptance, and the renewal of their parental roles and mission.

Experiencing Joy.

Life in the *hostland* was not all about challenges and difficulties. The participants experienced joy and fulfillment in their roles as parents. Joy was not just about money. Helping children in need was worth more than anything else. One could ignore job opportunities just to be with one's grandchildren. The participants felt joy behind their sacrifices for their family.

I am not really finding it difficult to help or support my sponsor. I am actually happy with what I do. In addition, because I am happy, I continue to live in my sponsor's house. **(Romeo)**

I do not mean that I have given more than enough, but I am very satisfied with what I have done for them. When they needed me, I cannot say no. **(Fely)**

I feel happy in providing support to my children. I do not feel obliged to do it. I love doing it. **(Poly)**

I am pleased. I feel the love and joy because I am with my children and grandchildren. **(Lorna)**

Of course, I feel happy because I am able to give. I am happy. I do not feel the burden. It may be burdensome sometimes, but for my family or for the good of my children, I can bear it. **(Gloria)**

I am pleased of the help or support that I have provided. Sometimes, I feel tired of what I do, but it pleases me because I do it for my family. I like doing housework. For as long as I am able, I do not have a problem with it. Of course! It is my joy to help. My children know that my help comes from within. **(Poly)**

The experience of joy and satisfaction in providing support to their sponsors was a shared feeling. Although they do not represent all sponsored Filipino seniors, they mentioned joy as part of the experience of providing support to their families in Canada. Furthermore, the clarity of purpose of being in Canada could bring contentment for the choices they had made. The ability to fulfill one's parental obligation was important in the life of the participants.

Assuming that I am earning here, what will I do with the money? If I choose to go home, I have money or pension in the Philippines. If I were earning here, I would have financially helped my son. However, over the past eight years since I came, I did not seek employment as I was babysitting my grandchildren. **(Bea)**

Nothing prevents me from helping them. It is okay. When I have work, I am able to support them. However, when I was unemployed, I am unable to provide what they needed. It is not the same. So, I feel good that I am able to give...I am happy otherwise I would have felt guilty had I not done it. I am happy because I have fulfilled what my heart says and what my children need. Therefore, I am happy that I have done it for them... Even if God takes away my life, I have already

done what I needed to do for my children. I am happy that I have done my responsibility. **(Fely)**

Bea knew that she could support herself in the Philippines; however, she insisted on serving her family, which she considered more important than a paid job. Fely was explicit that she would have felt guilty had she not helped her children. However, having done what was expected, she felt better. Although a sense accomplishment may be experienced, it does not signal an end to support. Motherwork and subsistence support continued on to the second generation of kin.

Experiencing Love and Acceptance.

Expressions of love and acceptance were important. They were forms of affirmation that sustained acts of support to families. Among others, Bea, Lorna, Del and Romeo felt the love of their children and it pleased them.

In effect, although it is difficult to be a parent and a grandmother, I am willing to sacrifice my life for them - my family, my grandsons. To be a mother is about sharing your love and taking care of them. I am pleased. I feel the love and joy because I am with my children and grandchildren... I benefit from the love of my children. Yeah. They share their love. They care for me. They give me a little amount of money for going around the beautiful country of Canada. **(Lorna)**

It gives me joy to provide help or support to my son. Money is nothing. I only have one son. If, I am sick, he is there to care for me. That is the way I see things... When my son gets his salary, he buys me food and gives me some amount. When we go to groceries, he would tell me to get what I want. It is something that benefits me. When I want some Filipino food, my son would invite me to shop at Lucky Store; and while in store, he would tell me to get I want. He would also bring me some Filipino food. **(Bea)**

They always take care of me. For example, when I was sick, I was far from them, my daughter came and brought me to the doctor. **(Del)**

I am old and it is inevitable to feel aches in my body. My children bring me to the doctor. That is what they have done to help me. **(Romeo)**

I am not sad. Truly, I am happy. I am so happy to live here in Canada. I have no problem with my sponsor. Indeed, we have a smooth relationship. They are so concerned about us. When we come together, we talk to each other – it is what it means to be a good family. When there is openness, it means having good relationship in the family. **(Francis)**

Lorna, who gave her love and care to her children and grandchildren, believed that her acts of support were forms of sacrifices. Her understanding of motherhood was founded upon the pleasure of caring the people she loved. In return, she received the love and care of her daughter and family. Like Bea, she received from them some money, not as payment for her sacrifice, but as gestures of gratitude and care. Bea claimed that no amount of money could ever replace the joy of being with her family. In times of sickness, her children care for her. Being cared for was an affirmation that she was important to her children. In times of sickness, Del and Romeo felt the care of their children. They felt an accepting atmosphere in the family. The impact of care from their families made the participants feel belonged and accepted. Having a smooth relationship sustains care and living-together arrangements. More so, Francis indicated that the atmosphere of care and acceptance in the household, the coming together to share stories, and the openness in the family were essentials in facilitating better relationships. When there are good relationships in the family, seniors feel that they belong, are acknowledged, and cared for.

Finding Meaning in Uncertainties.

While joy was a common experience of participants, it does not mean the end of uncertainty. Sponsored Filipino seniors faced uncertainties when their families asked them to live separately. Finding meaning in situations of uncertainty may be difficult for sponsored Filipino seniors. Indeed, Francis implied a sense of ‘eviction’; his son-in-law’s

parents were coming to Canada and there was no more room for him in the house. He needed a place where he could move in immediately. While he claimed that he had work to support himself, he also realized that getting a house at the current market price and at his age might not be easy. Aspiring to have a house with very little resources was a gargantuan task.

If my son in-law sponsors his parents, I am sure that if we have to leave his house immediately. The sponsorship application of his parents is still in process. For now, I want to have my own house because prices of houses continually increase. So, I would feel sorry if I cannot get one. For now, we are self-supporting.
(Francis)

Francis's situation mirrored the experiences of other sponsored Filipino seniors who moved out of their children's houses. Others did not have any choice but to live separately because of job demands. Del was one of those who had to live separately from her sponsor and was thus unable to provide daily housework and babysitting support. She dreamed of reunification. She felt guilty about not being able to be with her family; however, having no job could bring uncertainty, as there was no other way to help sustain the life of her children in the Philippines, who needed her support.

Finding Meaning in Work.

Finding meaning in work may be difficult when one cannot get accreditation on his or her professional training back home. Many sponsored Filipino seniors whom I know landed in cleaning or housekeeping work. For those who are stronger, they worked on production lines or in warehouses. Eddie wanted to work in the oil and gas industry. Having found no job in Calgary, he worked in a meat factory and later learned to accept his fate. He refused to accept support from his sponsor, as he was not used to it.

They do give us some amount but we refuse to take it. I told them that I am still strong and I am able to work. I told them that ‘I will work because it is what I did for you before.’ While I am still strong, I will work. It is what I want. When I am unable to work, then it is time for me to rest. **(Eddie)**

My son in-law drives me to work because of the distance from the house to my workplace. It is something that burdens me. If I could only walk to work, I need not bother my children anymore. I know that they are tired and that I should look after myself. I know that it is not good to think this way, but it is okay. I am working hard to survive so that gradually I would not be a burden to my children. **(Gloria)**

As cited earlier, they may have found meaning in working as it enabled them to support themselves, their sponsors, and their children and relatives in the Philippines. It enhanced their self-esteem. Like Eddie, they did not seek financial support from their sponsors. Others may find it difficult to refuse support from their immigrant children. Gloria found meaning in being able to work. Having work freed her from ‘dependency’ and from becoming a burden to her children. Back in the Philippines, she was dependent upon her husband’s support. Living in Canada reversed that role. She now provided support to her children in the Philippines. The reversal of roles, from being a recipient of support to being a provider, was obviously a struggle. In the midst of uncertainties and contradictions, however, the participants found meaning in their respective circumstances.

Renewing the Mission.

Coming to Canada did not mean an end to supporting their children. It was rather a renewal of parental roles and a continuation of the parental mission to support children in need. The term mission came from the Latin word *missum*, which means *being sent* to a task. For the participants, the task of providing support was a mission to fulfill. While fulfilling the mission, it gave them sense and meaning about Filipino parenting. It

powered their commitment and dedication to provide help or support for the good of their sponsors and families. Bea renewed her mission to provide care to her surviving family. She had no other family to care for and providing care to her grandchildren was an act of renewing her parenting role.

Nothing prevents me from helping my family. My help came from my heart. I pity them. Whenever I get to the mall, many of my friends (Filipino seniors) are inviting me for jobs. I am babysitting my grandchildren and I cannot just leave them in favour of work. I love my grandchildren.

My love for my grandchildren is inspiring me to provide more care to them. I became a widow in 1979. My daughter was still in Grade V and my son was in his first year High School. I patiently kept the fast food going, which enabled me to send them to education. I invested little money and we never lived in poverty. I paid their tuition and fees on time. **(Bea)**

I am pleased that I have done my responsibility as a mother. I am happy. I would have felt guilty had I not done it. I am happy because I have fulfilled what my heart says and what my children need. I am happy that I have done it for them. **(Fely)**

A sense of 'mission fulfilled' and/or personal satisfaction was an entrenched concept in the statements of the participants. Having done so much for their children, others experienced a sense of fulfillment, of a mission fulfilled, over the past decades of sacrifices. Fely, for example, went through difficult times as a widow and as a single parent. She took on multiple jobs to raise and educate her children. Fely was pleased that she did her responsibility. It was a mission accomplished.

Finding Meaning in Material Support

Like other sponsored seniors, the participants were among those prejudiced as immigrants who drain Canadian welfare resources. In the preceding discussion, the findings showed that they had a positive impact on the lives of their families in Canada. They provided benefits, not just in the provision of care, but in a sizable amount of saving

and income to their families. The following discussion therefore focuses on the impact or benefits of the support of sponsored seniors to their immigrant families. Figure 6 is an attempt to illustrate the impact of the participants' material or financial support.

Alleviating Economic Condition.

Sponsored Filipino seniors are not necessarily financial burdens to their sponsors. The experiences of the participants showed that they contributed towards their sponsors' monthly expenses. Their continuing help to the household and national economy is proof of the falsity of the claim that sponsored seniors are financial liabilities of the state.

Having jobs empowered the participants to support and alleviate the living condition of their children. It also enabled them to gain financial independence and support themselves in the event of separation or eventual return to the homeland. Moreover, participants considered their home-based support as a form of financial contribution to their sponsors.

As I told you, if they were to hire a caregiver, it could cost them \$ 1,000 a month. I am giving them a big help because they can minimize their expenses. (**Lorna**)

A huge benefit! They get huge benefits. Instead of paying a nanny or a caretaker, they save the money back to their account because we do not ask them payments. It is savings for them. (**Eddie**)

The benefit that they earn from me is that they are able to save because they do not have to pay anyone to babysit their children. (**Bea**)

Cost saving was evident in most of the participants' statements when asked about the benefit that their sponsors gained from their presence or support. Lorna, Eddie, and Bea were emphatic that their sponsors saved some cost because of their support. From the statements of the participants, a simple mathematical formula is possible. If the prevailing cost of labour (Cl) is multiplied by time (T), it gives one an estimate of cost

saving (Cs). The formula $Cl \times T = Cs$ is flexible, as it enables one to factor in the number of sponsored Filipino seniors (S1) and the number of years, months, or days (S2). Its divisibility can be factored by any desired variable (Y+). In other words, motherwork and subsistence support of sponsored Filipino seniors are readily convertible into financial terms.

Moreover, the participants were beset by the contrast between their preconceptions of Canada and their unmet expectations. Having seen the financial struggles of their immigrant children, they were compelled to help them financially. Hence, the notion that sponsors support the sponsored parents is not precise, because the individual realities of many sponsored Filipino seniors revealed otherwise. Likewise, the Sponsorship Agreement indicating that sponsors provide the basic requirements to sponsored parents appears to be a mono-linear relationship, as both sponsors and sponsored relatives were providing mutual support and care.

Increasing Mobility and Flexibility.

The presence of sponsored Filipino seniors enabled sponsors to have more freedom, flexibility and mobility in their daily life. The participants indicated that their sponsors had more time for themselves. Their presence enabled the sponsors to find better job opportunities and to have flexible work time.

They gained many benefits of my support. If they need to go out somewhere, I babysit their daughter. By staying in the house, I am able to cook so they have something to eat when they come home. If I were not in the house, it would be difficult for them, as they cannot find a helper here in Canada. Sometimes, I also do laundry for them. **(Poly)**

I prepared the dinner so that when they come home, the food is ready. I also feed my grandchildren. When they come, food is on the table, and when they are ready to eat, I serve them. That is how I do things for them. It helps them **(Rosa)**

When they went somewhere, they left their children to me. They cannot go to places if no one looks after their children. **(Fely)**

Well, we are able to help them. We look after their house and their children. We prepared their meals and have them ready when they come home from work. Yes, they do not need house helpers anymore. They cannot also get a babysitter in Canada. **(Gloria)**

There is a benefit. Someone now looks after the house while my children at work. Having someone to help is a support that benefits my family. **(Romeo)**

Participants assumed a motherwork role that enabled their children to work fulltime or flexible hours. In addition, Francis provided mobility to his children by mortgaging a vehicle that they could use for work. Although not all sponsored Filipino seniors can afford to mortgage a van for their families, Francis thought that it was the best way to express his gratitude to his daughter. Overall, the participants' motherwork role provided their children abilities to engage in economic opportunities.

Lessening the Cost of Living.

Del, Poly, Joshua, and Fely contributed to the monthly house mortgage and utilities. Their financial contribution to their sponsors lessened the cost of living expenses, which provided financial relief to their sponsors.

We provided them financial support to hasten their budget and we babysit their children if they go to the US or other places. It is a great help to them. **(Del)** Now that they are able to meet their needs as family, they have lesser debts -- as you know, life in Canada is about debts. My daughter is not like that. With our presence now in Canada, we share with her the responsibility. It lightens her load as I am helping her brothers and sisters in the Philippines. **(Joshua)**

My job (baker) is a big help to my family and me. I also have a lot to thank for from the Government of Canada. Indeed, my job is a big help to us and to my children. **(Francis)**

With my presence in the house, they are able to save because they do not have to pay anyone to babysit their children. **(Bea)**

Participants offered freely their support. Although some participants received occasional gratuities or gifts from their sponsors, these were not enough to compensate for the love and the amount of time, effort, and multiple tasks they provided for their children and grandchildren. Financial support alleviated the living condition of their families and would expedite the financial stability of their families in Canada.

Increasing Purchasing Power of Family.

Working in Canada increased the capacity of participants to provide support to their children in the Philippines. Through their monthly remittances, they increased the purchasing power of their families and thus alleviated their economic and social condition. Their support enabled their kin to purchase goods for the basic requirements of life, provide an education for their children, and access medical care. They alleviated the impoverished condition of their kin and helped them attain a decent living.

