

Review Article

The Role of Religion and Region in Identity Politics and In-Group Identification: How does Religion Influence Regionalism among Filipino-Americans?

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Abstract: This paper explores the role of religion and region in identity politics and in-group identification. It also investigates how religion articulates regional differences and its consequences for connections to political and civic engagement. Catholicism bears directly on regionalism because Filipino-Americans reproduce their social ties and communities from the homeland via ethnic-specific Catholic practices like the celebration of patron saints that represent their respective hometowns in the Philippines. Overall, Filipino-Americans' operate in multiple identities, which in turn impacts their civic and political connections to the public sphere. On one hand, in respect to civic engagement, there is an acceptance of regional pluralism, or respect for each other's patron saints. On the other hand, regionalism hinders the ability of Filipino-Americans to collectively perceive themselves as "Filipino-American," unify, and politically mobilize for specific social causes. This paper attempts to broaden understandings of citizenship-making as well as "post-national" citizenship.

Keywords: Regionalism, Filipino-American, identity, Catholicism, citizenship

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I explore the role of religion and region in identity politics and in-group identification. I also investigate how religion articulates regional differences and its consequences for connections to political and civic engagement. I define regionalism as the process by which immigrants who have immigrated to the United States from their respective provinces and regions reproduce social networks from the homeland. Catholicism plays a role in identity formation because I argue that the very structure and nature of Filipino Catholicism reinforce regionalism in a unique way that does not necessarily occur in other Christian denominations or other religions: Catholicism promotes ethnic insularity through the reproduction and reinforcement of regional ties and celebration of localized patron saint holidays. Therefore, ethnic identity in the Filipino community takes on a "religious tone," and subsequently, Filipino-Americans politically and civically orient themselves based on their geographic regional and hometown ties.

Focusing on Filipino-Americans' stories and experiences and utilizing a humanistically-oriented sociological approach, I immersed myself in "lived religion"¹ (McRoberts, 2004), engaged in participant observation (e.g., attended numerous community events), and conducted 60 in-depth interviews of Filipino-American adults in the Virginia Beach/Hampton Roads area—one of the most highly populated Filipino areas on the East coast. "Hampton Roads" refers to several small cities surrounding Virginia Beach that share a common identity and history. I attended events at St. Gregory Catholic Church, the largest Filipino Catholic parish in the city, and the Filipino-

¹ This aesthetics-oriented approach seeks to expand our understanding of religious experience through immersing in lived religiosity, where the ethnographer engages in religious experiences that are precognitive but not necessarily spiritual. In other words, the ethnographer seriously considers the diverse religious experiences of individuals with an open mind, even though the ethnographer is not directly concerned with "transcendent realms to which those religious expressions ultimately refer" (McRoberts, 2004, 190 & 199).

American Community Action Group (Fil-Am CAG), the only local Filipino political organization. I also interviewed key leaders, including former Philippine president Fidel Ramos.

I should note, however, that Filipino-Americans are not the only ethnic group engaging in regionalism. Mexican Catholics, for instance, display distinct regional characteristics. Moreover, different Hindu regions of India worship a vast array of deities or manifestations of deities. Such examples illustrate that religion and regionalism share a relationship to one another, which will be discussed in the literature review below.

Intra-ethnic dimensions of religiosity may sometimes actually complicate rather than facilitate understandings of and entry to the public sphere and political empowerment. Therefore, accounting for religion in our analysis of regionalism will provide a more comprehensive understanding of immigrants and their relationship to the public spheres of both the U.S. and the home country.

Since "solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society," (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967, p. 44), exploring regionalism will advance a more nuanced understanding of identity politics, in-group identification, and subsequently immigrants' connections (or lack thereof) to the public sphere. Exploring Filipino-Americans in Virginia Beach/Hampton Roads is largely representative of a broader phenomenon, that is, the role of religion in identity politics and in-group identification. Ultimately, this study will allow scholars to clarify how newer immigrants constitute a sense of empowered citizenship via the social institutions they navigate.

