Journal of Dharma 42, 2 (April-June 2017), 137-158

FILIPINO CATHOLICS IN JAPAN AND AMBIGUITY OF 'FULL INTEGRATION'

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Abstract: Utilizing Wacquant's theorization of urban ghetto, this paper argues based on a field study of selected churches in the Archdiocese of Tokyo that the negotiated existence of Filipino Catholics in Japan, at least in the Archdiocese, has shifted from being a "sworded victim" to being a "shielded enclave." In response to aging demographics and increasing nonreligiosity of the young, the Archdiocese initiated a vision of "full integration," generally understood as a strategic goal to achieve an image of a multicultural Church that implies a call to end any dynamics of "swording" on the part of the dominant group as well as "shielding" among the subordinated ones. In deconstructing the ambiguity of "full integration," the paper analyses traces and cues provided by the Filipino Catholics' negotiated existence in the Archdiocese of Tokyo. In addition, the paper makes use of ideations from Will Kymlicka's bi-partite multicultural theory, which may be helpful in articulating a solution to the ambiguity of "full integration" as well as to the predicament of disinterested bicultural youth of the Church in Japan.

Keywords: Archdiocese of Tokyo, Bicultural Children, Filipino Catholics, Japanese Catholics, Kymlicka, Migration, Wacquant

1. Introduction

Ruel,[1] a 50-year old Filipino Catholic (FC) residing in Japan for about 20 years, heads a construction team that works in public

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[1]Actual names of respondents are intentionally replaced with pseudonyms for purpose of confidentiality.

projects in Tokyo. While Sunday is normally a regular work day in Japan, he always makes himself available for his Sunday religious duties. On one occasion, his boss demanded him to work on one Sunday. When he failed to report on that day, despite clarifying his religious devotion, his boss ordered him to get out of his apartment that day.

Helen is a 45-year old FC, married to a nonreligious Japanese. They have two sons. She considered her church participation as a momentary refuge to escape from her husband's painful words and emotional beatings. "Every time I go to church, my husband utters, '*Asubu*' (literally means 'Have fun' with sarcastic overtone) and is always suspicious and distrustful... I'm happy when I'm in the church. It is here where I get strength. I feel a sense of relief while in here."

Ruel and Helen personify narratives of contestation and negotiation among many FCs while performing religious obligations within a nonreligious Japanese society. Their stories represent majority of these FCs in Japan whose religious identity is often regarded in public spaces with suspicion or reservation because the societal norm is to be nonreligious. "Being nonreligious is synonymously considered by Japanese with 'normal'."[2]Any expression of religiosity, public or private, is treated with indifference or even hostility. Both in public and private spaces, these micro-narratives speak about an arena of contestation where a subordinated religious lifeworld (Catholic identity) is marginalized by a dominant secular lifeworld (nonreligious norm).

A review of literature reveals that most of the studies on Filipinos' contested spaces are related to their gendered status as women (Filipinas). In the context of workplace, their social identification as entertainers or *Japayukis*[3] in night bars during the

[2]Jesse Le Febvre, "Christian Wedding Ceremonies: 'Non-religiousness' in Contemporary Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 42, 2 (2015), 97.

[3]"This neologism is composed of two parts — Japa (Japan) and yuki (bound for) — hence rendering the meaning "Japan-bound." See

early 70s until the early millennium has socially configured them as sex workers and suspicious individuals due to these night establishments' often-associated underground activities with *Yakuza* gangs.[4] There had also been researches done on the struggle of Filipinas who in the mid-80s were pre-matched to certain Japanese rural men as "mail-order brides" (*hanayome*), revealing painful stories of forced labor in farms and their conflict with their Japanese mother-in-laws.[5] Just recently, studies have shifted to their more stable domestic role as both wives to Japanese nationals and mothers to bicultural children (*hafu*) and the struggle that comes with the socio-normative expectation of what a traditional Japanese wife / bride (*ii oyomesan*) must be.[6] Evidently, popular studies on Filipinos in Japan have dwelt on the nexus of genders, migration, and culture because it is along these themes where contestation is obvious and explicit given Japan's *nihonjinron* ethos of homogenized socio-cultural behavior that obligates social compliance and obedience as well as the ideology presented by the patriarchal (household, family) that conditions gender inequality.[7]

On this note, the paper looks into what is deemed as less explored area of a contested public space of Filipinos in Japan - the religious / ecclesial / sacred space within the Church of Japan. While there appears few researches that have dealt with FC

Nobue Suzuki, "Japayuki, or, Spectacles for the Transnational Middle Class," *Positions Asia Critique* 19, 2 (2011), 439-462.

[4]See Lieba Faier, *Intimate Encounters: Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2009, 52.

[5]Apichai W. Shipper, *Fighting for Foreigners: Immigration and its Impact on Japanese Democracy*, London: Cornell University Press, 2008, 25, 46.