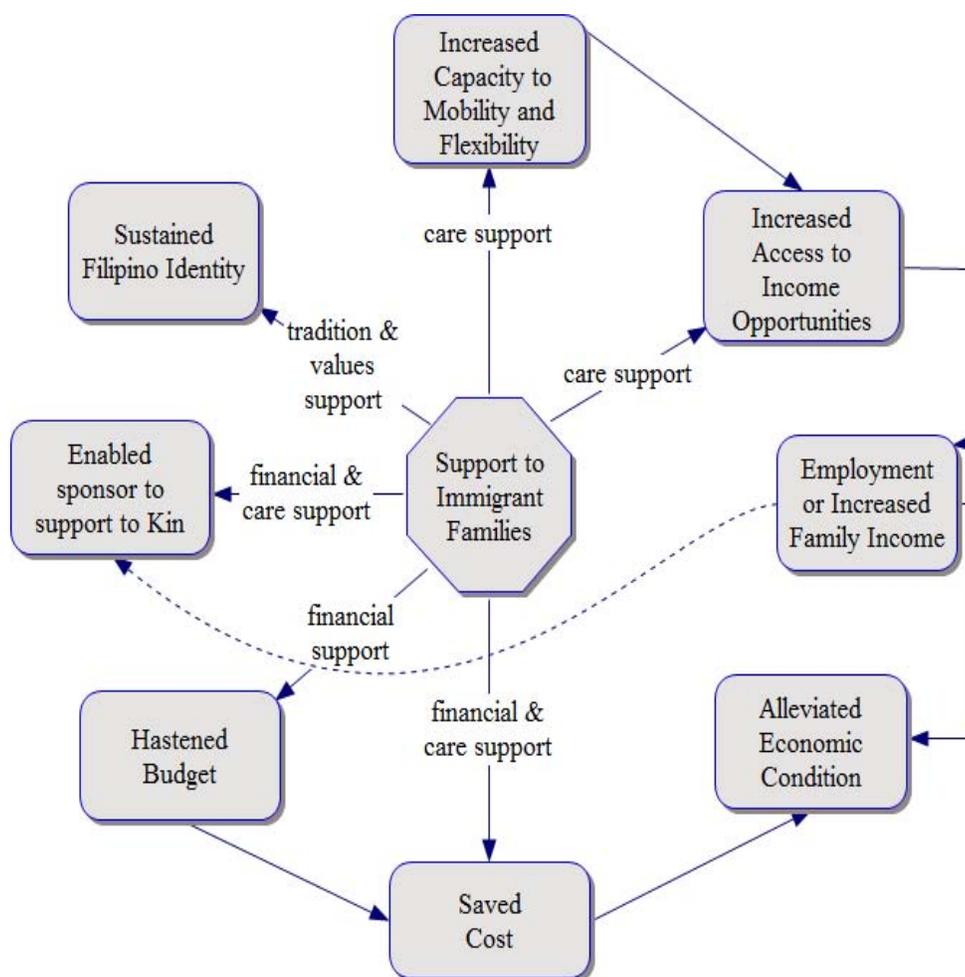
Concerning the benefits that I gain from giving them my help or support, they give me money. That is why I send it to my daughter in the Philippines who is financially hard-up. They (sponsor) also help me financially. **(Lorna)**

Lorna experienced a triple gain. She reunited with her family; provided care to her grandchildren; and, she continued her financial support to her family in the Philippines.

Romeo had no job in Canada. However, he still managed to provide support to his children in the Philippines through his monthly pension from the Philippine government.

The participants indicated that as long as they have the financial resources, they will provide support to their children, grandchildren and closest kin.

Figure 6: Impact of Sponsored Filipino Seniors



Summary

The support of participants to their immigrant families provided more advantages and thus challenged the stigmatic concept of sponsored seniors as burdens of the state. Participants alleviated the living condition of their sponsors through financial support and care that enabled sponsors to access economic opportunities. They enabled their sponsors to have more freedom, mobility, and flexibility in their daily work and living.

Their support facilitated employment opportunities, mobility, and convenience for sponsors. In other words, it helped their families establish stability and assisted their settlement in the *hostland*.

The participants also reduced the cost of living expenses of their immigrant families because they performed many tasks in the home. Their sponsors no longer had to send their children to daycare centres. For those who were employed, they also helped their sponsors with home expenses and mortgages. They lessened expenses and eased the financial obligations of their immigrant families. In addition, their income enabled them to continue providing subsistence support to their families in the Philippines.

In general, the interview data indicated that the presence of participants in their immigrant families brought a positive experience to sponsors. They enabled greater access to employment, afforded the children time for their jobs, served as bridges of Filipino culture and tradition, provided security for their grandchildren, performed housework, and provided financial support to their immigrant families.

Pondering the Overall Experience

Learning happens in different ways and at different times, sometimes in unexpected contexts. The process of coming to knowledge usually leads to the so-called ‘aha’ experience. In this section, I have presented examples of the mixed perceptions and feelings of the participants around the idea of a “better life” and their assessment of their life in Canada. Participants had moments of introspection and articulated their views about who they were in the context of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada. The ‘aha’ experience was a moment of awareness of their views of themselves after several years of supporting their immigrant families. The sixth theoretical category is pondering the overall experience with four categories: living a better life in the *hostland*, living as better persons, living as transients in the *hostland*, and learning to accept Canada. This section ends with a summary.

Living a Better Life in the Hostland

‘Seniors have work in Canada’ – this was a preconception that attracted many participants to the *hostland*. A high unemployment rate, highly competitive and discriminating employment criteria, and prejudice towards seniors all lessened their chances of employment in the Philippines. Immigrating to Canada appeared to be a viable option.

My situation is financially favourable in Canada than in the Philippines. Yes, there is a big difference between the two countries. It is advantageous to stay here in Canada than in the Philippines. An older person like me is able to work here, unlike in the Philippines where employment opportunity for people 35 years old and above is limited. Older people are often unemployed. In Canada, seniors are still able to get employment.

My job interview was on December 20, 2006. The following day, I immediately started working. Until now, I work in the same company. However, I am on leave

now due to abdominal pain. I went to the hospital and the doctor told me that I had inflammation in my pancreas. I am now on medication. My boss told me to rest and come back to work when I am ready. **(Eddie)**

Life here is comfortable. Jobs await many. In the Philippines, people are finding life difficult. With my age, I would have no work there. However, here, I am accepted and able to work decently. **(Francis)**

At age 73, Eddie worked in a meat factory. At his age, he would have the slimmest chance of going back to work in the Philippines. Eddie and Francis found work upon reaching Canada and they were pleased with it. While age discrimination in the Philippines and Canada was evident in the statements of the participants, the latter country offered more employment opportunities for seniors. With a previous context to compare it to, the availability of jobs for seniors seemed to make life better in the *hostland*. Participants understood a 'better life in Canada' in several ways. Firstly, it meant having a job.

Of course! It is different. Well, all of us (my family) feel more financially comfortable here. All our families back in the Philippines also experience financial comfort. Put it this way - living and working here in Canada is a big help. All of us here are financially better off. **(Poly)**

Poly's job meant a lot to his children and close kin. His dream of finding a job to alleviate the impoverished condition of his family came to fruition. He managed his finances well so that he was able to support his families and kin. Having a job is an economic positioning that enables sponsored Filipino seniors to extend help or support to their children in need. Having a job was immensely important for their settlement in the *hostland*.

Secondly, a better life in Canada means living harmoniously with sponsors and children-in-law. Relationship with their families is important to Filipinos, particularly to

families who have kept the family-centric tradition. Experiences of other sponsored Filipino seniors indicated the break-up of families due to conflict and misunderstanding. Therefore, having a job and a good family relationship were both elements of a better life.

Given the choice between Philippines and Canada, well, I like it here because I have work. However, if I am unable to work, I will decide to go back to the Philippines. It would be difficult if I were unable to work here. While I am still able, I will keep working. **(Gloria)**

Financially, life is better in Canada. It is what makes Canada different from the Philippines. About my relationship with my family in Canada, it is also nicer here. **(Del)**

Participants who have similar views to Gloria's, would rather not live in Canada without work to support their family. Gloria needed her work to support her children in the Philippines. In her conversation, she spoke about how she valued her family, particularly her grandchildren.

Thirdly, a better life was about affluence. It means satisfying needs and wants, and having access to the niceties of life. The large percentage of the middle class in Canada has made it possible to access goods and services that are unavailable to poor people in the Philippines. The better life situation of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada was considered a privileged one. Romeo was told by his friends in the Philippines that he was lucky as he had children who sponsored him to come to Canada.

Others told me that I am luckier because I am in Canada and that I have children here. It is better here. It is better here in Canada. Well, there is affluence in Canada and life is good here. Wherever you are, if you are closer to God, the Lord God will always show his mercy on you. I am not tired here, I am happy in Canada. **(Romeo)**

For the participants, it appears that living a better life means ‘living in affluence’. The economic affluence in Canada evidently became the basis of the claim that it is a better place than the Philippines. However, this view was not necessarily shared by all participants or sponsored Filipino seniors. For them, coming to Canada is akin to one's purpose in being. For instance, Bea was not as concerned about jobs or affluence. Life was meaningful only when she was with her son and grandchildren. Her world revolved around her only child and three grandchildren.

Fourthly, a better life in Canada meant living in a safer place. The economic turmoil, political instability, social injustice, and widespread poverty in the Philippines had made survival too difficult. Lorna contrasted the situations of both countries and then opted to stay in Canada. She expected to have a prosperous life in Canada. Like Romeo, she believed that it was a great privilege for sponsored Filipino seniors to be in Canada.

My life here in Canada is better than in my home country. In my own country, you encounter hardships in life especially if you belong to a poor family. In Canada, people are privileged -- you see it around here. You will encounter prosperous life in Canada as long as you are industrious. **(Lorna)**

Fifthly, better life was about the freedom to pursue one's aspirations. Some participants viewed Canada as an open society. In Joshua's case, she found it more free being in Canada. She felt able to buy what she wanted. Unlike in the Philippines, where luxuries and vanity items were only for the rich, she said that a working person could buy these things in Canada.

It is better here as we are able to do what we like. We are also able to buy what we want and help our families in the Philippines. **(Joshua)**

Freedom was an important concept in the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors. Filipino values and traditions nonetheless could be exacting at home and the claimed

freedom of expression may encounter contradictions within immigrant Filipino families and transnational communities.

Lastly, a better life means being empowered with the capacity to support. Having jobs added to the capacity of participants to provide financial support, despite their age and qualifications. Francis experienced a positive view of himself. Having earned more than he had in the Philippines, he supported his children in the Philippines beyond any expectations. He even concluded that most sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada are happy. For those who went back to the Philippines, he blamed the cold weather.

I think that they (Filipino seniors) are all happy. I see them in the malls and they look pleased. Some of them went back to the Philippines because of the cold. They cannot stand the cold here in Canada.

I work at Peter and Paul Bakery (not the real business name). I mix flour about three years now. I started working there since I came to Canada. I have a bakery back home and so when I came here, I was immediately looking for work in bakeries... I like it here. There is a lot of opportunity. My wife has a part-time cleaning work at the Calgary Place. She has worked for three years there. We are now regular employees. **(Francis)**

They are happy because they have income, which they could use to support their poor relatives in the Philippines. **(Rosa)**

Having regular income made the participants feel better about their stay in Canada.

It also enabled them to sponsor their children and closest kin. Some participants sought ways to bring their children to Canada.

One of my children and his wife may also come to Canada. One of them is due for interview. My sister-in-law has a work contract already. My life in Canada is still better even if my children are not all here. I do not worry much about them as they have work in the Philippines. **(Poly)**

I like it here. I like the climate. Money is also easy to find. All these make Canada better. I really like it here. I want to sponsor my relatives from the Philippines because life here is better. That is what I want, when it is possible. **(Francis)**

Poly and Francis implied about a chain of migration to Canada. When they said family, it did not just refer to their children. It also included their closest kin. The experience of a better life did not just attract Poly and Francis but also other sponsored Filipino seniors. However, not all agreed with those who claimed that life was better in the *hostland*. Living in Canada was only better when there was a job but it could be a lonely world for seniors, especially those abandoned by their families. Many participants shared an apprehension of loneliness and isolation in Canada in later life.

Living as Better Persons

With similarities in their previous definitions of a better life, and despite the challenges they faced, the participants generally expressed self-contentment regarding their experience in the *hostland*. Their claim of being ‘better persons’ implied that they have somehow found their home in the *hostland*.

Being a ‘better person’ is associated with having the ability to support their families. The quotes of Francis and Joshua are evidence of a greater capacity and of fulfillment and happiness. Possessing the freedom of choice and the ability to give what is desired added to the meaning of being ‘a better person’. Joshua knew that as long as she had income, she had the ability to support her family and choose what she wanted.

There is a difference. Here, I am better able to help my children. I am also able to help financially not only my children but also my relatives in the Philippines. I paid for the education of my grandchild. I also send boxes of goods to them. Just recently, I sent four. **(Francis)**

I feel a better person now because I can help, I can give, and I can buy whatever I want for as long as I work. I have not yet received much from the Government. **(Joshua)**

Further to the notion of being a better person was a sense of self-fulfillment for having done what was necessary. Eddie experienced the joy of having stayed with his immigrant children and grandchildren and established a smooth relationship or open communication with his families in Canada and the Philippines. Eddie used to be away from home while working in an oil and gas company in the Philippines. As a retired professional, he found more time with his children and grandchildren and had frequent and open communication with his children.

I feel that I am a better now. Although I help them (sponsor and family), they too have helped me. Whoever has a problem, he or she gets the support. When my children have problems, I give them my advice and help them solve their concerns. Through my advice, I can see that they were happy and without problems. To see your children happy is a great achievement of parents. For Filipinos, the presence of parents in the life of children is important, even to the married ones. Family bonding remains important.

Yes, I am a better person now. I am happy that I am with my children. I also have very open communication line with my children thus, I know what is going on with my children in both the Philippines and Canada. I am happy now. I do not have problems. **(Eddie)**

I feel better here because I am happy and becoming beautiful (laughed). It is not part of it, all right. I am not growing old! We easily get old in the Philippines because of the heat and of being penniless. **(Fely)**

I am now a better person. One reason is that I know God. God is here (pointing to her heart). He will never leave you nor forsake you. Whatever problem you encounter, just offer it to the Lord and he will strengthen you. That makes me feel a better person now. If you encounter a problem, there is a solution to it. I know that I will also experience a prosperous life in Canada unlike in the Philippines. **(Lorna)**

The feeling of acceptance contributed to Eddie's image of himself as a better person. His advice earned him respect from his children and his ability to gel the relationship in the family enabled him to foster familial bonding, which he considered important. The concept of acceptance and fulfillment also qualified the meaning of a

‘better person’. Moreover, understanding this was due to the enhancement of physical attributes, in addition to financial capacity. After going through the struggles of survival, Fely now feels a better person.

Moreover, a religious encounter in Canada could influence one’s understanding of what it means to be a better person. Lorna deepened her Christian faith when she reached Canada. She joined a Christian charismatic prayer group and in the process found some sense of meaning in her challenges. Her trust in God gave her a sense of spirituality in her day-to-day experience. It likewise gave her a sense of meaning and optimism and made her feel a better person. With faith, she expected prosperity in the *hostland*.

Living as Transients in the Hostland

The other participants also saw themselves as better persons and yet did not want to settle in Canada forever. Having been reunited with their immigrant children and grandchildren was more than enough to make them feel good about themselves. However, being reunited with immigrant families did not mean forever. They wanted to continue living with their immigrant families for as long as they were needed, but sooner or later they thought they would go back to their homeland. Romeo was among those who believed that he had become better, although he was not sure about retiring in Canada. With his other children and grandchildren in the Philippines and with a very limited social network in Canada, he may go back to the Philippines when he chooses to retire.

Having reached Canada and lived with my daughter’s family, I am a better person. It is nicer here in Canada. I do not have a problem here. You can do everything here. However, I am not sure if I want to retire here. **(Romeo)**

I like it the way I was before. I used to have a house. I miss my house. Now, I am frequent flyer to the Philippines. **(Bea)**

Long years of living in Canada with their immigrant families did not guarantee full settlement. Sponsored Filipino seniors may continue living in or reminiscing about the past. Bea was one of those longed for her past and yet could not detach herself from her only family who happened to be immigrants of Canada. To fill her inner longing of the past, she often flew to the Philippines and so she described herself as a frequent flyer. It seemed that her life remained in transit.