Regionalism also fosters solidarity through various cultural practices, such as preserving language. Filipinos within regional associations are able to speak their respective dialects with their native town-mates. They are also able to practice their specific cultural heritage through region-specific dances and celebrations. Furthermore, through such local, shared practices they may form friendships that enable a connection all the way to the Philippines.

Although Filipino-Americans are able to support each other's regional patron saints from disparate hometowns, this solidarity and support does not necessarily connect or translate to political engagement in the U.S. Filipinos tend to distrust Filipinos from outside their region, and this distrust reinforces ethnic insularity while also fostering inter-ethnic social fragmentation. This contentious dynamic makes it difficult for Filipinos to mobilize under a pan-ethnic "Filipino-American" identity as other immigrant groups do (e.g., Asian Indian-Americans) toward American political ends. Subsequently, regionalism appears to weaken Filipinos' ties to the American political public sphere.

Moreover, "bias" and a lack of trust amongst leaders ensue because of these regional differences. Strong regional ties weaken solidarity and diminish Filipino representation within the public sphere because regional leaders compete amongst themselves, vying for power. Since Filipinos are still an ethnic minority within the area, it is especially important that they foster a sense of solidarity in order to achieve political representation and to elevate their entry and visibility in the public sphere. These intra-communal power struggles thus heighten ethnic insularity rather than promoting an outward-looking attitude that would facilitate organization around relevant Filipino-American issues as opposed to regionalistic, localized identity issues.

Therein a paradox of empowered citizenship persists within this immigrant community—while regionalism tends to preserve Filipino culture and foster solidarity among Filipinos who share the same regional origin, at the same time it also leads to social fragmentation and hinders the formation of a pan-Filipino-American identity. Consequently, Filipino-Americans struggle to craft a fully cohesive identity that would enhance the community's political mobilization, organization, and connections to the public sphere.

Compellingly, as will be discussed later in the article, even in the absence of a more cohesive community identity, some Filipino-Americans empower themselves politically and attempt to transcend regional differences in order to civically engage in the U.S. and the homeland. I should note that while regionalism is a heated issue for many Filipino-Americans, these concerns impact first and second generation Filipino-Americans in different ways. First-generation Filipino-Americans most strongly affiliate with their regional ties, while second-generation Filipino-Americans are far less likely to do so (a social phenomenon that will be discussed further below).

Since "local elections constitute an important opportunity to foretell the future of American state and national politics" (Kaufmann & Rodriguez, 2011), and since racial group interests have been seriously understudied (Kaufmann & Rodriguez, 2011), I also argue that we need to elucidate the conditions that foster or hinder civic and political participation among racially-defined groups. Contrary to previous studies, I argue that within ethnic groups like the Filipino-Americans, different regional origins, though even with a shared national origin, may hinder a

sense of shared ethnic identity and, subsequently, an effective ethnic political mobilization via community connection to the public sphere.

In order to understand the meaning of regionalism in the lives of Filipino-Americans, we need to start with the topic of regionalism in the Philippine homeland. The geographic composition of the Philippines fosters regional consciousness (Phelan, 1959), which weakens a sense of national identity. Historians Agoncillo and Guerrero state that the Filipino “does not think in terms of national boundaries but in regional oneness...so strong is this regionalistic feeling that the Filipino of one region looks down upon his countrymen of another region” (1970, pp.12-13). These regional divisions make it more difficult to develop a “comprehensive group consciousness” (Espiritu, 1996). Comprised of over 7,107 islands and geographically diverse, ranging from mountains and islets to extreme valleys, the Philippines has at least 200 dialects and 8 major linguistic groups (Pido, 1986). These islands are primarily divided into three regions: 1) Luzon, the largest and most northern island; 2) the Visayan islands, located south of Luzon; and 3) the island of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, the southernmost and most highly-populated Muslim part of the Philippines. Within these main groups, there are seventeen formal legal regions. Spanish colonial rule (from 1565 to 1898) also reinforced regionalism. Utilizing a ‘divide and conquer’ tactic, Spaniards often mobilized groups of Filipinos from one region in order to dismantle uprisings and revolts in another (Espiritu, 1996).