[6]Sherlyne Almonte-Acosta, "Ethnic Identity: The Case of Filipino-Japanese Children in Japan," *Asia Pacific Social Science Review* 8, 2 (2008), 17-33.

[7]Naoko Takemaru, *Women in the Language and Society in Japan: The Linguistic Roots of Bias*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2010, 6.

religiosity in Japan particularly in Archdiocese of Tokyo and neighboring dioceses, theirs are differently-nuanced and theoretically-distinct. Mateo's[8] field research makes use of data that are old and outdated, dating back to the 90's, where most of the FCs were contract-based workers. "It is presumably this kind of frequent visitors, and not permanent settlers, who constituted members of the church in Tokyo where Mateo conducted research."[9] Meanwhile, Zarate's[10] descriptive study draws from his eight-year priestly work in Japan where many of the FCs have already attained a certain degree of parish recognition and institutional functions. While his study appears more updated and reflective of present situation of FCs, he admits analytical limitation and that his essay serves as mere introduction to more extensive studies. He writes in his introduction, "May this short exposition serve as a basis for research of many other people who deem it worthy to lay the path of total integration and cultural harmony..."[11] One researcher who may have extensively analyzed this contested religious space of FCs is a Japan-based American scholar, LeMay. In his doctoral dissertation,[12] he explored the multiculturality of Church of Japan with Filipinos and Japanese sharing the same space and its implications on Filipinos' religiocultural dynamics. He also addressed the predicament of the bicultural children particularly their struggle to continue their

[8]Ibarra Mateo, "The Church's Nonreligious Roles among Filipino Catholic Migrants in Tokyo" in *Old Ties and New Solidarities: Studies on Philippine Communities*, eds., Charles J-H Macdonald and Guillermo M. Pesigan, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000, 192-204.

[9]Ichikawa Makoto, "Filipino Migrants and Religion: Comparison of Cases in Australia and Japan," *Japanese Institutional Repositories Online* 2016, <http: / / www.rikkyo.repo.nii.ac.jp> (22 June 2016).

[10]Robert Zarate, "The Filipinos in the Catholic Church in Japan," *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 26, (2008), 25-39.

[11]Zarate, "The Filipinos in the Catholic Church in Japan," 25-26.

[12]Alec LeMay, "Inculturating Inculturation: Considering Multi-culturalism within the Roman Catholic Church of Japan amongst Japanese, Filipinos, and Filipino-Japanese," *Sophia Monograph Series* 12, (2013), <http: / / www.repository.cc.sophia.ac.jp> (6.21.2016).

mothers' Catholic religiosity. This paper appears thematically similar with LeMay's but is argued to possess significant differences. First, the author is a Filipino (ethnicity) who speaks Filipino (language); his insider-researcher identity could offer a distinct analysis. Second, the field areas where both the author and LeMay have performed their researches consist of different churches and ethnic communities.[13] Third and most importantly, LeMay extensively *exposed* the plight of Filipinos in Catholic Churches and their bicultural children but limitedly analyzed it in *critical* sense. This paper exposes the results of the fieldwork on contested spaces, and makes use of critical frames from Wacquant's urban ghetto ideation as well as Kymlicka's bi-partite multicultural theory in providing not just a critical analysis of their negotiated existence but also a creative response to their problematic condition.

The critical questions that this paper seeks to ask are: How are these FCs when situated in a sacred space in a nonreligious Japan? How do they negotiate as 'foreign Catholics' in mainstream Japan Catholicism? What is entailed in this negotiated existence that has marked a shift of status from being a "sworded victim" to being a "shielded enclave"? What is the ambiguity contained in the offer of "full integration"? How can this ambiguity be addressed?

2. The FCs in the Archdiocese of Tokyo

In a most recent census made available by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan (CBCJ) in 2012, it has accounted around 444,441 Catholics in all of its sixteen dioceses across the country, which is roughly 0.3% of its national population. Since these figures are based on parochial registries, it is reflective only of the number of Japanese Catholics (JCs) and perhaps a few other non-JCs that include Filipinos, Koreans, Indians, Latinos, among others. FCs do not register themselves in a parish primarily due to their transparochial tendencies in search of an English/Tagalog

[13]LeMay's field study has the following churches: Akabane, Kiyose, Hachioji, Umeda, Meguro, and Kasai. Similar only with Kasai, and Akabane, this paper lists Matsudo and Koiwa as other field areas.

mass in the company of fellow Filipinos and their avoidance to pay monthly parochial tithes when officially registered. Due to increasing presence of foreign Catholics in the Archdiocese, a number of parishes offer Sunday masses for non-Japanese speakers. Most of these masses are in English, though there are also some churches where a few of their masses are offered in Filipino (Tagalog), Korean, Vietnamese, and Portuguese.