Rosa did not have plans of living in either Canada or the Philippines forever. She wanted to consider herself a transient resident as she had children and grandchildren in both countries. There are huge differences between Canada and the Philippines, but Rosa did not see the difference. Her support and commitment to provide help to all her children regardless of their domicile remained the same.

I have children in the Philippines and in Canada. I have the same feeling towards them. They are all my children. There is no difference between Canada and the Philippines. Being in Canada is the same as being in the Philippines. The only difference is the weather. It is cold here. I do not see anything different. I remain the same. There is no difference between who I am in the Philippines or in Canada. I am still what I am. **(Rosa)**

What I feel? I think that Canada and the Philippines are just the same. I feel no difference. Financially, unlike in the Philippines, it is better here because I am able to work. There is work here. In the Philippines, there is no work for seniors. I find it ideal to stay here because there is work even to those who are aging and yet able. We are well in the house. We are all happy, even if disagreement sometimes happened. **(Gloria)**

Rosa did not want to get a job. She was contented and happy to continue providing support to her children and grandchildren, a role that she had been used to doing. Like Rosa, Gloria also did not see a difference between the Philippines and Canada. Gloria

also had children and grandchildren in both countries who needed her support. Gloria considered Canada a better place to stay, but only when there was an opportunity to work.

Learning to Accept Canada

Participants immigrate for various reasons, some of which were not about settling down. Nonetheless, in the process, they learned to accept the *hostland* and Canada became their home.

Now, I am happier because most of my family members are here. Nonetheless, my only problem now is my children back in the Philippines. It is okay. Here in Canada, my first priority is the one who sponsored me. If possible, I want to sponsor my children to come to Canada. However, if they are overage, I do not know if it is still possible. I want my children to come here. If my children are here, I would probably be very happy. **(Del)**

I am nostalgic sometimes. There is never a place like your country. There is nothing you can do! Your livelihood is here. Life could have been happier in the Philippines, but life here is okay now. There is peace in this country. Life is better here now because I feel that I am able to help others and that makes me feel happy. In Canada, work is permanent. Unlike in the Philippines where work is difficult to find, there are several jobs here. **(Poly)**

Del was certain that she was happier, as most of her family members were already in Canada. Recently, her cousin, daughter, daughter in-law, nephew, and niece had all come to Alberta as foreign workers. Although she was concerned about her other children in the Philippines, she had learned to accept Canada as her new home. Similarly, Poly had learned to accept Canada as his home. Although he sighed that '*there is no place like home*' and continued his nostalgia over his happy years in the Philippines, he realized that he could not reverse the situation as there was no home to return to in his homeland. Like Del, he recognized that life is better in Canada because of his increased ability to provide support to his children from his regular income.

Summary

Participants experienced a sense of joy in their support and remained persistent in providing support to their immigrant families. The act of support was a form of parental mission to help families cope with the demands in the *hostland* and to sustain subsistence support to families and kin in the homeland. The experience of a fulfilled parental mission is evident, although for some it has taken on another form. Participants found joy in their acts of giving and supporting their children amidst the challenges of survival. Out of gratitude, families reciprocated their sponsored parents with care and acceptance that further encouraged the participants to deepen their support.

Uncertainties, the challenges of survival, work demands, failed expectations, and shattered preconceptions had all pushed participants to seek meaning in their day-to-day living. They found meaning in the experience of recognition, affective gestures, gifts and gratuities, and respect. The experience of love and being offered gratuities signified their families' acceptance of the participants. Affective gestures like smiles, having fun together, and demonstrating care also emerged as valued gestures of love and acceptance. Treats and gifts (clothes, dinner, fun, hockey, movies, outing, travel treats, going to malls, treat out, and so on) were gestures of affirmation, obedience, and respect.

Moreover, participants found meaning in their lives in a new environment. Life was better and they claimed to be better persons. They defined the concept of a 'better life' in various ways. It meant having a job that enabled one to provide support to their families; it meant living in a harmonious relationship with their sponsors, an affluent lifestyle, and a life of prosperity, free from social unrest. It was also about freedom of choice, being empowered, and enhanced self-esteem. Participants considered themselves

better persons because of their enhanced ability to support their kin, the ability to make choices, to have a sense of self-fulfillment, and to live their religious beliefs.

Others did not see themselves as better persons but as transients in Canada. They were unsure about making Canada their home, as they had other children in the Philippines. Retiring to the Philippines was more aspired to, than real. Memories of, and feelings for their past life in the Philippines persisted and never went away. Although nostalgia about these past memories continued, the reality of poverty and unemployment in the Philippines had pushed them to accept Canada as their new home. For some, returning to the homeland would remain a myth, for as there was no home to return to. The only choice was to accept Canada as their new home.

CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

Does a mother forget her baby, or a woman the
child within her womb? Yet, even if these
forget; yes, even if these forget, I will never
forget my own.

-- Isaiah 49:15

This chapter is an engagement with the emerging theory and the existing literature around dispersion and migration, diaspora, collective identity and values as Filipinos, sponsorship, labour, motherwork and subsistence, and productive aging. My analysis and interpretation of the categories eventually led to an overarching theoretical proposition that sponsored Filipino seniors are foremost diasporas. I have previously argued that their efforts to provide support to their immigrant families are diasporic experience of settlement in the *hostland* or in an imagined homeland; and that being diasporas is part of a newly constructed life in Canada, which evolved from the persistent pushing and pulling of family demands, mediated *via* sponsorship. When emerging theories became apparent, I reviewed related existing theories and/or studies. As previously discussed, literature review is not about filling in gaps of knowledge or testing hypothesis (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998, 2008); rather, it is engaging with theory or studies that support and/or contradict or relate with emergent theory (Charmaz, 2006).

I have integrated the discussions in the literature review and the findings in three main topical areas: sponsored Filipino seniors as diasporas, deciding to immigrate and living in a new constructed reality. Being with and providing support to families in Canada means living in transnational family demands, struggling with transnational identity and tradition, coping with challenges of existence in a new place away from the homeland, experiencing transformation and renewal of the self and family, and deciding to remain in the *hostland* or to return to the homeland. I also discuss some theoretical considerations around the notion of diaspora as an appropriate lens in understanding the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in general.

Sponsored Filipino Seniors as Diasporas

The participants of this study were among the thousands of sponsored Filipino seniors dispersed from their homeland. Firstly, they were diasporas, compelled to emigrate, by necessity of sustaining one's families beyond the boundaries of homeland. They belong to the 11 million Filipinos now dispersed in foreign lands. Theorists claimed that diasporas are people dispersed from a common homeland to two or more foreign regions (Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 1997; Safran, 1991; Tsagarousianou, 2004; Wonneberger, 2004). Such diasporic character applies to many sponsored Filipino parents and seniors in countries like Canada, Australia, and the USA. Like the participants, many had to leave their homeland due to the demands of family survival and tradition. Survival and tradition (embedded with Filipino values) are therefore essential concepts of Filipino diaspora.

As discussed in Chapter 3, family is core to Filipino identity (Bulatao, 1968; Colin-Jones & Colin-Jones, 2004; Herrera, 1995). It is a social unit where a Filipino identifies

him or herself and finds support and guidance through life. Family status or economic condition reflects the self-image and identity of a Filipino. Being dispersed and living as diasporas is tied to the primacy of family interest over personal or individual gains. In addition, preconceptions of a “better life” in Western countries like Canada have further pulled participants to emigrate. Whether these preconceptions are part of a Filipino colonial mentality cannot be ascertained, though may be assumed. According to Cohen (1997), the expansion from a homeland in search of work or further colonial ambition is itself one of the typologies of diaspora.

Living outside the boundaries of and connecting with the homeland (Cohen, 1997; Okamura, 1998; Safran, 2004; San Juan, 2000; Tsagarousianou, 2004; Wolf, 1997) positioned the participants, and sponsored Filipino seniors in particular, as transnationals. Their new identity as transnationals means being able adapt to their new context and thus evolve a new form of motherwork, which is transnational in nature. In this study, the emergent concepts of transnationalization of motherwork and subsistence are integral in the concept of survival in the *hostland*. Motherwork, interwoven with Filipino tradition and family values, was extended and renewed in the *hostland* to sustain life and caring work for participants’ immigrant families. Likewise, subsistence support became transnational as demanded by newly challenges immigrant families experienced as they struggled to survive, to acculturate, and to settle in the *hostland*. Further transnationalization of motherwork and subsistence unfolded through life-sustaining support to families and kin in the Philippines, now outside the boundaries of the new home in the *hostland*.

Secondly, participants were diasporas because they lived in an ‘imagined homeland.’ Theorists on diaspora use the term ‘imagined homeland’ to mean a collective memory, myth, vision, and a general orientation toward the homeland (Cohen, 1997; Safran, 1991, 2004). Rodenas (2007) suggests that homeland is akin to experience of ‘home.’ And for diasporas, ‘home’ means a collective experience (Clifford, 1994).

Participants shared their stories or concerns and visions for their families and practiced Filipino tradition and values. They were aware of their ethnic identity, reinforced by the traditions and practices of immigrant families and the presence of other Filipinos in their groups and communities. For them, “imagined homeland” meant a constructed reality of a home sustained through lived memories and images of the past; frequent contacts with kin through telecommunication, letters, and sending remittances; being abreast of events and information about the homeland communicated by kin or mass media; and interacting with Filipino communities and socially or purpose-driven groups.

Moreover, participants in the study showed the depth of their awareness of their ethnic identity/identities in various ways and held on to their respective memories of their homeland. In the homes of their immigrant children, they practiced ethnic tradition, spoke in their own language, and taught Filipino values to their grandchildren. In the community, they associated with groups of Filipino seniors, went to different churches with largely Filipino congregations, and participated in Filipino festivities that sustained their ethnicity.

Filipinos are in the top five ethnic groups and immigrants of Canada. They are organized in social groups that further sustain the experience of ‘imagined homeland.’

While they have a distinguishable ethnic identity, they also have regional identities, languages, and cultures that differentiate one from the other. The country has one national language, but it has over 170 languages, ten of which are spoken by the majority of Filipinos. Those who come from the same region in the Philippines and who speak the same language tend to organize their own groups, which become avenues of ‘imagined homeland’ where common histories, traditions, beliefs, celebrations, and ethnic practices are shared. However, acculturation with the ‘mainstream’ culture has raised issues of the hybridity of identities and cultures of their immigrant families that concerned some participants.

Thirdly, the participants were diasporas as they sustained ethnic group consciousness. They identified with the collective identity of Filipinos in their ‘imagined communities.’ Practicing Filipino tradition and values through their support to families in Canada and their constant contact with families in the Philippines enhanced an awareness of their ethnicity or identity as Filipinos.

The experience, however, of eventual hybridity of diasporic identity may be inevitable (Schiller et al., 1992). In Chapter 3, I indicated that theorists also used the term hybridity to refer to adaptation to the local culture while keeping some level of ethnicity and collective identity. The daily construction of reality and identity in two competing cultures, Filipino and Canadian, could result in some form of hybridity. The work of Okamura (1998) and the result of this study show a similar resistance on the part of immigrant families to liberalist, laissez-faire, or easy-going lifestyles and demanded the practice of discipline, responsibility and respect toward elders in the family.

In the process of providing support to immigrant families, the participants interacted with the hybrid lifestyles of their children and grandchildren. This represents a similar finding of studies conducted with second-generation children of immigrant families in the US and Canada (Almirol, 1982; Hébert & Alama, 2008; Lalonde & Giguère, 2008; Okamura, 1998; Wolf, 1997). Their constant exposure to the *hostland* culture vis-a-vis their persistent adherence to and practice of Filipino tradition, and values became a daily struggle of both tolerance and resistance. While they practiced Filipino values in their immigrant families, they had to deal with the ‘hybrid identities’ of their families and other Filipino-Canadians. In addition, the constant pull to integration with Western values and lifestyles through the mass media was evident. Theorists (Wolf; see also Georgiou, 2006; Gray, 2004; Olwig, 2004; Papastergiadis, 1997) claimed that the media are a channel of integration to the local culture and reinforce hybridity. The notion of ‘hybridity’ therefore is part of the diasporic experience as diasporas interact with their social milieu on a day-to-day basis.

Sustaining Filipino identity proved challenging amidst the dominance of the mainstream culture. However, there are Filipinos who have no qualms about having a western-oriented or hybrid identity. The colonization of the Philippines by Spain and the US, the ability of Filipinos to speak English as a second language, and the westernization of modern Filipino lifestyles could have attributed to the adaptation of Western culture.

Non-classical views toward diaspora have considered hybridity of identity of diasporas an open discussion. According to George Marcus, the notion of identity and community is no longer mapped on to a locality but produced in many different locales (cited in Morley, 2000). It implies that Filipinos in diaspora may acquire the identity of

the mainstream Canadian. To sustain Filipino collective identity, however, means strengthening the foundations of “imagined communities” and maintaining subscription to Filipino media and contact with Filipinos in Canada and the homeland.

Fourthly, the participants maintained persistent and permanent contact with their imagined communities and kept up different kinds of relationships to the home country. Remittances, return visits, and connecting with families in the homeland reinforce the validity of previous studies of Filipinos as diasporas and transnationals.

Sponsored Filipino seniors and their immigrant families sustain tradition and identity through social networking in the *hostland* and maintain concrete form of support through remittances. Okamura (1998) claimed, “the global Filipino diaspora is imagined through various circulations of people, money, goods, and information to and from the Philippines” (p.8), which is a transnational social construction in itself. The Philippine government is also instrumental in promoting and expanding the diaspora of Filipinos to 180 countries through Philippine international labour migration. Emigrant Filipinos ploughed back their overseas income through remittances (Okamura; see also Yang, 2006), and sponsored Filipino seniors shared the millions of dollars sent as transnational support to families in their homeland. Remittance therefore is central to the construction of the notion of transnational support.

Wonneberger (2004) claimed that a triangular nodal relationship evolves between diasporas, host country, and home country and each influence the other concerning policies and the culture of the *hostland*. As diasporas, therefore, their ideas can be different from what is popular in their home country. Other theorists of diaspora suggest a triangular relationship between diaspora, host country, and home country (Safran, 1991;

2004; Sökefeld, 2004). In this study, I argue that there are more than three nodes of relationships among and between diasporas in relation to others. The experiences of the participants revealed that points of relationship were among sponsored Filipino seniors, interaction with other Filipinos in the host country, periodic and frequent communication with families and kin in the home country, contacts with other members of the family, kin, and friends in another country, and cross communication between Filipino diasporas in other nations. Transnational migration does not necessarily mean losing their collective Filipino identity, as evident in the statements of the participants. Patterns of Filipino kinship, in relation to families in the *hostland*, in the homeland, or in other foreign lands, may remain the same though transnational in setting. According to Morley (2000), “geographically based identities can extend over great distances and may be better understood as articulated through ideas of place, rather than being necessarily rooted in particular territories (p.52).

Fifthly, participants were diasporas because their dispersion brought about separation and disintegration from family and kin in the homeland. Among them, only two had reunited fully with their children and grandchildren in Canada. The rest separated from their loved ones, a situation that was not desired but was necessary. However, five of the eleven participants expected the process of separation to be temporary. With the help of their immigrant children, they hoped for a reunification with their families someday in Canada. Participants and their families explored ways to bring their families to Canada through sponsorship, nomination, skill-based immigration, contracting agencies and seeking employers for their children and kin, and other legitimate means may be saturated. As illustrated in Figure 3, the process of dispersion is

leading to full integration of family in the *hostland*. Theoretically, the process becomes almost cyclical as dispersion repeats itself until everyone in the family has immigrated to Canada or until no one in the family becomes ineligible to emigrate.