1.1. Filipino Immigration to the United States

Geographic regionalism in the Hampton Roads Filipino community is expressed through membership in regional associations. There is no definitive count of the number of regional associations in the area, but the State of the Region report estimates that as many as one hundred different regional associations are active (State of the Region, 2007). These community associations serve a variety of functions, such as preservation of specific ethnic heritages, intergenerational transmission of culture, and socialization with ethnic co-peers.

Filipino immigration to the U.S. has taken place largely in three main overlapping immigrant waves. The first wave of Filipino immigration to the United States occurred between 1889-1945 and young Filipino men comprised this cohort who hoped, in immigrating to the United States, for better job prospects and more education. Filipinos who migrated pre-1965 often came from working class backgrounds and worked in fish canneries or as farm hands in the West Coast and Hawaii (Takaki, 1998). In the second wave of immigration, the U.S. Navy largely recruited Filipinos to serve from 1901 to 1976. These Filipinos were from low socioeconomic status and achieved middle class status in the U.S. through their naval service. Filipinos who migrated via the U.S. military usually settled on the coasts as naval bases were (and continue to be) largely concentrated in San Diego, California, and Norfolk, Virginia—sites of two of the largest naval bases in the world. The third wave attracted educated and skilled Filipino immigrants (e.g., nurses) due to the United States’ passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (INA). This legislation eliminated national origin quotas and attempted to achieve family reunification among immigrant families and fill gaps in occupational shortages in the U.S. This act dramatically increased the overall number of immigrants from Asia to the U.S., including Filipinos.

Most studies on Filipino-Americans are generalized from the experiences of West Coast Filipino-Americans who have a very different migration history and pattern than their East Coast countrymen, who overwhelmingly originate from the post-1965 wave of immigration. For instance, West Coast Filipino immigrants did not always share the U.S. military background that is such a prominent aspect of the immigrant experience of their later East Coast counterparts. Subsequently, my research is among the first projects to explore the understudied East Coast Filipino-American population.

1.2. The Filipino-American Community of Hampton Roads

Overall, Filipino-Americans constitute the second largest Asian-American group (19.7% or 3,416,840) after Chinese-Americans (Elizabeth M. Hoeffel et al., 2012, p. 15). In respect to geography, about two-thirds of Filipinos reside in the West, compared with 16% in the South, 8% in the Midwest, and 10% in the Northeast (Elizabeth M. Hoeffel et al., 2012, 18). A total of 79,706 Asians live in Hampton Roads and over half of them are Filipino-American (39,922) with the most residing in Virginia Beach (22,092) (State of the Region Report, 2013). Hampton Roads is a hub for the largest naval base in the world, namely the Naval Station Norfolk in Norfolk, Virginia. Subsequently, all interviewees were either active in the U.S. Navy or related to a family member who served in the U.S. Navy.

Since 1903, the U.S. Navy recruited Filipinos as mess attendants and stewards, and this recruitment process expanded after the Philippines’ political independence in 1946. Post-

Philippine independence and after World War II, thousands of Filipinos enlisted as military servicemen for the U.S. In the early Cold War era, the U.S. Navy continued to recruit and admit up to 2,000 Filipinos annually, though tens of thousands applied (State of the Region, 2007).

For much of the twentieth century, a majority of post-1965 Filipino-American immigrants who arrived at the Hampton Roads area came via U.S. military recruitment or by marriage to a military serviceman. Filipino women largely immigrated to Hampton Roads as wives of Filipino and American servicemen. From 1966 to 1985, however, the U.S. also specifically recruited Filipino nurses trained in the Philippines and at least 25,000 arrived this way. For Filipino enlistees, the U.S. Navy offered a stable income and steady path toward U.S. citizenship for themselves and their families. The U.S. Navy, therefore, is primarily responsible for this distinctive pattern of immigration and subsequently large demographic presence of Filipino-Americans in Hampton Roads (State of the Region, 2007).