As for their gendered and age demographics, the current profile of most of these Filipino church-based communities shows that the majority of their members are women and aging. Cited by Tubergen in 2006, Stark and Bainbridge believe that people's sense of religion increases with age due to promise of an afterlife as they near death[14] while De Vaus and McAllister contend that women's predisposition "toward expressive values are more congruent with religious values and practices as men are more inclined towards instrumental values that are less consonant with religion."[15] Besides these psycho-attitudinal factors, it is believed that the 2005 amendment in the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act of Japan has significantly contributed to such gender and age gap. By tightening up the issuance of 'entertainer' visas as a prevention from 'human trafficking', it has deprived infusion of new membership and young blood. Mostly temporary contractual in the 90s, many of them have since gained a more permanent status as housewives, English teachers, company employees, etc., creating a more stable presence in the churches where they serve.

With a more stabilized religious presence and aided by entry of Filipino priests in the Archdiocese, they have since enjoyed the privilege organizing Sunday mass in Filipino language. Some

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[14]Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1987. See also Frank Tubergen, "Religious Affiliation and Attendance among Immigrants in Eight Western Countries: Individual and Contextual Effects," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, 1 (2006), 2.

[15]David De Vaus and Ian McAllister, "Gender Differences in Religion: A Test of the Structural Location Theory," *American Sociological Review* 52, 4 (1987), 472–481.

Japanese parish priests started to notice them and open the parochial doors for Filipinos. Vina, Filipino lay leader in Kiyose, recalls an encounter in 1996 with a Japanese parish priest. After the mass, as she and her Filipino friends were about to leave the church after a Nihongo Sunday mass, the priest approached them and engaged them in a conversation. Before the end of that brief encounter, the priest had encouraged them to invite more Filipinos in the church and had allowed them to hold a Filipino mass if they could find a Filipino priest to officiate it. Soon enough, a Filipino mass has become a regular fixture in that particular parish, replicated and duplicated in some parishes as well, particularly those with large Filipino population. The non-familiarity with Filipinos' language has somehow affected ability of Japanese priests to take care of Filipinos' pastoral needs and Mullins asserts that "only by inviting an outside priest can some of the smaller churches provide an occasional non-Japanese mass for the immigrants."[16]

This 'linguistic turn' in the medium of celebrating mass attracts more Filipinos to go to church, gather together, and commit to church services. Their gravitation to a church that offers Sunday mass in English or Tagalog enables them to form their own ethnoreligious community, ties them to the parish and discourages transparochial tendencies. Nowadays, most of these Filipino church-based communities have been active in parish projects. In fact, some of their leaders have been regular members of the predominantly-Japanese parish councils.

Though more stable than ever before, the paper argues that FCs' presence is still a negotiated space, wrought with the problem of dwindling demography given their aging population and their religiously-disinterested bicultural children. By virtually closing Japan's border to Filipino entertainers through 2005 revision in immigration control, Filipino church groups have since then lost potential new blood to infuse their aging membership. Despite opening its healthcare industry for Filipino nurses and

[16]Mark R. Mullins, "Between Inculturation and Globalization: The Situation of Catholicism in Contemporary Japanese Society" in *Xavier's Legacies,* ed. Kevin M. Doak, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011, 182.

caregivers in 2006 as provisioned in Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement, it has yet to contribute any significant impact to Filipino church demography as Japan remains an unattractive destination for Filipino healthcare professionals due to linguistic difficulty and stricter requirements.[17]

As for their hope that their bicultural children would continue their religious fervour and practices, this proves to be a huge disappointment. Despite having been baptized in Catholic faith as infants and regularly brought by their mothers when they were toddlers and preschoolers in Filipino masses and religious gatherings, their eventual assimilation into the socionormative trend of nonreligiosity has overshadowed the initial introduction into Catholic faith. Further conditioned by postwar Japan's constitutional prohibition on inclusion of religious thoughts in academic spaces as well as strict attendance to schools' *bukatsu* or *kurabu*[18] that usually falls on a Sunday, many of these bicultural children grew increasingly disinterested to anything religious, let alone Catholic. What this current predicament shows is the FCs' struggle for sustainability and longevity.

3. From Sworded Victim to Shielded Enclave

Any analytic attempt on current situation of FCs in Japan must begin with a brief diachronic sketch of their narratives that may possibly reveal some traces and cues of negotiation, contestation, and struggle especially since their entry into the religious space of established JCs is deemed with suspicion and interpreted as intrusion. Their past struggle may also provide clarity on current struggle as this paper would show that indeed, their present

[17]See Jeff Kingston, *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s,* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. See also Ronron Calunsod, "Hurdles Cleared but Disillusionment, Homesickness Prompt Filipino Health Workers to Exit Japan," *The Japan Times*, 22 April 2016, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp> (21.June 2016).

[18]"These are sports clubs that run for about five or six days of practice a week, after school and on weekends and sometimes before school." Alec Le May, "*Bukatsudo* and the Sport of Religious Assimilation," *The Japan Mission Journal* 68, 3 (2014), 196-203.

predicament is tied up with their past.[19] In this section, the paper makes use of Wacquant's theory of ghettoization, particularly his interesting ideations on sword/shield binary as strategies of ghettoization, which is understood as "the segregation/isolation of a group and placement of that group into a figurative or literal position of little power."[20] While his studies have focused on popularly-identified urban ghettos in Western countries and in sociological terms, this paper adopts his analogical frames of swording and shielding in the hope of articulating and analyzing the dynamics of contestation that have marked the historicized existence of FCs in the ecclesial space of Catholic parishes.