Sixthly, the participants were diasporas as they shared the collective consciousness and sense of distinctiveness of Filipinos in Canada. They identified a common history and belief in a common fate of impoverishment in the homeland that was instrumental in bringing them Canada. Some of them, however, experienced discrimination. The unemployment of others was viewed as the lack of acceptance of Filipino seniors in Canadian society. Somehow, the sense of connectedness among Filipinos as being part of an extended family relates to their collective psyche; Filipinos treat each other as *kalahi* (ethnic clan) even if they are unrelated by consanguinity. When a Filipino says *sino pa ba ang magtutulongan kung'di tayo lamang mga Filipino* (who else will come to our rescue but us Filipinos), it is a statement of empathy and solidarity. All the participants belonged to various Filipinos groups, which they collectively identified with and drew support from in times of difficulty.

Lastly, returning and settling back home may be an 'imagined action', a romanticization, and may remain a dream. In addition to the arguments of Hall (1993), that returning home may no longer be possible as there was no more 'home' to return to, many sponsored Filipino seniors do not also intend to resettle back in the Philippines, unless the situation of the country changes. With no home to return, faced with the realities of impoverishment, economic and political instability, unemployment, and discrimination of seniors, it is difficult for sponsored Filipino seniors to resettle in their homeland. The participants in the study indicated that their life has been better in Canada.

Without a home to return to, some preferred to remain in Canada where they construct an 'imagined homeland' that is enriched with collective memories, visions, beliefs, and enlivened through Filipino festivities, celebration, tradition, values, and practices. However, the agenda of eventual return when the situation is favourable, a classic definition and typology of diaspora is challenged when returning home is no longer possible (Hall, 1993; Tsagarousianou, 2004).

As previously cited, San Juan (2000) observed that in general Filipinos would not return to a homeland with impoverished, exploitative, and oppressive conditions; that they would rather remain reunited with their families overseas. Similarly, among the participants, not all aspired to return home. Within the period of sponsorship status of ten years, the push and pull constructs that brought them to diaspora continued to be the main considerations in their decision to remain in Canada. Nonetheless, they kept the same aspiration of returning home, for reasons of family reunification, aging and retirement, care and security, tradition, and even after-life considerations. As proposed by Wonneberger (2004), it is not the return that is decisive but the wish to return. In the meantime, resettling in the Philippines remains a romanticization and a dream.

However, there were sponsored Filipino seniors who returned to their homeland. Returning home was no longer merely a dream. Findings revealed concerns around cold climate, unemployment, loneliness, and misunderstanding with families as well as frustration due to unmet expectations or preconceptions about Canada. These realities were pushing them to return home or to spend the remaining years of their life with their other children in the Philippines. They realized that their children in the Philippines also needed their time, physical presence, and care. Some opted to return to their homeland

because they did not want to live eventually in seniors' retirement and care facilities. Elderly Filipinos expected filial piety. The practice of putting aging parents in institutional care remains unacceptable to many. Parents are often cared for in their ancestral homes or in the homes of their children. In Figure 7, I have illustrated two major decisions of the participants while living in diaspora with their families, i.e., either they remain in Canada as they have learned to accept the *hostland* and have experienced better life or they return to their homeland.

In the discussion above, I have emphasized the participants' experience in providing support to their families as a characteristic of people in diaporas. I have discussed why they are diasporas and linked my explanation to the definitions and typologies according to Safran (1991, 2004), Cohen (1997), Clifford (1994), Wonneberger (2004), and others. In the following sections, I attempt to integrate further the findings and relevant theories regarding two realities: family demands in the homeland, and the newly constructed reality in the *hostland*. The former focuses on pushing and pulling demands prior to sponsorship while the latter on the experience of providing support of sponsored Filipino seniors in the *hostland*. Figure 7 also shows the journey from home to another home and corresponding conceptual links.

Deciding to Emigrate

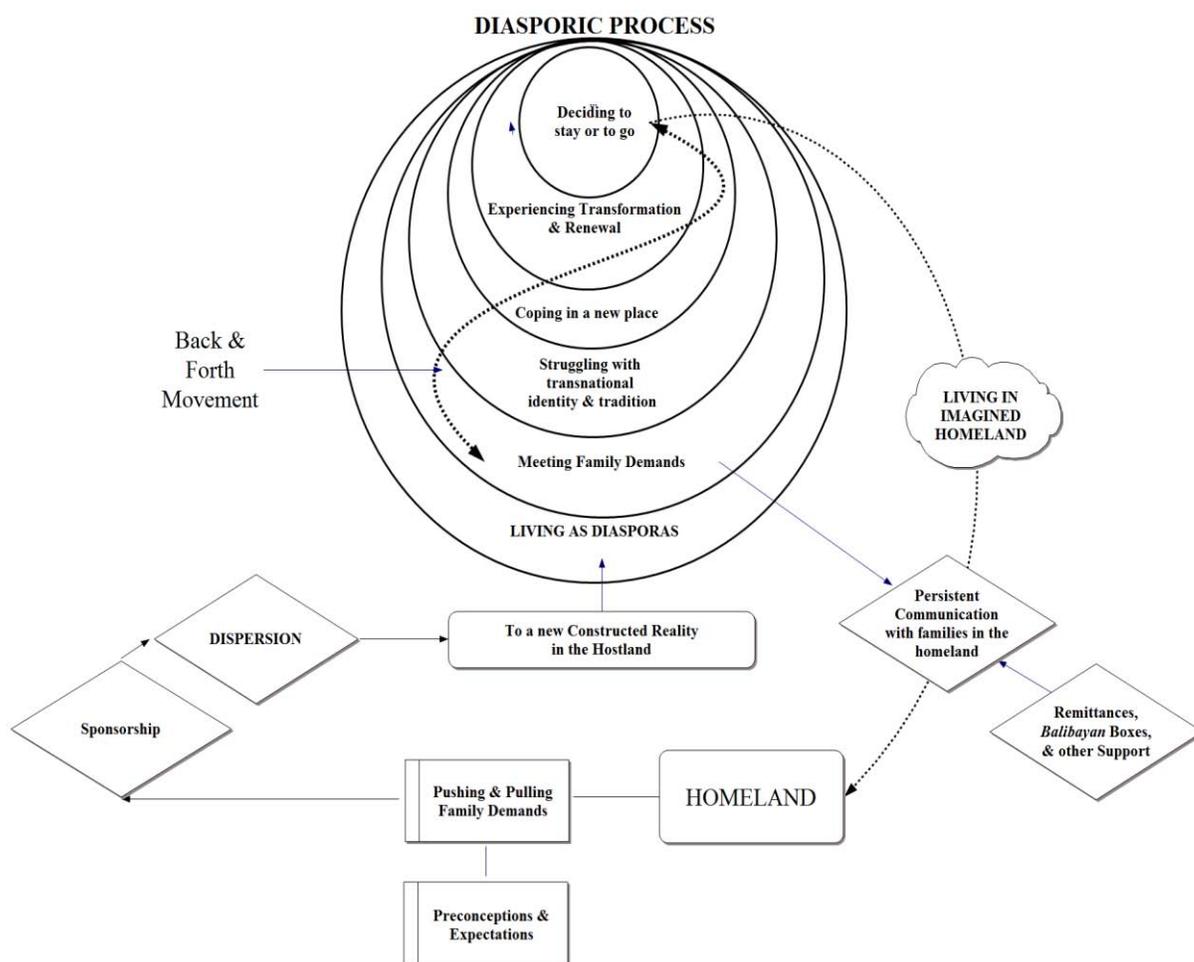
The decision to emigrate was part of the participants' pushing and pulling realities. In this study, I have endeavoured to understand the social/historical reality of their experiences, which provided data that evolved into a theoretical concept on pushing and pulling family demands. The pushing reality refers to family-centered demands that influenced sponsored Filipino seniors to make the decision to emigrate. The pulling

reality, whether actual or imagined, refers to the attractions and promises that brought the participants to the *hostland*. The pushing and pulling realities, although not exclusively contained, influenced the decision of the participants to emigrate.

As discussed earlier, there is a difference between emigration and immigration. The former means to leave one's country while the latter means to live permanently in another country (Pearsall, 1999; Marsella & Ring, 2003). The interplay of push and pull demands eventually dispersed the participants to Canada. Emigrating embeds a purpose and meaning. It is a decision with a deep sense in sacrifice of leaving one's children and grandchildren for something greater. In retrospect, participants muddled through these pushing and pulling demands and looked for alternate realities where they could improve or at least alleviate their living condition. They emigrated for an altruistic end: long-term welfare and benefit of their families and kin. They needed to save their family from impoverishment and emancipate them from a situation of neglect and marginalization. Theorists attributed economic reason as the principal or at least one of the main determinants of Filipino migration to richer countries (Almirol 1982; Aranas, 1983; Caliboso, 1998; Chen, 1998; Kassam, 2008; Okamura, 1998; Parreñas, 2001a, 2001b, 2008; San Juan, 2000). Seeking employment to alleviate their living condition was a key reality that pushed them to migration. Immigrating to Canada was also a strategic action by the participants to achieve a solution to their impoverished economic condition. It affirms the findings of Findley (1987) that Filipinos have developed a family survival strategy by allowing the migration of at least one member of the family to increase the income and social status of the family. Findings in this study also revealed that participants immigrated based on preconceived expectations that the *hostland* could offer

alternate and viable solutions to their family's economic condition. It is important to note, however, that the emergent push concepts did not just mean economic factors but also factors around the demands of kinship, family-centeredness, and tradition. While economics is a dominant conceptual domain in migration, family tradition and kinship are also part of the concept of emigration for the participants.

Figure 7: From dispersion to a newly constructed reality in the *hostland*



Preconceived expectations of the *hostland* further pulled the participants to immigrate. Participants thought of Canada as a land of opportunity. With higher standard of living and work opportunities for seniors, and better paying jobs, they expected a better life with their families. Hatton and Williamson (2005) theorized that migration increases when the country of destination offers higher wages. The results of this study validated the theory that work opportunities and better wages pulled immigrants and migrants to a country that offered these opportunities. Generally, the participants' preconceptions or constructs around work and living conditions were met, although a few faced disappointments. Hatton and Williamson's (2005) work suggests that the inflow of immigrants will continue to parallel the promises of a better economic condition in a country of destination. Indeed, aggravating socio-economic difficulties in the Philippines correspond to the increase of sponsored Filipino seniors coming to Canada. As previously cited, over 83,000 sponsored parents and grandparents were granted permanent residency from 1998 – 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2008).

This study further indicated that immigrating to Canada meant reuniting with family members living there as well as an enhanced capacity to provide support to their families back home. To be in Canada was an opportunity to both renew kinship and provide a lifetime support to families. As already discussed, the centrality of family is a Filipino value that necessitates personal sacrifices (Bulatao, 1968) and support. Sacrifices through *padala* or remittances, *balikbayan* boxes (boxes of goods from *hostland*), and *tawagan* (long-distance calls) were some forms of persistent transnational and distant support. Inside the *balikbayan* boxes are Canadian and US made goods, which Filipinos colloquially called 'stateside' products. Interestingly, the Philippine market is already

flooded with imported products from China and neighbouring Asian countries, but Filipinos prefer US made products, which they believe to be superior in quality and style. Filipinos generally viewed the countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, and other rich countries in Europe as places of abundance and affluent lives. Even Filipinos who worked in the Middle East aspired to immigrate to Canada because of the same preconception. Generally, therefore, working and living overseas was perceived as the 'solution' of family's impoverished condition.

Filipino nationalists identified these preconceptions of the United States and North America as part of the westernization of the Filipino psyche due to the colonial past. Constantino (1978) for instance said, "the Westernization of the Filipino mind has blurred its responses to even the worst aspects of Western exploitation and influence and has resulted in a crisis of identity" (p.212). While colonial influence may be a reason for dispersion, it is not the one and only explanation of the phenomenal migration of Filipinos. In this study, the decision to emigrate was linked to both the realities of impoverishment and the lack of opportunities to have a decent life, but it was also intertwined with Filipino values and tradition. These preconceptions, the realities of opportunities in the West, and their own culture, attracted the participants to immigrate.

In addition to the claim of Hatton and Williamson's (2005), migration may also increase because of forces specific to a particular context, culture, and tradition. In the life of the participants, providing support and care to their children was both a social expectation and part of the tradition of Filipino parenting. In the midst of the struggle for survival while in diaspora, the presence of sponsored Filipino seniors in immigrant families proved beneficial and may have expedited the socio-economic settlement of

emigrants. Previous studies have already acknowledged the importance of the social roles of grandparents in their immigrant and transnational families (Almirol, 1982; Chen, 1998; Kataoka-Yahiro, 2004; Parreñas, 2001a, 2001b, 2008; San Juan, 2000). It is important to note that the migration of participants was not just an individual decision. The pushing and pulling of realities were necessary conditions in making a decision to immigrate. As Findley (1987) argued, if Filipinos are unable to accomplish their objectives in their locale, they emigrate.

Living in a New Constructed Reality

Immigrating to Canada meant encountering a new reality. The participants had to deconstruct their expectations or preconceptions of Canada and to build more realistic views regarding the complex constructs of Canadian society. They expected affluence in the 'dreamland' but not about a demanding life. They knew that they would live with their families but did not expect to work for their survival. In Canada, participants had learned learn about surviving as diasporas. They learned about motherwork and subsistence support in a transnational setting, building an 'imagined homeland' to make sense of their identity and values, while coping with the many demands of their new life (c.f. Figure 7).

Interestingly, living in a newly constructed Canadian reality brought some form of transformation and renewal and thus self-fulfillment to immigrant families, particularly in providing support. Some participants had come to a point of acceptance of their new constructed life and considered their current living condition 'better' than the Philippines, although others were unsure about staying in Canada long-term. The latter shared the

common aspiration of all participants to return to the homeland; generally, however, the participants' desire to return was rather 'imagined.'

People being uprooted and transplanted in a new reality need time to before becoming rooted again. According to Brah (1996), diasporas are not temporary and casual sojourns but settling down and putting roots down somewhere else. Living as diasporas implies 're-rooting' to survive. For the participants, survival in a new milieu was a diasporic concept, which intersected their own lives, and the demands of their families in both Canada and the Philippines.

Furthermore, as diasporas in a new constructed reality means having to move back and forth between the elements of the diasporic process. These elements are meeting transnational family demands, sustaining ethnic identity and values, coping with diasporic demands in the *hostland*, transforming and renewing oneself to make sense of one's existence, and finally deciding to stay or to return home. I have illustrated all these elements in Figure 7. They are not in a sequential order but are experiences along the continuum of the new reality.

Meeting Transnational Family Demands

Meeting transnational family demands was not easy. Participants had to meet multi-pronged expectations of support for themselves, their immigrant families, their children and kin in the homeland, and those living in other countries. As some of them lived independently from their children, they needed to find work to support themselves. They also have to support their transnational families, who expected them to share in the cost of living, including home and car mortgages. Although sponsors were supposed to care for their needs or necessities in life, the participants ended up giving more support

than their families. Having an income was important for those whose families expected financial support. They sent remittances periodically as subsistence support. Sponsored Filipino seniors who had children in other countries, also sent occasionally some financial support to augment their income or save them from being in debt, to pay for travel or immigration costs. The support, therefore, of sponsored Filipino seniors was not just limited to the demands of their transnational families but also to their other children living abroad. Therefore, work was essential to meeting these expectations of support. That sponsored Filipino seniors engaged in employment, voids all constructs of dependency imposed on them.