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, nearly 39,922 (documented) Filipinos reside in Hampton Roads (State of the Region, 2013). Community leaders report that between 15,000-25,000 people were not counted in the U.S. Census Bureau, so it is highly likely there are even more Filipinos than officially documented (State of the Region, 2007). Almost one-fourth of Hampton Roads' foreign population comes from the Philippines, far more than any other national group in this area. Filipino-Americans comprise more than the next five largest national groups combined.² Considered a relatively 'young' immigrant group, Filipino-Americans have also attained citizenship most recently: In 2005, for example, more than 20% of naturalized citizens and legal permanent U.S. citizens came from the Philippines (State of the Region, 2007).

Filipino-Americans in the Hampton Roads region are largely socio-economically stable. The Filipino American Economic Characteristics in Hampton Roads study indicates that Filipinos in this region are more likely to have graduated from high school and onward: 32% of Filipino-Americans attained a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 24% for the rest of the regional population. Economically, as of 2000, Filipinos' median household income was 21% higher (\$51,509) than the overall region's average (\$42,533) (State of the Region, 2007).

Filipino-Americans in the Hampton Roads region are politically distinctive. According to Filipino-American scholar and regional expert Dr. Araceli Suzara, Filipinos in this region are overwhelmingly politically conservative due to the strong U.S. Navy influence (State of the Region, 2007). This unique pattern is compelling in light of the fact that nationally, Filipino-American voters have tended to politically align with the Democratic Party: 49% of Filipino-Americans are Democrats or Independents who lean to the Democrats while only 28% are Republicans or Independents who lean to the Republican Party ("The Rise of Asian Americans," Asian-American Survey, 2013, 17). It is also important to note that Filipino U.S. Navy veterans are among the most politically active members in the Filipino-American community. Given that Filipino-Americans from the Hampton Roads community tend to identify as Republican and conservative, and that Filipino U.S. Navy veterans tend to be the most highly politically active in this community, investigating this group will shed light on how their contexts of reception, or their relationship with the U.S. Navy, influence their political interests and agenda.

2. Literature Review

Broadly speaking, scholarly studies on citizenship have increasingly explored "post-national citizenship," or denationalized citizenship (Sassen, 2002, p. 277). As Saskia Sassen argues, "it is becoming evident today that far from being unitary, the institution of citizenship has multiple dimensions, some of which might be inextricably linked to the nation state (2002, p. 277). Rooted fundamentally within this area of research is the "analytic terrain which we need to place the question of rights, authority and obligations of the state and citizen (Sassen, 2002, p. 288). Connected to Sassen's notion of rights, scholars have begun exploring civic and political stratification, or "political consequences of immigrant civic participation, especially as they relate to questions of inequality" (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad, 2011, p. 2). Drawing from the Immigrant Civic Engagement Project, Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad have found that Mexicans and Koreans possess low levels of civic engagement (2011). They argue Mexicans have low levels of civic engagement because of correspondingly low rates of citizenship and socioeconomic status (2011). They also argue that Koreans have low levels of citizenship because community organizations are not supported by a large voting population (2011). Building upon their research, Jose Cassanova, has noted, "the best of postcolonial analysis has shown how every master reform narrative and every genealogical account of Western secular modernity needs to take into account the colonial and intercivilizational encounters" (2011, p. 62). Indeed, my research intends to unravel and consider new understandings of citizenship that have historically been excluded

² United Kingdom, Germany, Korea, Vietnam, and Canada.

from dominant narratives and master categories, thus enabling scholars to develop “conceptual architectures” (Sassen, 2008).