While Filipinos' presence in Japan started in the early 1900s as musicians and boxers,[21] the significant entry of Filipinos in Japan's religio-ecclesial consciousness began with the entry of women entertainers since the late 70s. Popularly labelled as *Japayukis,* they work in night bars "differentiated as snack bars (*sunakku*), pubs (*pabu*), cabarets (*kyabare*), and clubs (*kurabu*)."[22] Towards the late 90s, stories back in the Philippines of affluent and propertied *Japayukis* coupled with huge demand from Japan spurned the increasing entry of Filipino women entertainers. Soon, large percentage of Filipino migrant workers in Japan belonged to this type of laborers. Many of them soon got married

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[19]See Marcela Ines Mendez Vasquez, "Citizenship of God: Female Sex Workers and the Roman Catholic Church's Advocacy for Human Rights" in *Transnational Faiths: Latin-American Immigrants and Their Religions in Japan,* eds. Hugo Cordova Quero and Rafael Shoji, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014, 107-128. See also Mario Francisco, "Migration and New Cosmopolitanism in Asian Christianity" in *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Felix Wilfred, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 575-592.

[20]Wiktionary, "ghettoization," The Free Dictionary, <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ghettoization> (7 July 2016).

[21]See Nobue Suzuki, "Filipino Migrations to Japan: From Surrogate Americans to Feminized Workers" in *Transnational Migration in East Asia: Japan in a Comparative Focus,* ed. Shinji Yamashita, Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2008, 67-77.

[22]Lieba Faier, *Intimate Encounters: Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan,* California: University of California Press, 2009, 41.

with Japanese nationals, acquiring in the process a more stable resident visa as spouses of their Japanese husbands.

Pressed to work in Japan despite its alienating societal strictures and cultural norms, many Filipinos sought religion as a way to address such anomic existence.[23] Interestingly, some Filipinos even shared that they felt more connected to their Catholic faith when in Japan than when at home in the Philippines. Nikka adds, "When in the Philippines, I don't go to mass regularly but here in Japan, if it's a Sunday, I really go to church." This concurs well with what Williams notes that "immigrants are religious - by all counts more religious than they were before they left home."[24]

When women were mostly employed to work in night bars, most Filipino men were contractually hired in less-attractive blue-collar jobs. In general, Filipinos' socio-labor presence is situated in jobs that are characterized by 3K of *kitsui* (difficult), *kiken* (dangerous), and *kitanai* (dirty).[25] This paper argues that the marginalization that has defined their socio-spatial presence is somehow reinforced and extended in religio-ecclesial space. In fact, their relationship with JCs over the course of their history includes what Wacquant suggests as strategic characteristics of ghettoization: sworded victim and shielded enclave.[26]

In the early years of their formation, Zarate observes that "They are not trusted to use the place well and are even put under

[23]See Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion,* New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967, 23, 44.

[24]Raymond Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 29.

[25]See Steven A. Spencer, "Illegal Migrant Laborers in Japan," *International Migration Review* 26, 3 (1992), 754-786.

[26]See Loic Wacquant, "A Janus-Faced Institution of Ethnoracial Closure: A Sociological Specification of the Ghetto" in *The Ghetto: Contemporary Global Issues and Controversies*, eds. Ray Hutchison and Bruce Haynes, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2012, 1-32.

a bias that they would never be able to leave the place clean."[27] Distrusted and prejudiced, the stigma attached to their labor identities is extended even into their religious behavior. In an interview with Kasuya, a Filipino university professor and an active Catholic lay leader, she mentions about how JCs generally view FCs in the church as characterized by 3M: "*maingay, magulo, at makalat"* (noisy, disorderly, and messy). As time allotments were provided for the FCs' celebration of Filipino Sunday masses, it is observed how clearly demarcated the spatio-temporal religious observance of both ethnic groups with Japanese mass in the morning and the Filipino mass in the afternoon. When asked about this arrangement, a Filipino parish priest explains, "After mass, most of the Japanese have meetings and social gatherings. Due to limited parking space of the church, we're avoiding possible conflict if both Japanese and Filipinos are in here together."

Pushed into the margin of sacred space as 'guests' in the Catholic parishes since their early years, FC communities have since achieved an autonomy, duplicating the structural systems that define their dominant counterpart of JC communities. In Wacquant's words, these often subjugated ethnic group of FCs have organized themselves "with a distinct and duplicative set of institutions enabling the group thus cloistered to reproduce itself within its assigned perimeter."[28] Right now, most of these groups have elected officers with working committees assigned on different tasks and activities and organized various social events, cultural gatherings, sports tournaments, and dance contests. Some of these events are intended as fund-raising events where most of the proceeds would go to charitable institutions in the Philippines.