While living as diasporas, participants were essentially transnationalizing motherwork and subsistence support. Motherwork is about sustaining life through life-affirming work (Hart, 2002; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999); and transnationalizing it means bringing motherwork beyond the borders of their ancestral home. The participants' experience, however, shows that they went beyond the notion of housework and domestic care. Among the equally important acts of 'motherwork' that sustained and affirmed the life of Filipino families included financial support, caring for children and grandchildren, and teaching Filipino values to young children. The experience of the participants further confirmed the concept of motherwork as life sustaining and affirming and the concept of subsistence as something delivered and produced towards one's and daily needs and self-sufficiency (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen; see also Hart, 1995, 2002) This study, expanded the meaning of motherwork beyond concepts of domestic concern and housework to include financial support, emotional and physical care of children and

grandchildren, and maintaining Filipino values in transnational families. All of these elements sustain and affirm the life of Filipino families in diaspora.

Furthermore, participants in diaspora also extended motherwork and subsistence support to families and kin in the Philippines. They provided distant motherwork, emotional care, advice, encouragements, direction, and even discipline through telecommunication. As mentioned previously, they also provided support through remittances and shipped boxes of goods to their families. Their income in Canada enabled them to provide these subsistence needs and thus sustained the life of their families in the homeland. These findings validate the work of Parreñas (2001a, 2001b, 2008) regarding Filipina overseas workers and mothers. Parreñas argued that Filipina mothers continued to provide long-distance care and emotional support, make domestic decisions, and support their families financially even if they were living and working overseas. In other words, the demands of motherwork and subsistence support did not just affirm and sustain life, but also ploughed capital into the homeland, which augmented household income and domestic spending.

Motherwork and labour of care have been less valued and rendered invisible in a world where value is measured by forms of commodity and productivity and where money is the basis of security (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999; Hart, 1995, 2002; also see Chodorow, 1978; Maynard, 1985; O'Hagan, 1994; Parris, 2005). Marx spoke about use value as well as exchange value, but while motherwork has a use value, it does not have a place in the language of production and profit or exchange value. This distinction is important, because the participants' experience showed that motherwork, as well as subsistence, was necessary to meet the demands of their families in Canada and the

Philippines. There is, therefore, a use value to their labour of care, housework, and participation in the labour market. Living with their families was an exchange value, because it was linked to the income gained by their families due to their presence.

Clearly, the dispersion of the participants from their homeland was about meeting the family demands. The findings of this study indicate that they came to provide motherwork and subsistence support to their families and not to become dependents upon the Canadian government. Meeting transnational family demands, through motherwork and subsistence, meant long-term or lifetime support to families. By staying at home and providing care to their grandchildren, they enabled their families to access work or to take advantage of income opportunities. Sponsored Filipino seniors, like the participants, therefore help defray the cost of living, and contribute to such things as paying the mortgage and other financial obligations of their children. They enhance social harmony in the family, bridge generational gaps, and help maintain Filipino values in the *hostland*. Overall, the multi-dimensional and transnational support of the participants was fundamentally essential to their families' subsistence living.

It is also worth clarifying that in meeting the needs of families, motherwork and subsistence support was a role performed by both female and male participants. Mothers and women have the rightful claim to the term motherwork, as domestic and life-caring work has been 'typecast' upon them over the centuries. Parreñas (2001a, 2001b, 2008) claimed that Filipino men have assigned emotional care or housework to women; however, in this study, labour of care and housework such as babysitting, caregiving, housekeeping, cooking, laundry, and shopping were all shared roles. The male participants were therefore performing life-caring and sustaining work, which is a

fundamental definition of motherwork. Male participants did not have any qualms in providing care and support to the people they love. I have argued that in the context of diaspora, traditional gender role differentiation diminishes due to the needs of survival in the *hostland*.

Living with Transnational Identity and Tradition

Identity and tradition was core to the understanding the support of sponsored Filipino seniors gave to their immigrant families. Being a Filipino and a parent carries a social expectation of providing long-term support to one's children. According to the participants, the concept of 'long-term' is 'lifetime.' It is also an obligation that extends beyond one's immediate family and generation.

Filipino families maintain strong ties in their kinship system (Almirol, 1982; Lynch, 1968). The ties are evident in the participants' relationship with their families. The provision of support manifests these familial and social ties, which Almirol claimed as the rights and obligation that children expect from their parents. The Filipino tradition of kinship is a sense of loyalty to one's family and constitutes a pluralistic identity (Steinberg, 1990) where the 'I' means 'We' in terms of daily living. Self-identity is associated with loyalty to the identity of the entire family and kin (Almirol; Lynch; Steinberg; see also Bulatao, 1968; Church & Katigbak, 2000; Dolan, 1993; Hennig, 1983; Hollnsteiner, 1968; Santiago, 1953). One cannot speak about the 'I' identity without it being associated with the 'we' identity of the family. As quoted in Chapter 4, "A Filipino's sense of self is derived from his or her family: "I am who I am because of my family; their success is my success, and my shame is their shame" (Colin-Jones & Colin-Jones, 2004). It means that the identity of Filipinos is linked to their

families or kin. The findings of this study indicate that support to children or kin is an integral part of Filipino identity regarding both kinship and family-centrism.

Steinberg (1990) claimed that as Filipinos are gradually removed from their nuclear family and close associates, the sense of obligation for one's family lessens. In the context of the experience of participants, Steinberg's claim has some flaws. Kinship and family-centrism remains strong even in diaspora. Separation in years and boundaries did not deter the participants from continually sending support to family and kin in the Philippines. Kinship as a plural identity implies obligation of support that remains a lived experience even in the *hostland*. A study of Filipino immigrants in the United States indicated a similar result of continuing kinship support to families (Almirol, 1982). It claimed that kinship and family loyalty played a role in sustaining the support of sponsored Filipino seniors to their families and kin in the Philippines.

Nevertheless, the dominant culture inevitably permeates in the tradition of kinship and family obligation. Ethnic tradition, values, and social expectations thrive through multi-pronged channels of sustainability. Therefore, maintaining contacts with their families in the Philippines, living as Filipinos in their families, networking with transnational Filipino families and groups, subscribing to Filipino mass media and technology, and electronic means of communication represent these channels. Distant support to their families in the Philippines was essential in sustaining connectedness with their homeland. Connecting with home reminded them of their identity as Filipinos and sustained it.

Furthermore, Filipino seniors are respected in the family (Almirol, 1982; de Guzman, Chua, Claudio, Consolacion, & Cordero, 2009; Gendrano, 1996). They hold

the ‘authority’ (Bulatao, 1968; Dolan, 1993) in their families and discipline their grandchildren (Bulatao, 1968; Gendrano, 1996; Santiago, 1953). Findings in this study confirmed that the participants’ families respected and cared for them. There was a connection between their identity as seniors and expectation of respect towards them.

The results of the study further affirm Almirol’s (1982) research among Filipino immigrant families in the US. As previously discussed, he found that ‘old-timer’ and post-war Filipino immigrants viewed it as their responsibility to care for and support their aging parents and grandparents in contrast to American-born and *Mestizos* (mixed race) who would rather have their aging parents and/or grandparents in a nursing home. The result of this study is consistent with the Almirol’s study because concepts of filial care and support by immigrant families of their sponsored parents were evident in the participants’ statements. In addition, however, some participants especially those who had employment income opted to remain in Canada without having to depend on support from their children. Others preferred to go back to the Philippines when they were unable to work, contrary to San Juan’s (2000) claim that Filipino seniors tend to remain overseas rather than go back to an impoverished condition in their home country.

Being a senior was integral to the identity of sponsored Filipino seniors. The traditions concerning the place and authority of seniors in the home, and the role expectations that went along with their status in the family were all part of their transnational identity. Many sociologist and anthropologists agree that grandparents have authority and actively participate in family decision (Almirol, 1982; Bulatao, 1968; Gendrano, 1996; Kataoka-Yahiro et al., 2004; Wolf, 1997). Studies by Wolf and Kataoka-Yahiro et al. indicate that transnational Filipino grandparents struggled

with adjustment in to Western lifestyles and values. Grandparents may find themselves in a clash with the hybrid cultures and identities of their children and grandchildren. In this study, the participants' experience revealed a very active role in sustaining tradition, in the values formation of their grandchildren, in giving care and emotional and spiritual support, and in providing subsistence support to their families. While the hybridity of values may have caused some conflict between sponsored Filipino seniors and their families, the participants' experiences showed that Filipino seniors still enjoyed respect and kept their status and place in the family. Participants recognized that there was a hybridity of values among immigrant Filipino families but argued that Filipino values and tradition remained a dominant practice in their homes. They used the colloquial term 'Canadianized' to refer to a Filipino who has acquired more Canadian than Filipino values.

Identity is not static. It interacts in historical and social contexts and is a multi-faceted dynamics. It evolves and changes through time. Living as diasporas means one is vulnerable to the culture of the *hostland*. It appears inevitable that Filipino immigrant families acquire hybrid cultures. Indeed, acquiring hybridity is only a matter of time. Sponsored Filipino seniors will continue to face the challenge of hybridity in their immigrant children and grandchildren. Sustaining the 'imagined homeland' could become more challenging when Filipino immigrant families becomes less Filipino.

In this study, the participants who were mothers claimed that it was part of their identity to offer their life for the sake of their children and grandchildren. Traditional roles, with men as providers and women as carers of children and the house, were prevalent in Philippine culture (Parreñas, 2008). Traditionally, men were the ones who

worked in overseas (Almirol, 1982; Parreñas, 2008) while Filipina mothers were treasurers and intermediaries between father and children (Bulatao, 1968; Dolan, 1993; Gendrano, 1996), household managers and housekeepers (Caliboso, 1998), and they made sacrifices for the sake of the children (Parreñas, 2001a, 2001b, 2008). In general, however, the majority of the participants viewed their experience of providing care and support to their families not about motherhood or mothering *per se* but about parenting values rooted in Filipino tradition. Participants hoped that by their example, their children and grandchildren would learn and sustain Filipino tradition and values as diasporas in Canada.

Coping as Diasporas in the Hostland

Living in the *hostland* was more demanding than in the homeland. The decision of sponsored Filipino seniors to come to Canada was part of the whole gamut of aspiration to transition from the reality of impoverishment, misery, conflict, and family separation to a 'better life' in Canada. Brah (1996) used the term 'economic emigrant' to refer to labour emigrants who crossed borders in search of a better life. In the case of sponsored Filipino seniors, they did not only just disperse due to economic demands but for complex family reasons including tradition, and social expectations.

For diasporas in Canada, it means coping with family expectations, maintaining and providing multidimensional support to families. These are diasporic in essence, transnational in form, and lifetime in character. The nature of support brought capital advantage to immigrant families. The entry of sponsored Filipino seniors into the labour market did not only add to the human capital of the country but it also augmented the per capita income of Filipino immigrant households. In addition, coping with the demands of

the *hostland* meant that gender roles expectations were not a concern. Out of necessity, participants consigned to ‘oblivion’ traditional gender-differentiated roles and focused on how they could help their children in diaspora. This study showed that support to immigrant families goes beyond gender-specific roles due to survival needs.

Participants also coped with the persistent longing to return to the homeland. Leading theorists have spoken of the aspiration of people living in diaspora to return home (Brah, 1996; Cohen, 1997; Clifford, 1994; Hall, 1993; Safran, 1991, 2004). When life becomes difficult, participants asked questions about their purpose of being, their roles, and expectations of others. In the middle of uncertainties and difficulties, a way of making sense of things was necessary. They endeavoured to establish a ‘sense of home’ or an ‘imagined homeland.’ Brah suggested likewise that finding home is important for people in diaspora and that their diasporic journeys is fundamentally around finding a home ‘elsewhere.’

Living in the *hostland* meant finding ways to survive. While the participants were reunited with their immigrant families, some had to find work to themselves and their families. Doing this involved sometimes discrimination, and rejection or prejudice towards aging and ethnicity (Driedger & Chappell, 1987). Ageism is a form of prejudice or perception towards older persons as weak and dependent (Novak & Campbell, 2006), as fiscal burdens (Stone, 2002; Gee, 2002), and as disengaging in usual activities (Cumming & Henry, 1961). Ageism also sees seniors as debilitating (Hendricks, 1995), declining and deteriorating (Stone; see also Cavanaugh, 1997; Comfort, 1976; Svanborg, 2001) towards living in an inactive and passive life (Decker, 1980; Gallagher, 1994). In addition, issues of employers around aging and an economic recession have made it

difficult for some sponsored Filipino seniors to find work. Having a job was a necessity but finding one proved difficult. Yet, as diasporas, they need to establish their roots in the *hostland* (Brah, 1996) to be able to support themselves. Moreover, employment gives a sense of meaning and identity (Muirhead, 2004), a sense of independence (Altschuler (2004a), and proves their ability to support their family.

The sponsorship agreement appears to presuppose the dependency of sponsored grandparents and elderly parents, although it ensures the benefit of care of sponsored seniors by their immigrant families and later the state, assuming that an elderly parent still lives after the government prescribed period of ten years in Canada. Contrary to the prejudiced and ageist preconceptions, participants have shown the capacity and ability to generate resources to support their immigrant families. The result of this study supports the notions of productive aging, as far as it is necessitated by the demands of survival in the *hostland*.

Productive aging connotes an individual choice to engage in active work. This resolved action brings advantages and benefits. In this study, coping with the demands of the *hostland* by necessity enable their ability to make choices not for personal benefit but for the family. The family demands also conditioned the desire to live productively. This could mean engaging in paid employment, volunteering, providing family support, and living independently as much as possible (Hinterlong et al., 2001). The notion of living independently, however, did not make sense to the participants, as they preferred to be with their families, a practice which is evident in a collectivist culture. Interestingly, whether the participants lived with or separately from their sponsors, their statements manifested relationships of intradependence.

Theobald spoke of intradependence as a ‘necessary relationship within a place’ and referring to a locality where people are highly dependent on those who shared the same place (as cited in Parker, 2003). Intradependence was necessary to cope with the demands of living and surviving in the *hostland*. The participants understood that the *hostland* was the locus of their desire for a better life. They realized that the survival of their families depended on an intradependence and interdependence of support in order to attain the shared aims of family reunification, support to families and kin, and settlement. Their desire to support their families empowered them to remain resilient despite the challenges of coping in a new environment.

Transforming and Renewing the Self

A study in the US by Sycip and Fawcett (1988) on Filipino decision making concluded that “Filipino behaviour is not shaped so much by motivations for personal accomplishment as it is by calling upon network contacts to helping a specified goal” (p.17). This study confirms that finding. As previously discussed, pushing and pulling family demands, woven by Filipino parenting tradition and social expectations, have all contributed to the decision of sponsored Filipino seniors to immigrate to Canada. Living in Canada has transformed their ability to provide support and renewed their sense of mission to help their children in need. The element of self-sacrifice was necessary to sustain the renewed commitment to serve.

The demands of survival in a newly constructed reality brought a re-awakening and renewing of their mission to fulfill parental obligation to support their children in diasporas. A mission fulfilled means a sense of accomplishment in providing transnational and distant support as well as the joy of ‘being there’ for their children and

grandchildren in need. Moreover, the value of *utang na loob* further contributed to the commitment of providing support. As discussed, *utang na loob* is a collective value that brings advantages to the one in need of help in the family or community (Almirol, 1982; Church and Katigbak, 2000; Lawless, 1966; Lynch, 1968; Hennig, 1983; Hollnsteiner, 1963). Sponsored Filipino parents were living up to expectations of reciprocity by providing support to their immigrant families. Affirmation of children could further make sponsored Filipino seniors feel important and accepted. It was a way of making them feel needed in the family.

The support of sponsored Filipino seniors further expedited the settlement of their immigrant families based on their willingness to help their kin. Hatton and Williamson (2005) suggested that immigrant relatives and friends who help emigrating family members and friends help the settlement process. Contrary to the claim of Hatton and Williamson, the participants became providers and initiators of, rather than receivers of help. Their altruistic motives and sacrifice for their families enabled them to overcome challenges as diasporas; renewed their commitment to alleviate the impoverished condition of their children and kin in the Philippines; and pushed them to work and survive to be able to provide subsistence support.