Moreover, along this intellectual vein, scholars frequently posit that immigrants express multiple identities (e.g., regional, religious, national, professional, etc.) that emerge in different contexts. Similarly, studies on diaspora explore the intersection between citizenship vis-à-vis rights, authority, and obligations of the state; specifically, the process of diasporization and the ongoing relationship with the homeland (Aguilar, 2015). I would suggest that Filipinos as a people parallel the practice of Scots, Jews, and other ethnic-national groups in terms of retaining ties to the homeland amidst worldwide dispersion.

Over the course of the past twenty years, research has flourished on the linked topics of religion, immigration, and the public sphere. Craig Calhoun has specifically noted that religion is a part of the very genealogy of reason itself and helps inform one's epistemological worldview. Therefore, Calhoun questions post-Enlightenment assumptions that religion can even be separated from one's reasoning, or how individuals come to make decisions within the public sphere (2011; Habermas, 2006). In other words, a wide array of contemporary scholars, in a similar intellectual vein, has explored how religion should be considered within the public sphere (Habermas, 2005; Cassanova, 2011; Calhoun, 2011; Eisenstadt, 2002): First, religious traditions deeply articulate and inform morality, especially in vulnerable aspects of communal life (Habermas, 2006). Second, religion strongly contributes to the creation of meaning and identity. Specifically, religious communities help socially integrate immigrants (Habermas, 2006). Third, immigration adds complexity to pluralism, because immigrants bring their different religions along with their ways of life (Habermas, 2006).

Within this field of study, scholars investigate transnationalism (Yang, 2002), immigrant women's roles in shaping religion (Menjivar, 2003), and pan-Asian solidarity in respect to religion (Brettell, 2005). Most recently, scholars have also explored Arab-American immigration and the role Islam has played post-9/11 as well as its impact upon immigrants entering the political and civic public sphere (Bakalian & Bozorghmehr, 2009). In respect to collective religious identities and citizenship, research has explored transnational Indian organizations in the United States and India (Agarwala, 2015). This research shows that both Indian-American Hindu and Muslim religious organizations send financial and social remittances in India, in order to empower their respective constituencies in India (Agarwala, 2015), not unlike transnational connections I have elucidated in the Hampton Roads Filipino community. Overall, this transnational connection to the homeland enables immigrants to engage in homeland affairs, act as a counterpoint to extremist voices (in their home country), and export their more moderate political views that have perhaps been forged in the context of their American congregations (Cassanova, 1994). Scholars have even explored, to a smaller extent, the role of religion in Filipino-American lives (Gonzalez, 2009; Cherry, 2014). Sociologist Stephen Cherry, for instance, has investigated Catholicism in Filipino-American community life in Houston, with a special interest in “how Filipinos' religious life impacts their civic life in the larger context of the puzzle of American Catholic civic life” (2014, p. 14).

Research on regional identity broadly, has been present in the literature on U.S. immigration for some time. Burgeoning scholarship explores how the involvement of immigrants in hometown associations in the U.S. influences immigrants' civic and political participation here. For instance, researchers investigated how collective identities impact political interest and efficacy among Turkish Muslim migrants in Germany and found that “both an ethno-cultural identification with the in-group as well as a national identification with the country of residence positively relate to cognitive politicization with respect to minority groups” (Reichert, 2015).

Patron saint holidays and celebrations are not unique to Filipinos. Italians and Mexicans, for instance, have deeply imbedded histories of and relationships with respective Catholic patron saints. In fact, all countries with a Catholic history share this phenomenon. Filipinos and other Catholic ethnic/immigrant groups continue to celebrate and honor their patron saints after arriving in the U.S. In Atlanta, Georgia, for instance, Mexicans, Salvadorians, Bolivians, Hondurans, and various other Latino Americans have erected images to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Juan de Los Lagos from Mexico, Our Lady of Peace from El Salvador, Our Lady of Suyapa from Honduras, Our Lady of Copabana from Bolivia, and so on (Orsi, 2003). In the Bronx, Catholic Haitians celebrate the annual fiesta of the Madonna of 115th Street, a holiday that was previously celebrated by Italians in the early part of the twentieth-century (Orsi, 1992). Moreover, Indian Americans have many regional associations that perpetuate local regional languages (Brettell, 2005). Indian Americans (as is also the case for Filipinos) participate in many different associations, some of which allow them to express regional identity and others of which allow them to express a shared religious identity (e.g., Hindu, Muslim, Christian), or a shared Indian cultural identity (Brettell, 2005).