While early part of history saw the spatial seclusion and social control (sword) employed by the Japanese unto Filipinos as a form of external closure, the latter eventually strengthen their communal bond through internal bonding (shield). Expectedly,

[27]Robert Zarate, "The Filipinos in the Catholic Church in Japan," *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 26 (2008), 35.

[28]Wacquant, "A Janus-Faced Institution of Ethnoracial Closure," 15.

this acquisition of stability by FCs has somehow brought conflict with the host group. Japanese have considered their counterpart as separating from the church and forming a new ethnic church. For FCs, it has become a "protective device insofar as it relieves its members from constant contact with the dominant..."[29] But for the Japanese Catholics, what has become is a parallel church, a "parish within a parish."[30]

4. From Parallel Church to Multicultural Church: The Call of 'Full Integration'

Divested of hope from both the absence of new Filipino migrant workers and the bicultural children, Filipino communities' future is in peril. The urgency to address this predicament is evident. The solution, however, is not solely found within the confines of their 'shielded enclave' as they feel the need to extend their search into the realm of the once 'swording host'. But since the problem of dwindling demography concerns not only the Filipinos but also significantly obvious among the Japanese group, it can be surmised that it is in fact a problem that concerns the whole of the Church of Japan, particularly the Archdiocese of Tokyo.

To overturn a predicted bleak future and address the situation of foreign Catholics, the Archdiocese of Tokyo has decided to embrace an image of a multicultural church.[31] In its desire to achieve such goal, the Archdiocese laid out its call for 'full integration' that invites non-JCs to embrace a more active role as empowered members and integral part of the Church through gradual ethnic de-enclaving within the religious parochial space. Part of the entire call is for both ethnocultural communities to be more dialogical and accommodating of one another inasmuch as

[29]Wacquant, "A Janus-Faced Institution of Ethnoracial Closure," 10.

[30]See Mateo Ibarra, *Tainichi Gojyomou: Oritatami-Isu no Kyoudoutai* [Mutual Aid Network of Migrants in Japan: Collapsible Community], trans. Masayuki Kitamaru, Tokyo: Freepress, 2003; and Ichikawa Makoto, "Filipino Migrants and Religion: Comparison of Cases in Australia and Japan," *Japanese Institutional Repositories Online*, 2016, <http://www.rikkyo.repo.nii.ac.jp> (21 June 2016).

[31]See Archdiocese of Tokyo, "Local Community Relations."

both are aware of their ethnocultural nuances in religious space through reflexive assessment of their own hegemonic tendencies. Over time, the historicized negotiated existence between the two ethnic groups has created a mutual respect of spatiotemporal existence and for a time, this arrangement has attained a certain degree of peaceful co-existence. But with the call for 'full integration', JCs are left clueless and confused while FCs are cautious and anxious. Without any official definition and interpretation of its meaning, many interpret it as coalescing of distinct religiocultural nuances towards a multicultural Church that is neither strictly Japanese nor strictly Filipino. For others, particularly among Filipinos, they assume that it could mean a gradual dissolution of Filipino religiocultural practices in favor of Japanese norms. The current ecclesial atmosphere on how both Japanese and non-JCs treat this Archdiocesan call is littered with confusion and caution but at the same time aware of how such call can possibly address the situational problems of diminishing demography, aging members, and disinterested youth.

Despite its existing ambiguity, observation from parochial grounds has seen a more cooperative interaction between Japanese and Filipinos. They participate together in both parish and community-based activities like food fair, cleanliness drive, and religio-cultural processions among others. Their interactions have become more frequent. Each group has become more open and welcoming. Japanese parish priests have shown more care and concern for the non-Japanese parishioners. Filipino church leaders have been invited in many of the Japanese-led parochial councils and have represented the situation and needs of the Filipino groups. A number of Filipino priests have been assigned to parishes, catering not only to Filipinos but to Japanese parishioners as well. They too have been invited to participate in Archdiocesan clergy meetings and events. Overall, there has been significant development that fosters stronger collaboration among these multicultural groups within the Archdiocese.

5. Ambiguity of 'Full Integration' and Kymlicka's Bi-Partite Multicultural Theory

The discourse of 'full integration' is in fact backgrounded on what appears as ethnic tension that is subtly present in the long history of FCs' struggle for recognition and stability. Evidently distinct in cultural expressions, JCs and FCs often have misunderstanding in the way they ethnoculturally behave in religious spaces.[32] As observed in the field, Japanese satisfies their religious expression through meticulous observance of rituals and refined formality while Filipinos' religious satisfaction is characterized by festive atmosphere rich in sensory experiences of spontaneous movements, songs, and dances. This cultural contrast between them proves that indeed the success of full integration is hinged upon mutual and open conversations on cultural nuances and peculiarities above anything else. Despite that, both ethnic groups acknowledge that the only way to avoid extinction and manage sustainability in a highly nonreligious Japan is for 'full integration' to take effect.