The presence of sponsored Filipino seniors in immigrant families also renewed the filial relationship between sponsored elderly parents and their sponsors (Wai-ming, 1999). Participants cited claimed a renewed relationship with their children who treated them with respect, care, and love. Their presence and/or support were recognized through gestures of affirmation, treats and gifts, and physical and emotional care, which were affirmative gestures of recognition and respect. In the Filipino culture of family-centrism

‘everything’ (including identity) revolves around the family (Colin-Jones & Colin-Jones, 2004; Wolf, 1997) and parents and elders have ‘the voice.’ Research data in this study has shown that family-centrism remained strong in immigrant families.

Self-actualization was evident in the statements of the participants, as they have fulfilled the expectations of their children or families. Their support was not about alienation of labour (see also Braverman, 1974; Nichols 1980; Reiss, 1997; Rius, 1976) but focused on the necessity of providing subsistence and they valued the tradition that ultimately gave meaning to their work experience. Work experience may be alienating but only when work is regarded as an end. For the participants, their jobs were means to a greater end that provided them with a sense of self-actualization and fulfillment; and they believed that the labour they engaged in was meaningful.

Living in a new reality in Canada was therefore an experience of renewal and transformation. It was about the renewal of motherwork and commitment of supporting children and was evidence of a filial relationship. Renewing their commitment was no longer just about mothers but was about Filipino parents who, traditionally, were expected to provide life-long support to their children. Demythologizing or reframing the concept of ‘family’ to mean *living and working with children* (Hart, 1995) affects the concept of motherwork as both a feminine and masculine role. Moreover, living in a new constructed reality was also about a personal transformation of income status, citizenship, and identity. For those who found settlement in the *hostland*, however, it also means an inevitable integration into the local culture and tradition and even a change in citizenship.

Deciding to Stay or to Return Home

According to Frideres (1999), most immigrants come with the desire for social change and view Canada as a 'lifeboat' from the environment they fled. Participants sail with the winds of pushing and pulling family demands. At the core of these demands is subsistence support, which emerged as an important concept in understanding of the migration of sponsored Filipinos seniors to Canada. Living in Canada brought the participants face-to-face with the challenge of deconstructing their views and tradition. This means adjusting to or living up to Canada's system, lifestyle, values and culture, and demands as well as opportunities. For some, deconstruction did not mean a total change of their Filipino identity, but tolerance and adaptation of local culture in order to keep up with the demands of their new social milieu. It means integration into the Canadian system, yet maintaining an imagined homeland through their families, kin and Filipino social network to make sense of their existence in the *hostland*.

Within the period of ten years, while the participants' 'imagined' return persisted, having 'better life' was a key consideration of the decision to stay in Canada. As previously discussed, a better life means having a job, living harmoniously with their family sponsors, a life of affluence versus a life of impoverishment in the homeland, peace and security in the *hostland*, the freedom to make decisions and choices, and being valued and empowered as seniors and parents. Living a 'better life' further meant the ability to support children and kin, which is fundamental to their experience of fulfillment or accomplishment as Filipino parents. However, having a 'better life' did not mean a decision to remain permanently in Canada. The option to return eventually to the homeland remained an open agenda. Brettell and Hollifield (2000) argued that

early anthropological studies on return migration emphasized the link with the homeland and that the idea of emigration did not mean a definitive mindset of departure from homeland; hence, the idea of return remains (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000; Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 1997; Gray, 2004; Safran, 1991, 1997; Tsagarousianou, 2004; Wonneberger, 2004). In fact, all the participants were explicit on their desire to return home, even those who no longer have families in the homeland.

The Philippine Government has issued Republic Act 9225 or the Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act 2003, which allows natural-born Filipinos, who have lost their citizenship through naturalization in a foreign country, to reacquire their Filipino citizenship (Commission of Filipino Overseas, n.d.; Consulate General of the Philippines, n.d.). The Act further allows Filipinos to have a visa-free entry to their homeland, own property or run business in the Philippines (Consulate General of the Philippines, n.d.). The program is likewise an invitation to sponsored Filipino seniors to return to their homeland without losing their Canadian citizenships.

The constant link to the homeland may be a bridge to the eventual return of sponsored Filipino seniors to the Philippines. Some participants depended on work availability and the necessity of their presence in Canada as the bases for their decisions. In the absence of forces that hold them to remain in Canada, returning home may not be such a far-fetched possibility.

Summary

In this Chapter, I have attempted to discuss the concepts that emerged in the study and linked with the literature. In view of the preceding discussion, it is proposed that participants are diasporas. I have also argued that as diasporas, the notion of survival was core to understanding the participants' dispersion and their experiences in the *hostland*. The pushing and pulling of survival have influenced their decision to immigrate to Canada.

In Canada, the participants shared a collective vision, myth, and memory, which were not necessarily articulated but manifested in action through tradition and values, and contacts with transnational families, friends and groups. Meeting the needs of their families was linked to their identity, which was challenged continually in the *hostland's* values and lifestyle. Nonetheless, their overall experience was about the transformation of their expectations and the renewal of their commitment to provide lifetime support to their families. The sponsorship of participants to Canada had an impact on their families and Canadian society as a whole.

Living in diaspora also means longing for and imagining home. This longing persisted. However, the eventual return may not be applicable to many diasporas, as there may not be a home to go back to, or an opportune time to return.

CHAPTER 6: THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Let us teach our people again to be proud that they are Filipinos. Let us teach them to realize anew that being a Filipino means having as rich and noble a heritage of language, culture, patriotism and heroic deeds as any nation on earth...

-- Carlos P. Romulo (1961)

This chapter has two sections. The first section discusses some theoretical propositions at the completion of the study. Theoretical propositions neither appear complete nor bear finality. They are not the conclusions of hypotheses but propositions meant to facilitate the exploration, affirmation or contestation of theories or findings in future studies. Charmaz (2006) further suggested that in constructivist grounded theory, the resulting theories are interpretations and thus depend on the researcher's view. In consonance with the constructivist approach to grounded theory, the theoretical propositions are likewise my interpretations of the experiences of the participants. As there has been very little literature focusing on Filipino seniors and their diasporic experience in Canada within the sponsorship period of ten years, the findings of this study have given me reason to claim the six theoretical propositions concerning the diasporic condition of sponsored Filipino seniors.

The second section explores some implications of the study in relation to developing theories around migration, diaspora, motherwork and subsistence, the labour of seniors, and productive aging. I further discuss some of the study's implications concerning the continued entry of sponsored seniors to Canada. I also propose some implications for consideration for future study. Note that the discussion in this section is not just about the emergent concepts resulting from the grounded theory process but includes some insights gained from the process of generating data.

Theoretical Propositions at the Completion of this Study

In an attempt to investigate the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families, living as diasporas emerged as the overarching concept that provided a theoretical frame of understanding and interpretation of the interview data. It is a conceptual construction, which emerged during the process of coding, constructing conceptual categories, and sorting memos. It became more apparent during the integration of concepts and literature review. I eventually interpreted the experience of the participants as diasporic in a newly constructed reality away from their homeland. As a concept, living as diasporas therefore integrates all the family categories that emerged in this study.

Firstly, through the findings of this study, I propose that sponsored Filipino seniors (and maybe the Filipino immigrants and migrants in Canada) are diasporas. The experiences of the participants affirmed the definitions, typologies, and academic discourse around diaspora (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 1997; Georgio, 2006; Gray, 2004; Hall, 1993; Safran, 1991, 2004; Sökefeld, 2004; Tsagarousianou, 2004; Wonneberger, 2004). The experience of the participants of the pushing and pulling

realities around their dispersion to Canada, living in an imagined homeland, the transnationalization of motherwork and subsistence, the persistent idealization of and aspiration towards a home to return are all part of the bigger picture Filipino diaspora in Canada. Informed by the findings of this study and the literature, including the previous study of Okamura (1998) of Filipinos in diaspora in the US, the theoretical proposition that Filipinos are diasporas in Canada is worthy of exploration.

Secondly, the interplay or aggregation of pushing and pulling realities induces eventually a sponsored Filipino senior to emigrate. The demands of survival and family of values and tradition, along with preconceptions and expectations about Canada, are constructs that contribute to the decision to emigrate. Sponsorship became the means of meeting those demands.

Thirdly, living in Canada inevitably requires a reconstruction of home. Uprooting oneself from an ancestral home meant separation and loss; transplanting in unfamiliar ground meant a hybridity of values, acculturation, or resistance to the dominant culture. What was lost needs to be re-created; however, the re-creation will remain 'imagined' as it will not be the same as the lost home. The diasporic concepts of 'imagined homeland' or 'imagined communities' are manifestations of the inability to recreate what had been uprooted and lost; hence, a continued longing for the homeland and the aspiration to return there persisted among sponsored Filipino seniors. Unfortunately, there was no more home to return to; and even if it were there, it was not the same. Sponsored Filipino seniors were virtually homeless, as the home that they used to know was now gone.

Moreover, living in a new reality entailed meeting family demands for survival and settlement. It meant struggling with transnational identity and tradition, coping with the demands of the *hostland*, renewal of motherwork and subsistence support to children and kin, and the persistent confrontation of an 'eventual' return to the homeland.

Fourthly, the experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to families in Canada are diasporic experiences of survival and settlement. The notion of diaspora as being scattered in a foreign land is also about 'settlement.' Like a plant, diasporas need sustenance in order to survive. They need to 'root' in economic, political, social, and cultural systems while sustaining their ethnicity and collective identity. The struggles of finding a home, the daily work challenges they face, the multi-dimensional support that their families need, and the risks of losing their values and tradition are diasporic experiences and struggles of settlement.

Fifthly, when engaging in motherwork and subsistence support beyond the borders of homeland, these become transnational acts of 'mothering.' Transnational motherwork and subsistence support of sponsored Filipino seniors is multi-dimensional and woven with threads of Filipino values, tradition, and beliefs. It is a necessary to cope with the demands of survival in Canada; hence, it goes beyond assigned gender roles and 'mothering' becomes a shared experience of parents working together to help their immigrant families. Moreover, sponsored Filipino seniors who have families and kin in the Philippines will continue to provide distant motherwork and subsistence support.

Finally, hybridity of identity may be inevitable in the *hostland* but it does not necessarily obliterate collective identity and memories of the Philippines. Immigrants are to integrate with Canadian culture and the aggregation of ethnic and Canadian values,

views, or lifestyles evolved into a hybrid culture. The longer an immigrant lives in the host country or exposes to local culture and tradition, the more the chance of hybridity of identity becomes inevitable. However, sponsored Filipino seniors may acquire Canadian values and lifestyles but they will not forget about their homeland and the stories and memories of their home. Sustaining their identity and values depends on the frequency and depth of contacts with families and kin in the homeland and with Filipino individuals and groups in Canada. Subscription to Filipino television, radio, magazine or newspaper, and engagement with Filipino groups or network are ways to enhance their collective memory and awareness as Filipinos in Canada. Sponsored Filipino seniors made sense of their lives. They constructed an imagined homeland through efforts of living or reliving a Filipino way of life in their immigrant families.

Given the findings of the study, I propose a definition of diaspora as it relates to the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors:

A people dispersed by the demands of family survival and/or tradition to a land outside the political and socio-cultural demarcations of 'ancestral' home. In the *hostland*, they share visions, memories, beliefs, values, and ethnic practices, and recreate an 'imagined homeland' that provide them virtual and spatial, economic, social, and political belonging. They have a collective identity as Filipinos, of which sustenance depended on the depth of their social bonding with their families and friends in both the *hostland* and homeland. However, hybridity of values and lifestyles is inevitable, owing to the dominant and diverse cultures of their 'newly constructed' home. Forced by circumstances, the aspiration to return home remains 'imagined' as staying in the *hostland* has become a necessity. For others, there is no home to return to and reconstructing one may no longer be possible.

The definition, however, does not mean that all Filipinos in Canada are diasporas. It is worth noting that Filipinos who come to Canada for a business trip, leisure, or professional training are not included in the above definition of diaspora. In some cases

in this study, Filipino seniors came to Canada to visit their families and were eventually sponsored. They now live in diaspora.

Implications for Migration and Diaspora

The results of the study expand the classical notion of politico-religious to include economic and socio-cultural domains related to the phenomenon of dispersion. I have attempted to lay down the foundation for the argument that senior sponsored Filipinos live in diaspora and encourage further investigation of this claim. The experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families manifested diasporic concepts, based on earlier definitions of diaspora (Safran, 1991; 2004) and diasporic typologies (Cohen, 1997). Conducting one among the few inquiries that specifically focus on sponsored Filipino seniors; I am in a better position to claim that the diasporic experience of the participants speaks of a larger reality of Filipinos living as diasporas in Canada. I have also integrated into the discussion the core value of survival and subsistence as the underlying reality that influenced the act of dispersion and diasporic experience in the *hostland*. This study opens up further inquiry and leads to an understanding of survival using the theoretical lens around motherwork and subsistence.

There are practical implications in the migration of sponsored Filipino seniors to Canada. Dispersion implies uprooting an individual or family from tradition, breaking up families and friends, living in a foreign climate and social norms, and finding a home away from home. In like manner, to return to the homeland means the same acts of uprooting, separating, re-acclimatizing, and re-establishing a home. Hastening the adjustment period of sponsored Filipino seniors in the *hostland* and their eventual return to their homeland is helpful.

Moreover, the eventual migration of sponsored parents and seniors to Canada implies a review of preconceptions and expectations about the *hostland*. Both Government and private immigration agencies could provide a realistic orientation program or information materials about the actual life situation of immigrants that may hasten their eventual settlement. Likewise, the eventual return of sponsored Filipino seniors to their homeland should also be prepared for. They need re-orientation towards the physical demands, economic and political conditions, lifestyles, climate change, and the implications of their return to their families. Their presence in Canada did not just provide subsistence support to their children and kin but also to the ‘national subsistence’ of the ailing economy of the Philippines. Their return, of course, would have repercussions both to those who depend for their support and to the national economy.

Implications for Motherwork and Subsistence

Motherwork is often understood as a domain of mothers and women and not of men. It is a compound word for *mother* + *work*, which is a derivative of the concept of nurturing, affirming, or being oriented towards sustaining life (Hart, 2002; Meis & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). The concept, however, becomes problematic when understood through the lens of gender. The act of nurturing, affirming, and sustaining life is not just a role ‘assigned’ to women but also to men who love and care for their families.

Results of this study suggest that it affirms the notion of motherwork as nurturing, and life-sustaining but also that the concept is gender inclusive, especially in the context of the diasporic experience. The findings have shown that motherwork and subsistence

transcends age, tradition, and gender differentiation by necessity. Filipino families generally practice gender-segregated roles where men are providers and women as carers for domestic needs. However, participants' experience indicated that acts of caring and nurturing were not defined based on gender roles but on love and the necessity of survival.

Having a job was likewise necessary to support the subsistence needs of their families. The result of this study provides parallel findings to previous studies (Gallagher, 1994; Hui, 1987) suggesting that immigrant seniors, regardless of gender, are engaged in motherwork and labour of care because of love and the responsibility. The need to survive in a foreign land also demands the cooperation and mutual support of couples and families in establishing a home. By virtue of necessity to survive, which is a fundamental precondition of subsistence support, motherwork becomes an assumed role of parents.