What and how must this 'full integration' take shape? What is however clear based on field interviews and document review is on what it is not. It is clearly not an attempt to merely combine the two or other ethnic groups together without significantly addressing their own cultural sensibilities. It is also not in the form of dissolution of non-Japanese religio-cultural cosmologies where Filipino ethnoreligious practices are coalesced into Japanese ways because Filipinos and Japanese are culturally different; they are antithetical to one another not only in terms of religious expressions but also in their socio-political lifeworld.[33]

'Full integration' is an ideal, an advocacy and outcome that satisfies longevity and sustainability for all stakeholders, that is, the JCs and others including Filipinos, Latinos, and Europeans, among many. A possible impact too of realizing full integration is a provision and promotion of a multicultural church that offers a suitable and conducive environment for the bicultural children to address their state of confusion, condition of uncertainty, and

[32]Mullins, "Between Inculturation and Globalization," 185.

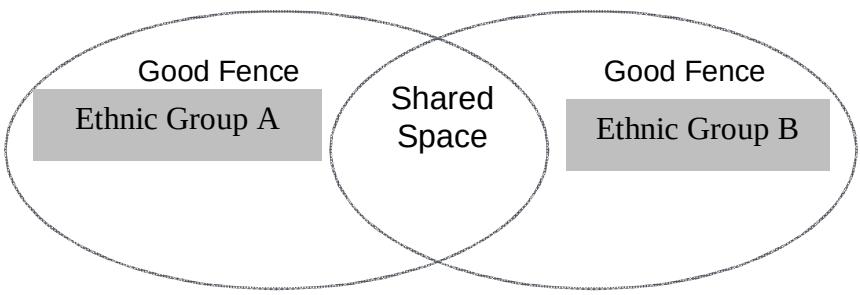
[33]Faier, *Intimate Encounters,* 6-7.

search for meaning and answers. The nature and extent of their disconnected religious existence is embedded deep in their history back *from* when they were these young totally-dependent kids, brought along by their Filipino mothers in Sunday masses and religious gatherings *to* their increasing awareness of their Filipino culture's 'foreignness' as they continually adapt to Japanese social norms, adopt sociocultural cosmologies, and in the process replace anything Filipino with their fathers' home culture. They grew up fondly familiar with sights and sounds of unique Filipino cultural expressions of faith but gradually felt alienated and confused due to their increasing affinity, familiarity, and identification with anything Japanese. Tagalog, when used in mass, has become just a noise to many of them. It brings no meaning to them. Even if freely available on a Sunday for mass attendance, many of these bicultural children would opt to stay at home or go elsewhere to relax and be with their friends. Mylene shares, "I rather not force him to go to mass even without *bukatsu* because there's so much school stuff for the entire week, ... if he wants to just rest and sleep, I'd just allow him."

The pressure and demand to be Japanese along the *nihonjinron* ethos presses upon them a socio-normative ideal that treats anything non-Japanese as secondary and even subjugated. Eventually their initial introduction to the religious faith of their mothers has soon been replaced by a nonreligious perspective. Yet not everything is lost. Their situation is believed to be more of a confusion rather than an outright denial of God, faith, and religion. If only their questions would be answered; voices would be heard; needs would be addressed, the future of the Church of Japan may well rest upon them, that is, on the condition that their situation and concerns shall be addressed. A fully-integrated Church of Japan shall include this as a primordial concern and Bishop Koda may be right in believing that the success of 'full integration' is hinged upon these young Catholics.[34]

[34]Archdiocese of Tokyo, "Local Community Relations Very Important!"

Together with addressing the concerns of the bicultural children, the problematic nature of 'full integration' starts with its very ambiguity on what it really means. The spirit of integration is not to Japanize the religious praxis and expressions of FCs because that does not align with the vision of a multicultural church of Japan that celebrates cultural diversity. The basic principle that must define 'full integration' is respectful appreciation of cultural heritage together with an active and conscious promotion of a shared space that looks to establish common ground and continuity of dialogue. Kymlicka's liberalist theory on multiculturalism speaks of a 'bi-partite' quality where ethnocultural groups preserve their own cultural heritage, i.e., the 'good fence' element, and at the same time allow them to nurture shared elements for the new reality of multiculturalism to flourish and eventually benefit the most affected ones, in this case, the bicultural children (see the Figure below).



One could see promising gestures and practices that can serve as seminal bed for the promotion of a multicultural Church following Kymlicka's theorization. On the side of cultural preservation, morning schedule of most parishes in any given Sunday is allotted to Japanese group for their mass, table fellowship, meeting, and bible study sessions among others. The afternoon slot is generally given to the Filipino groups. The 'good fence' ideation from Kymlicka is construed as reinforcement of unique cultural identity that defines one's ethnic boundaries inasmuch as it marks the borderline for its promotion and preservation, particularly by the cultural minorities. It allows ethnic groups to (re)connect with their traditional customs and cultural practices without prejudice to the promotion of shared spaces with other ethnicities.