The findings also suggest that the demand for survival necessitates subsistence support to children. Necessity implies having to provide help to sustain life and ultimately gain settlement in the *hostland*. Finding a job to help support the cost of living expenses of immigrant families, providing care to grandchildren, and helping with house chores so immigrant children can find work opportunities were necessary contributions towards survival. Participants disregarded the tradition of gender differentiation and were more concerned about how they could provide subsistence support to their children and grandchildren. Motherwork in the context of struggle for survival and subsistence support of people in diaspora could mean a renewal of the universal parenting. Raising

children to support and sustain life but in a more challenging diasporic context, requires meeting the demands of the new constructed reality.

The introduction of the notions transnational motherwork and subsistence support were emergent concepts that need further exploration and substantiation. In the context of diaspora, motherwork and subsistence assume a transnational character. I find it helpful to use the notion of transnationalism as multi-stranded relations that link origin and settlement (Kandiyoti, 2003). Similarly, Schiller et al., (1992) defines it as “the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement (p.1). Motherwork and subsistence support of sponsored Filipino seniors is by nature multi-stranded in their social relations. It transcends homeland and national and cultural borders, yet connects the hostland and the home, and thus became transnational in both ways, i.e., support to transnational or immigrant families; and motherwork care via long-distance advice, visits, e-communications, and subsistence support via remittances and *balikbayan* boxes to children and kin in the Philippines. I also propose the inclusion of *transnationalism* as a category of the notion of motherwork in the discussion around subsistence.

Implications for Labour and Productive Aging

The notion of motherwork as linked to subsistence strengthens its meaning as life affirming and sustaining (Hart, 2002; Meis & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). It is labour by nature, with economic and care value, where subsistence is an essential concept of motherwork. Subsistence support is fundamental to survival and existence, which is inherently life affirming. Acts of motherwork by the participants through subsistence and care were important forms of support to sustain life and ultimate settlement in the

hostland. The result of this study further affirms the intrinsic and extrinsic value of motherwork and its importance especially when necessitated by the context of diasporic settlement. Intrinsically, it means that the enabling capacity of care of sponsored Filipino seniors did not only raise awareness of Filipino values and tradition in immigrant families but also opened economic opportunities to children. Studies have already shown that older persons find meaning in providing care to children and their families (Atchley, 1972; Gilligan, 1982; Gallagher, 1994; Hui, 1987; Kim & Lauderdale, 2003; Trias & Mazumdar, 2004) just as sponsored Filipino seniors found meaning in providing subsistence support for their immigrant children and children and families and kin in the Philippines. Extrinsically, subsistence support of the participants from employment income had economic value that immigrant families needed in their diasporic existence. The result implies that subsistence support, either through money or through care or both, has economic values linked to survival. Therefore, the labour of sponsored Filipino seniors in the home or in the workplace affirms life and ultimately brings about settlement of immigrant families in the *hostland*. This is all part of the notion of subsistence where mothering, caring, and sustaining life in the family, community, and nature all come in one fold (Russell, 2001).

The presence of sponsored Filipino seniors in their families further implied the living of Filipino tradition and culture. Having older Filipino persons in the family connects the past with the present generation. I have seen this in my child Nathan who loves to listen to stories of World War II and the lifestyles of people in the past from her Grandma. I was like him too when I was young. I belonged to a big family of 10. I grew up with our grandparents who patiently taught me with life's values and told me fantastic

stories about almost anything. They never got tired of loving us. I have seen that the sponsored Filipino seniors in the family are catalysts of dialogue among three generations (parents, children, and grandchildren). They provided their families with an opportunity to appreciate the past and the Filipino culture and tradition. They are the living witnesses of the life's meaning that they have lived through time. Staying with or connecting to their immigrant families also provided them with the opportunity to learn and understand the experiences of the present generation.

The notion of motherwork, as discussed in the findings, has a positive influence on views of sponsored Filipino seniors as most of them are engaged in 'mothering' and domestic work. As previously discussed, motherwork is not about profitability (Hart, 1995; 2000) even if it has contributed to the surplus value to the labour of the spouse and their children (Maynard, 1995). In like manner, as sponsored Filipino seniors performed the surplus labour, they too contribute to the value of their son's or daughter's labour power. As previously mentioned, there is a monetary equivalent to the labour of care by sponsored Filipino seniors. Hart (1995) proposed that given the importance of motherwork, "family wage" must be accorded to those who take care of children. Giving value to motherwork and subsistence support demands a corresponding value to the labour of sponsored Filipinos seniors for their immigrant families.

Furthermore, with the increasing number of emigrating seniors to developed nations, there is a need to redefine the notion of productive aging with a consideration of culture and diasporic experience. Speaking from the experience of the participants, however, it appeared that the notions of independence and independent living could face contradictions within the culture of family- centism, filial piety, and tradition of lifetime

and long-term support to. For reasons of tradition and social expectations of being cared for by children, living with their immigrant families was preferred to living alone.

Implications for Sponsorship Policy

Claims are repeated in the literature that Canada's population is aging – a phenomenon that adversely impact the country. The term 'apocalyptic demography' is used to explore the supposed catastrophic impact of aging. The homogenization of the elderly as sick and burdens of society reinforced the common notion that an increase of aging population will strain the health and care costs (Gee, 2002). On the contrary, Gee argued that "population ageing is not necessarily the social crisis/social problem that it is commonly believed to be" (p. 750) and that the increase of price for pharmaceuticals, expensive medical prescriptions and technologies, and high maintenance of physicians have caused the rise of health care spending. Likewise, in this study, the 11 participants did not strain the health care system of Canada. None of them were recipients of health and care support system of Canada. They were providers of economic, motherwork, and cultural and values support to their immigrant families. In fact, the sponsored Filipino seniors in this study are active, productive contributors to the Canadian economy.

In social economic terms, individual and group contributions matter in economic development. Motherwork and subsistence support of sponsored Filipino seniors to their families therefore count as important contributions in the host country. The results suggest that there is a need to re-examine sponsorship policies affecting immigrant seniors. Results of this study offer a challenge to the social view that immigrant seniors are burdens or liabilities of the state.

The multi-dimensional support of sponsored Filipino seniors has a social and economic impact on diversity, immigration settlement, and nation building. Sponsored Filipino seniors bridge and sustain Filipino tradition and culture in their immigrant families. Their presence deepens and reinforces the foundation of ethnicity in their respective family and promotes diversity in Canada. Their motherwork and subsistence support also hastens their immediate families' settlement in the *hostland*. They seek employment to support their immigrant families and/or provided care and housework support that enable their children to find opportunities and take on fulltime job. They make a worthy contribution to families and society. They are assets of nation building. Imagine the magnitude of human capital that sponsored Filipino seniors bring to Canada. Babysitting and housekeeping support alone save immigrant families a sizable amount of money as they no longer have to hire caregivers and housekeepers or send their children to daycare centres. The support of sponsored Filipino seniors likewise facilitates opportunities for their children to be free to pursue economic opportunities. The findings in this research further affirm the previous work of (Sycip & Fawcett, 1988) indicating that Filipinos migrated to America not for personal reasons but for one's family.

Moreover, the Sponsorship Agreement prescribes sponsors to support their sponsored parents and grandparents (CIC, 2009c). Canada appears to protect itself from the burden of care by ensuring that the sponsors have sufficient funds before they can even sponsor their parents, grandparents, or relatives. CIC requires that sponsors must be able to provide the basic living requirements and to ensure that the sponsored relative must not be in the condition that could potentially cause excessive demand on health and social services in Canada (CIC, 2009a). The policy can be interpreted to assume that

sponsored seniors must not be a burden to the state funded care system. The findings in this study although exploratory, raise new questions for researchers, e.g., does the sponsorship policy consider the valuable contributions or benefits that sponsored seniors can bring to their families and Canadian society?

The 'ten-year' formula has caused concerns among the participants. The Old Age Security, and Guaranteed Income Supplement require that a qualified beneficiary should be a resident of Canada for at least ten years (Service Canada, 2008). Aging and ailing sponsored Filipino seniors may need support that sponsors can not afford. This study suggests a review of the prescribed ten-year waiting period before a sponsored senior can be eligible for government support. For instance, participants suggested consideration to reducing the residency period from three to five years to qualify for Canadian old age pension and exceptions if there is a severe crisis such as eviction from family or serious illness.

The study has further evolved knowledge about sponsored Filipino seniors and their experiences in Canada. Findings and theoretical propositions in this study encourage me to disseminate this knowledge as useful to advocates for seniors who advise policy makers and community researchers about enabling inclusive social policies. Understanding the condition of sponsored Filipino seniors by sharing knowledge that can build partnerships with other senior activists may prove fruitful in improving the lives of sponsored seniors and their families in our communities.

Implications for Future Study

There are several implications of this study, which evolved from the process of going through the interview data. I wrote some notes, which I considered important for

future consideration. In the beginning, I thought I was interested in the immediate experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families. It is interesting on how the data, in relation to the literature review, gradually coalesced around the notions of diaspora, which later provided a framework for findings and discussion. It became apparent in this research that the emergent concept of diaspora evolved as a theoretical proposition that has implications for future study.

Sponsored Filipino seniors are diasporas, a theoretical proposition emerging from the voices of experience of the 11 participants. However, further in-depth study on the theoretical proposition is encouraged to include a larger number of participants and possibly clustering them according to gender, regional ethnicity and language, age range, or circumstance. On a grand scale, a study of Filipinos as diasporas in Canada remains an opportunity for investigation. It is an area ripe for both qualitative and quantitative inquiry. Studies on migration, transnationalization, and diaspora of Filipinos in the US (Almirol, 1982; Caliboso, 1998; Okamura, 1998; Parreñas, 2001a, 2008; Ramos-Herrera, 1997; San Juan, 2000; Sycip & Fawcett, 1988; Wolf, 1997) and a few others in Canada (Aranas, 1983; Chen, 1998) could serve as starting points and basis of comparison for this investigation. Replicating the study with other dispersed ethnic groups cultures could further deepen the issues associated with the diasporic experience of sponsored seniors in Canada.

This study has further proposed that gender differentiation is not a concern in providing motherwork and subsistence support *vis-a-vis* the necessity for survival and settlement of Filipino families in diaspora. This preposition challenges the gender-based preference of motherwork as originally explicated by Chodorow (1978), Meis and

Bennholdt-Thomsen (1999), Hart (2002), among others. Future study on motherwork may wish to pursue the question of the gender-inclusive attribute of this concept. It may also consider emergent notions of transnational motherwork and subsistence in the context of people in diaspora. Throughout this study, I have regarded the definition of the concepts of motherwork and subsistence as open and evolutionary. I have prefixed the terms with ‘trans’ to signify the diasporic relevance of these in the life of the participants. However, there is a need to explore the ontological and epistemological meanings of motherwork and subsistence in diasporic context. Doing a cross-cultural investigation may provide a variety of nuances that could further challenge the existing definition of the terms. It is an open invitation to social, anthropological, feminist, and interdisciplinary researchers.

Understanding the meaning of identity can be enigmatic, as the term has evolved from Erik Erickson’s work in the 1950s to recent times where historians, anthropologists, and humanities use the term to explore cultural politics and social categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, citizenship, and so on. Today, the term is a constructed ‘social category’ and has ‘personal’ characteristics linked to socially distinguishing features of dignity, pride, and honour (Fearon, 1999). As far as this study goes, the findings indicate that social and economic transformation has occurred in the life of the participants. Their social identity, based on expectations as Filipino parents, has been enhanced in terms of a ‘better’ capacity to provide support to their children and grandchildren in both the *hostland* and homeland. They have sustained a social and collective identity as Filipinos that was necessary to build a strong ‘imagined homeland.’ Some have transformed their past social identity in impoverishment to become an empowered and

‘better person.’ The experience of fulfillment and the recognition of their support to families and kin enhanced their personal identity. The experience of recognition reinforced the culture of the ‘we’ in the family. Hegel once spoke of a process of interpersonal recognition where the ‘I’ is a ‘We’ and the ‘We’ is ‘I’ (as cited in Williams, 1992) which is akin to the experience of the emerging ‘We’ identity of the participants in the struggle for survival. The collective identity of the ‘We’ of Filipino families to support each other in the midst of uncertainties in the *hostland* challenged the Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest. Moreover, the inter-subjective recognition (Honneth, 1995) was an important aspect of the participants’ experience of self-fulfillment and sense of accomplishment. This study therefore proposes in theory that sponsored Filipinos seniors enhanced their identity along with the transformation of their socio-economic status and recognition of their kin. However, given the limitation of the scope of the study, an investigation of the identity transformation of Filipinos in diaspora in Canada is further encouraged.

Studies also claimed that mass media, telecommunications, and integration into the *hostland* culture brought hybridity of identity to diasporas (Gray, 2004; Georgiou, 2006; Olwig, 2004; Papastergiadis, 1997). A study also affirmed that Filipino children, who were born or grew up in the US, showed hybridity of identity and lifestyles (Wolf, 1997). Hybridity of lifestyles and values in immigrant families have caused generational struggles, as evident in the findings of this study. As Filipinos do not live in enclaves in foreign lands, how long will Filipinos be able to sustain their tradition and values like family-centrism, *utang na loob*, life-long support or *pagmamalasakit*, filial piety, and so on? As the influence of local culture is inevitable, hybridity of Filipino

culture in Canada will eventually unfold. Hybridity of Filipino values *per se* is a study warrants further exploration in the future.

Furthermore, despite the phenomenal dispersion or migration of Filipinos overseas, the existing literature on Filipinos as diasporas needs to expand. Previous studies were mostly US-based. The very little literature available on the diasporic experience of sponsored Filipino seniors added on to the relevance and timeliness of this study. Further academic inquiry is encouraged.

CHAPTER 7: LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUDING REFLECTION

“Ang hindi marunong tumingin sa
pinaggalingan ay di makakarating sa
paroroonan” (Anyone who shuns the past will
not reach his or her destination)
--- A Filipino Proverb

This chapter has two short sections. One discusses the given limitations and delimitations of the study while the other are talks about my reflections at the completion of this study. In the constructivist approach to grounded theory, conclusions are incomplete and instead are suggestive and inconclusive (Charmaz, 2000). The concluding reflection that I have drawn from this study is meant to provoke thoughts and suggest actions. It is my understanding, interpretation, and a personal encounter.

Limitations of the Study

The data in this study did not mean to claim universal representation but to develop theoretical concepts from the experience of eleven participants that could mirror some realities of sponsored Filipino seniors in Canada. The findings of this study did not intend to prescribe but to provide insights of the unexplored experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families.

Moreover, the extent of participants' openness limited the depth of the study. The codes and categories that emerged largely depended on the data provided. In some interviews, I sensed that there were personal matters that participants seemed unwilling to

divulge. A few refrained from sharing details about their children in-law, potential abuse in relationships, and immigration concerns. I respected their choice and avoided myself from pursuing questions that bordered areas of sensitivity.

Being a Filipino is an advantage and yet embeds limitations. In the analysis of data, I was aware of the temptation to speak for the data according to my views instead of allowing concepts to emerge. I guarded myself from it and allowed concepts to emerge before engaging in dialogue with my personal experience and views as a Filipino. I understand that a researcher comes to a study with a worldview and that could influence the research. Incidentally, having used a constructivist approach in this study, the same limitation gives me an edge, as I am able to use my tacit knowledge as a resource in interpreting the relationships of theoretical categories. Despite the limitations, I was able to gather a huge and rich text data.

I have further limited the scope of the study to Filipinos who have been in Canada for no more a period of ten years. Considering my limited resources as an international student, it was practical to invite sponsored Filipino seniors in Calgary through my network of friends. I did not have to pay for their voluntarily participation. Restricting the locale of participants had inherent limitations in terms of the possible influence of socio-economic milieu such as employment or income opportunities. To conduct a similar study that includes other Filipinos living in other provinces of Canada is encouraged, should opportunities and resources allow.