Japanese mass is characteristically orderly and well-rehearsed. Every song is based upon pre-approved liturgical books and mass guides. Each movement is marked with polite and refined gestures like frequent and repetitive bowing of heads and clasping of hands. While Roman rites have specific rubrics for bowing, the JCs have more of that than what is provisioned. A priest's homily is well-performed when read as a prepared text than an extemporaneous preaching.

Filipino mass is usually festive, upbeat, and cordial. Mass hymns incorporate a melodious music and charismatic sound. Hymn books are not provided and people rely mostly on slides projected on large screens. They love priests who deliver homilies that make them laugh, cry, or touch their deepest emotions and feelings. Highly cordial and mobile, most of them cannot avoid brief chats with seatmates and even friends from opposite corners. They smile, stare and greet people around while the mass is ongoing. After all, a Eucharistic liturgy is supposed to be a celebration. Sans too much emphasis on solemn silence, Filipinos make up for their warm celebration and festive atmosphere.

Kymlicka places high value on one's cultural membership, particularly from the position of the disadvantaged minority group. He believes that by identifying oneself with a cultural group, it serves as "anchor for their self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging."[35] Through participation in Tagalog masses and religious activities as well as organization of socio-cultural events that promote their ethnic colors and flavors, FCs have reinforced their cultural identity as a group which is an important source of their own individual empowerment. For each of them, one's self-identity is extended and connected with one's group identity; that the respect one gets for oneself is deeply

[35]Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 89, quoting A. Margalit and J. Raz, "National Self-Determination," *Journal of Philosophy*, 87, 9 (1990), 448. See also Sarah Song, "Multiculturalism" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/multiculturalism/> (10 July 2016).

connected with the respect enjoyed by the group where one is a part of. This explains then the deep passion and fervor of most FC lay leaders in their pursuit of parochial space and the resistance to attempts to dissolve their cultural expressions and identity.

In order to better discern and understand how this ambiguity of 'full integration' must be addressed in the light of Kymlicka's theory on multiculturalism, there are nuances that have to be clarified. Kymlicka distinguishes between members of minority groups whose status is a product of unchosen circumstances and those that are voluntary. By classification, most of these FCs are voluntary migrants and that their minority status is something that they have chosen as part of their initial desire to work or marry in a country that is non-Catholic while those bicultural children who were born to a FC mother and baptized in Catholic faith when they were infants are by affiliation an involuntary (unchosen) minority. In this section, it is important to differentiate articulations of response to differentiated minority status between the voluntary immigrants and the bicultural children.

Given Kymlicka's egalitarian approach in multiculturalism, many have regarded this centrality on equality as 'luck egalitarianism'[36] that provides special accommodations to peoples' unchosen minority status. Under this, bicultural children who want to actively pursue their maternal religiosity must be entitled to accommodations at the collective cost of State and Church. Under present circumstances, the State may revise its education system by disallowing any *bukatsu* on Sundays or at least providing special exemptions for Catholic kids to allow them to join their mothers for Sunday mass. The State may also declare legal holidays on important Catholic solemnities like Christmas. The Church of Japan must strengthen its pastoral care for the young by proactively organizing ecclesial activities to attract them and invigorate their religious faith. Currently, most of the programs in churches cater to preschoolers and grade schoolers

[36]See E. Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?"*Ethics*, 109, 2 (1999), 287–337 and S. Scheffler, "What Is Egalitarianism?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 31, 1 (2003), 5–39. See also Song, "Multiculturalism."

like Sunday catechetical school and bible study. There is a need to extend this to include the young adults and adolescents.

As for the voluntary migrants where many of these FCs belong, Kymlicka exhorts the majority to provide them "fairer terms of integration into the broader society through the granting of exemptions and accommodations, not a rejection of integration or a demand for collective self-determination."[37] Among present-day arrangements that FCs enjoy in parochial space like having their own mass schedule and space for social and cultural gathering, a socially-stratified basis for monthly tithing as a result of parochial registration, could be considered given Filipinos' lower socio-economic status in Japan's labour market. Insofar as their pastoral needs are concerned, Japanese parish priests must gradually learn their language, at least English. In fact, Bishop Koda of Tokyo has identified the Japanese clergy's English handicap as one reason that affects their effective pastoral care of the foreigners.[38] It would also help if seminary formation of future Japanese priests must include in their curriculum electives on foreign languages, courses on pastoral care/plan of Catholic migrants, and lessons on cultural sensibilities and multiculturalism.