Language and translations were factors that I further considered as limiting, if the study were to include sponsored seniors from other race or ethnic background.

Moreover, I also do not have the financial capacity to hire translators and participants.

However, with the eleven Filipino participants, I did not have to hire translators because I spoke the Tagalog language and four other Filipino dialects.

As mentioned earlier, I have limited the selection of participants based on the ten-year prescribed period during which they are ineligible to receive financial support from the government. This study focused on the experience within that critical period of ten years when sponsored Filipino seniors were adjusting to the new environment, struggling with their sponsors for survival, and ultimately making decisions whether to remain in Canada or return to their homeland.

Concluding Reflection

It was past midnight when I arrived at the Calgary International Airport in September 2003. As I disembarked from the aircraft, I was anxious, lonely, and questioned myself - was coming to Canada to study, worth the sacrifice of separation? I ran to the phone booth and phoned home. My nine-year-old son answered - Dad? It was a moving moment. I said to him: *Anak, tulungan mo si Mamang at ingatan mo si Gabby, ha! Wala si Papang d'yan. Pero, h'wag kang mag-alala, ilang tulog lang magkikita rin tayo...Mahal ko kayo.* (Son, take care of your mom and your little sister Gabby. Dad isn't there. But don't worry, I wouldn't be away that long. I love you). A cold breeze touched my cheek and the snow started falling. I realized I was alone in a foreign land.

It is all for a purpose that sponsored Filipino seniors now live in diaspora. Coming to Canada means giving up a land and losing a home that has become integral to one's personal identity. It means having to leave behind families to face the adversities and challenges in a foreign land, and struggle to survive in an unfamiliar milieu. All these sacrifices are made possible to enable their family's well-being. My research work has

reinforced this assumption. It is my view that sponsored Filipino seniors are therefore in Canada to support their families and not to seek support from the Canadian Government. They are not ‘drainers’ of the country’s medical and social welfare resources, but are seniors whose productive labour helps generate positive impacts on both household economics and the economy of the state.

The study has helped me to understand the pushing and pulling of realities around family demands that are crucial to an understanding of the diaspora of sponsored Filipino seniors, and perhaps true as well of the millions of Filipinos dispersed overseas. They are a people dispersed by the demands of individual and family survival, to a land outside the demarcations of their ancestral home. With their shared visions, memories, beliefs, values, and ethnic practices, they recreate an ‘imagined homeland’ that provides them virtual and spatial belonging. They share an aspiration to return to the homeland but this will remain ‘imagined’, for there may be a place to return to, but not a home. Their collective identity is anchored in ethnicity and sustained through bonding with their families and friends in the homeland. Although the influence of the dominant culture may create hybrid values and a hybrid lifestyle, their collective identity as Filipinos persists.

Sponsored seniors are immigrants in Canada. Some of them have become citizens of the country. However, many people still view them as peculiarly ‘different,’ despite Canada’s democratic, egalitarian, and humanitarian stance on matters of social justice. Through the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors, this study poses a challenge to review immigration and social policy affecting the protection and welfare of sponsored seniors.

Furthermore, I have come to believe that without sponsored Filipino seniors in their families' homes, these will remain only houses and not homes for Filipino immigrants. If there was no one to provide care, to help with house chores, to share in payments of mortgages and rents, it would have a domino effect on the immigrant families and Canada's economy. Immigrants will have less time to work or engage in productive and income generating endeavours because of their domestic and care responsibilities. It could contribute to a shortage of local labour.

Without sponsored Filipino seniors, sustaining Filipino values and traditions may mean that immigrant families face challenges in retaining their ethnic identity. Without their presence, the young will be on their own, as their parents have to work to meet the demanding lifestyles and standard of living in Canada. This will be at the expense of quality parenting and family life. Children and youth are the future of the nation. When family life is sacrificed for a temporal end, what kind of country can one expect in the future?

Although this study is of sponsored Filipino seniors, it has heightened an understanding of my personal identity of diaspora. It makes me realize that I also live in a newly constructed reality. Looking back at my purpose and the sacrifices that I have endured, I now understand what it is to be in diaspora. I am proud to realize that I belong to a people in diaspora; people who are willing to take on sacrifices for their families' sake.

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APPENDIX A: Participants Profile

| Name | Age | Gender | Language Spoken | Years in Canada | Affinity with Sponsor | Profession/Work | |
|---------|-----|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| | | | | | | Homeland | Hostland |
| Poly | 57 | Male | Hiligaynon | 8 | Father | Proprietor Driver | Maintenance Driver Maritime - Engine Maintenance |
| Fely | 72 | Female | Waray | 6 | Mother | Dressmaker Retailer Insurance Agent | Cleaning Services |
| Del | 56 | Female | Hiligaynon | 8 | Mother | Retailer | Hotel Housekeeper |
| Francis | 61 | Male | Tagalog | 3 | Father | Baker | Baker |
| Joshua | 69 | Female | Tagalog | 6 | Mother | Elementary Teacher Retailer | Cleaning Services |
| Gloria | 62 | Female | Hiligaynon | 1 | Mother | Housewife | Sales Associate |
| Romeo | 69 | Male | Hiligaynon | 1 | Father | Driver | Unemployed |
| Lorna | 63 | Female | Ilocano | 2 | Mother | Retired Fishery Technologist | Caregiver |
| Eddie | 73 | Male | Bicolano | 1 | Father | Oil and Gas Exploration | Meat Packer |
| Bea | 75 | Female | Tagalog | 8 | Mother | Self- employed | Caregiver |
| Rosa | 70 | Female | Bicolano | 1 | Mother | Housekeeper | Housekeeper Caregiver |

APPENDIX B: Interview Guide Questions

Main Question:

How do sponsored Filipino seniors describe their experience of providing support to their immigrant families (sponsors) within the sponsorship period of 10 years?

Sub- Questions:

- What made you decide to come to Canada?
- When in the Philippines, what kind of support or help did you provide to your family?
- How did your family give value or importance to your help or support?
- Could you describe the support that Filipino seniors are traditionally expected to do in the family?
- Now that you are here in Canada, could you tell me about the kind of help or support that you provide to your family (sponsor)?
- Why do you provide help or support to your family (sponsor)?
- How do you describe your experience in providing help or support to your family (sponsor)? How does it affect you?
- What helps and/or prevents you from supporting your family?
- How does your family (sponsor) give value or importance to your help or support?
- What does your family (sponsor) gain from the help and support that you provide? What benefits have you gained?

- Could you tell me about an experience that you would consider most important in providing help or support to your family (sponsor) in Canada? Why is it important to you?
- What should other sponsored Filipino seniors learn from your experience?
- Could you share your feelings or thoughts about sponsored Filipino seniors who are providing help or support to their immigrant families (sponsors)?
- How, if at all, has your life been better in Canada than in your home country?
- How do you describe the person you are now?
- Could you tell me about your view on the non-eligibility of sponsored parents or relatives to any government financial assistance within a prescribed period?
- Is there anything that you would like to add so I may gain greater understanding on your experience of providing support to your immigrant family here in Canada?
- Is there anything you would like to ask me?

APPENDIX C: Invitation to Participate (*Sample*)

Date:

Dear _____:

We are pleased to invite you as a participant of a study on the experiences of Filipino sponsored seniors in providing help or support to their immigrant families (sponsors) in Canada within ten-year sponsorship period. Examples of help or support may include housekeeping, cooking, shopping, giving advice to family members, caregiving, assisting financial needs of family, and so on. These examples of family support may sound common in immigrant families; however, many in society do not seem to know or understand these from your perspective. This is therefore an opportunity for you to help others know about your experience and its importance to your families.

While this project is a partial fulfillment of a doctoral study in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies at the University of Calgary, we believe that by inviting you to be a participant of this study, it can be of benefit to you and other Filipino sponsored seniors. By sharing your experience, you are helping the voices of others to be heard and understood. You will also have the chance to learn from the experiences of others and possibly extend your network of friends.

If you agree to become part of this study, kindly read and sign the attached consent form and send it back to: ERNIE ALAMA, 9 Fonda Drive SE, Calgary, AB T2A6E4.

As a Filipino, a sponsored senior parent or relative, a visible minority, a person engaged in providing family support, and someone who is concerned about the importance of the role of Filipino sponsored seniors in families, we hope that you will be interested in participating in this project. All information will remain confidential.

Very sincerely yours,

ERNIE ALAMA
Researcher

APPENDIX D: Withdrawal of Participation (*Sample*)**(Completing this Form is optional)**

Any participant is free to withdraw at any place and time. To withdraw means to end one's participation while the study is in progress.

This withdrawal form is provided if you decide to write your intention to withdraw your participation from the study. Alternatively, you may also advise your intent by phone, email, fax, or face-to-face meeting. This form also provides an option to withdraw your contributions. Please see the appropriate box below.

If you decide to withdraw your contributions and advise appropriately, all the information collected from you will be destroyed immediately; however, if you do not provide any form of advise, your contributions will be retained and used in the analysis and findings.

Please keep a duplicate of this document before mailing it to **ERNIE ALAMA, 9 Fonda Drive SE, Calgary, AB T2A6E4** . You may also fax the completed form at (403) 301-5298 or email it to ealama@ucalgary.ca

Once again, thank you for giving time and interest to this research endeavor.

Very sincerely yours,

Ernie Alama, MM (SGD)
Principal Researcher
Community and Rehabilitation Studies
University of Calgary

DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW

Mr. Alama:

This is to inform you that I am immediately withdrawing my participation from your research project. (Tick the corresponding box, if option is applicable.)

- I choose to withdraw any information collected from me. I want them completely destroyed.
- Other recommended actions:

Sincerely yours,

Date: _____

APPENDIX E: Consent Form (*Sample*)**Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:****Name of Researcher:**

ERNIE ZAMORA ALAMA, MM
 Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies
 Graduate Division of Educational Research
 Phone: 403-301-5298; 403-714-9602
 Email: ealama@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor:

ELIZABETH ANNE HUGHSON, BA, MSc, PhD
 Associate Professor
 Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies
 Graduate Division of Educational Research
 Phone: (403) 220-2985
 Email: hughson@ucalgary.ca

Title of Project:

Experience of Sponsored Filipino Seniors in Providing Support to Immigrant Families in Canada: A Grounded Theory Inquiry

Sponsor: N/A

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. A complete copy of the research proposal is available upon request.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Why is the Study Conducted?

The experience of providing help or support particularly focused on sponsored Filipino seniors is something that has not been explored in the City of Calgary. While previous studies have confirmed that immigrant seniors like the Chinese seniors in the Calgary

provide support to immigrant families (sponsors), less is heard about the experience of other immigrant seniors who are sponsored and who belong to the Filipino community in the City. This study will explore the perspectives and experiences of Sponsored Filipino seniors in supporting their families. This research is timely as more immigrant Filipino families are sponsoring their parents to settle with them in Canada.

The purpose of the study is:

To explore the experience of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families (or their sponsors) during the 10-year sponsorship* period as a way of understanding their situation and their contributions to Canadian society.

**Canadian immigration policy allows citizens and permanent residents living in Canada who are above 18 years of age to sponsor a relative or family member to Canada. In the Sponsorship Agreement, the sponsors promise to support the basic daily living requirements of sponsored relative from 3 – 10 years. Sponsored parents or relatives will not be eligible to any government financial assistance when they reach Canada (CIC, 2005) within a prescribed period, unless their countries have existing agreement with Canada that allows their contributions to their country's social security system to be added to the periods of contribution to Canada Pension Plan (Durst, 2005).*

What will we ask you to do?

Your experience will be very helpful to the study and your participation will be greatly appreciated. You will be invited to participate in a face-to-face individual interview for approximately one-hour and thirty minutes. Please note that all interview sessions will be audio-taped. It is important for you to understand that audio-taping is a necessary condition for your participation in the study. You will also be invited to participate in four follow up sessions where you will be asked to comment on the initial and then final findings of the study. Each follow up session will usually take one to two hours

Note that in every activity, you are free to use either English or Tagalog. If your native tongue is Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Karay-a or Waray, you may use any of these in the conversation as the researcher also speaks these Filipino dialects.

Your Participation is Voluntary

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse continuing your engagement anytime without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you have initially been engaged in the process and have decided to withdraw or discontinue your participation, may either advise us in writing through the Withdrawal of

Participation Form or by phone, email, fax, or face-to-face meeting. If you choose to complete the Withdrawal of Participation Form, the same form provides an option to withdraw one's contributions. Kindly be aware that your contributions will still be retained and used in the analysis and findings unless you advise orally or declare in writing that you want to withdraw them. If you advise us that you want to withdraw your contributions, all information about you will be destroyed immediately. Note that in the absence of any oral or written notice of withdrawal, collected information will likewise be retained and used in the study.

What type of personal information will be collected?

If you agree to participate, personally identifying information will not be collected from you. You will be asked to share your experience in providing help or support to your family as a sponsored parent or relative. All information will be held confidential and you will remain anonymous through the use of pseudonym. A box below is provided where you can write your preferred pseudonym.

The pseudonym I choose for myself is:

What are the risks or benefits if you participate?

Individual interviews will be conducted in a place and time of your preference. The group interviews will also be conducted in accessible and safe places in the City of Calgary. Interviewers will ensure that group discussions are conducted in an open, non-threatening, and culturally sensitive manner.

It is important for you know that I have prepared some ways to help you in case you would experience the feeling of distress during interviews or group meetings while talking about your experience. Should it happen, I shall observe the procedure below.

1) Discontinue the interview.

I will ask you immediately if you wish to discontinue the interview. If you want it discontinued, you have the option to either reschedule it at a convenient date and time or to withdraw your participation from the study. The rescheduling of interview session or withdrawing of participation may be advised immediately or a few days after the discontinued interview session.

2) You will be well informed of the supportive services you may need.

Whether you wish to reschedule the interview or completely disengage from becoming part of the study, I shall offer information about appropriate agencies, institutions and professional services that could help you. I will

facilitate your access to service groups or institutions of your preference. I will also provide brochures, with language translations (whenever available) and contact details, will be made available during the interview. I will facilitate your access to service agencies through phone arrangements. Of course, you will be made aware of the cost of accessing the supportive services.

There are several potential benefits if you choose to participate in this study. A few of them are listed below.

- Your stories could echo the many unheard voices of experiences of sponsored Filipino seniors in providing support to their immigrant families (sponsors) in Calgary or in Canada.
- You will have the chance to learn from the experiences of others.
- You could become a member of the sponsored Filipino seniors group, which may evolve from this study.
- The result of this work may be published and circulated.
- You will have the rear experience of being a part of a study that specifically focused on sponsored Filipino seniors.

What Happens to the Information You Provide?

Your identity as a participant will remain anonymous and confidential. In the analysis and discussion of data, your name will remain discreet. A pseudonym of your choice will be used. Should you decide to withdraw your participation in the study, your identity and participation will likewise be kept anonymous and confidential. However, as previously discussed, your contributions will be retained and used in the study unless you advised otherwise. If you decide to withdraw your contributions, all information about you will be destroyed immediately. Moreover, access to transcriptions and notes or interview tapes will be limited to the researcher and the research supervisor. Research data and results will be kept in the locked filing cabinet of the researcher. Your information will be kept for two years before they will be completely destroyed.

Signature (Written Consent)

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you have been given the information in your language of choice and thus understand to your satisfaction your participation in this research project; and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

ERNIE Z. ALAMA, M.M.

Principal Researcher

Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies

Graduate Division of Educational Research

Phone: 403-301-5298; 403-619-9128

Email: ealama@ucalgary.ca

and

ELIZABETH ANNE HUGHSON, PhD

Research Supervisor

Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies

Graduate Division of Educational Research

Phone: (403) 220-2985

Email: hughson@ucalgary.ca