On the side of shared space, Kymlicka believes that a multicultural social space must allow distinct cultural groups to find common elements where dialogue and interaction can prosper in such a way that it addresses the bigger situation of plurality and diversity. What adds to confusion of 'full integration' is some peoples' identification of its dynamics with what is embodied in current Archdiocesan practice, so-called 'international mass' - a Sunday mass gathering that invites both the Japanese and non-JCs to celebrate Eucharistic mass together. Officiated by the archbishop (if held as an Archdiocesan event) or a parish priest (if held as a parochial event), it still makes use of Nihongo as linguistic medium for its mass with *insertions* of non-Japanese (English, Filipino, etc.) songs and prayers. For many

[37]Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship,* 113-115. See also Song, "Multiculturalism."

[38]Archdiocese of Tokyo, "Local Community Relations Very Important!"

Filipinos however, this kind of gesture, while appreciated, still feels superficial and inauthentic insofar as full integration is concerned. In an interview with Kasuya, she said that it is not enough that these unique traditional customs of minority groups are "inserted" in Nihongo-mediated masses because for her, "Being integrated is not essentially the same with being inserted."

Rejecting any essentialist view of culture by looking at culture as fluid, overlapping, and transformative, this shared space highlights this spatial area of interaction of cultures. The millennial Japan is way too different with the postwar Japan of the 60s. Japan has opened its doors to a lot of global colours and voices although still relatively culturally-homogenized compared with other secular countries of today. But the society is not a closed-door space; it has swung its door open for engagement and possible influences. The Church is not at all different although still a bit reserved compared with its secular counterpart (society). The young of the Church are characteristically aware of existing hybridity in their society and multiculturalism of their environment. While the old of the JCs as well as the old of the FCs may still look at one another as belonging to separate societal cultures, the youth of the Church and its future generation have been living in a societal world marked by cosmopolitan and cultural hybridity. What the Church of today must do in response to 'full integration' is to nurture this shared space of possible hybridity, fluid interaction, and overlapping cultural engagements. As to what this shared space must look like or must include, any initiative to create an environment for interaction is always the starting point. When holding socio-cultural events, allow non-members to join and participate. When in mass, provide churchgoers with mass guides/ pamphlets in tri-lingual version (English, Nihonggo, and Filipino) not only to accommodate all but to also provide easy access for non-speakers to familiarize and eventually memorize liturgical responses in foreign languages. Provide more avenues of interaction by organizing ecclesial and extra-ecclesial activities (pilgrimages etc.) that invites international presence and their young. In planning for 'international mass', allow a cosmopolitan approach of

integrating Japanese and non-Japanese religiocultural expressions; not merely inserting cultural items from the religious Others.

What Kymlicka's ideation offers is both an appreciation of cultural cosmologies and sensibilities of ethnic groups while at the same time an urgency to bravely look for opportunities to create conducive environment and conditions for mutual cooperation and existence toward full integration. For, in the end, this shared space and the conditions that characterize it may provide attractive ambiance that addresses the confused state of many of their bicultural children.

6. Conclusion

Admittedly it is futile to expect an exodus of new Filipino migrants or expect the aging Catholics to sustain their religious presence in the next decade or so. It is just a matter of time, however, as predicted by some scholars, that the end of the Church in Japan is at hand. But Bishop Koda is hopeful that any plan to avert this must involve the young Catholics, particularly the bicultural ones. However difficult this undertaking may be, this paper has proposed clear and critical suggestions.

First, any ambiguity in the definition of 'full integration' as strategy towards a multicultural Church of Japan must be settled from an official standpoint. Addressing the confusion and anxiety though must start from consultation and conversation with the people from the ground. Only by honestly listening to the situational predicament of all stakeholders, including the bicultural youth as well as migrant Catholics can a well-meaning formulation of 'full integration' take place.

Second, Kymlicka's 'luck egalitarianism' that places more consideration to the plight of involuntary minorities like the bicultural young Catholics necessitates not only support and accommodations within ecclesial space but from state institutions as well like government, academe, and publics. Any sincere intention to address their religiocultural hybridity does not start and end inside a 'shared space' within the ecclesial ground, the environment outside it must also be supportive of their religious renewal. It is hard to imagine any success to integrate the young

when they are forced to attend school clubs on Sundays or are deprived of any religious instruction when at school. Admittedly, only by constitutional amendment will any of these be feasible.

Third, the nature of 'shared space' within ecclesial ground requires structural and institutional support from the hierarchy and leaders of the Church. It does not stop as a mere concept, it needs embodiment in the daily life and affairs of every parish. Within this 'shared space', anything that may disinterest the young like perhaps the formality of Japanese expression and the linguistic alienation in Filipino liturgy are purged while creatively weaving a hybrid religiocultural practice of faith that maintains the warmth celebration of Filipino brand in Nihongo medium and expression.

Catholicism in Japan is wrought with centuries of negotiated existence. From the time the great missionary St. Francis Xavier introduced this faith to Japanese people until today, never has it gained any dominant position in the play of power. It never will even in the future. The only hope of the Church is to at least survive the 'slow death' it is experiencing right now with aging demography, lack of new migrants, and disinterested youth. This paper has proposed recommendations hinged upon the important role of the bicultural youth. Indeed, the Church's 'fountain of youth' is literally Her young.