Other research has explored civic and political engagement in respect to the process of citizen-making among America's "newer immigrants" (Brettell & Reed-Danahay, 2011). Specifically, drawing from ethnographic fieldwork and interviews, Brettell and Reed-Danahay explored Asian Indian and Vietnamese immigrant organizations in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area (2011). They have found that immigrants of Vietnamese and Indian origin engage in a process of citizen-making, or create meanings of civic mindedness and politics via their organizational participation (2011). Alongside Sassen's idea that there are multiple dimensions of citizenship, Brettell and Reed-Danahay have found that Vietnamese and Asian Indians in the DFW area "practice forms of civic engagement and learn to 'become' American while simultaneously reinforcing a strong sense of their own ethnic identities" (2011). Other political scientists have argued that ethnic voters are more engaged and interested in politics when ethnic candidates run for election (Barreto, 2012; Dahl, 2005; Parenti, 1967; Tate 1998, 2004).

Political scientists have explored the role of shared ethnicity in Latino political participation with respect to Latino voting behavior (Barreto, 2012, p. 3). Specifically, Barreto argues that Latinos of different national origins may share ethnic identity due to overlapping ethnic and cultural bonds (2012, 26). Other political scientists have argued that ethnic voters are more engaged and interested in politics when ethnic candidates run for election (Barreto, 2012; Dahl, 2005; Parenti, 1967; Tate 1998 and 2004). Moreover, ethnic candidates tend to mobilize voters by directing more resources to ethnic communities (Guerra, 1992; Leighly, 2001). For instance, drawing on comparative politics, ethnic candidates have employed explicitly ethnic appeals to successfully persuade minorities to vote as a bloc in the Netherlands (Rath and Saggart, 1992), Romania (Shafir, 2000), Canada (Landa, Copeland, and Grofman, 1995), and Australia (Jupp, 1997). Most recently, some attention has been focused on Filipino-American regional associations. The aforementioned Cherry has explored the role of the Catholic Church in Filipino-American community politics. He notes that the Catholic Church often indirectly or directly mediates Filipino-American community relations and conflicts (2014, p. 82). While Cherry's rich work on Filipino-American community life in Houston illustrates these rich dynamics, I argue that religion's role in shaping identity politics and in-group identification has been largely overlooked in the scholarly research on immigration and politics. Furthermore, religion's complicated role in influencing regionalism and its relationship to "post-national citizenship" and citizenship-making processes is also an understudied phenomena in the research literature. Finally, in contrast to Cherry's work, I argue that the source of these dynamics may be (unwittingly) due to the Catholic Church's unintentional reinforcement of regional bonds.

3. Catholicism and Filipino-American Regionalism

While I briefly defined Filipino regionalism above, Father Dimaano, a local Filipino-American parish priest in Hampton Roads, discusses it in greater detail. I inquired as to whether the legacy of Spanish colonialism influences Filipino-Americans in the U.S., especially in regards to Catholicism. He replied:

Well, greatly so, especially those who directly came from the Philippines and lived here in the United States because all of us are products of our own history... The Philippines was under the Spaniards 333 years. They came to the Philippines to spread Christianity and at the same time, historically, I think they came to look for [natural] [re]sources for their whole country. Spain liked natural resources you know and we are rich in natural resources, so I think we were colonized by the Spaniards using the cross and the sword. That's in our history books in the Philippines. Again, fiestas originally came from Spain. It is a Spanish activity and it's our way of celebrating life [and the] support that we get and the support that we give to each other, and it's our way of coping with difficulties and hardships.

Father Dimaano's comments illustrate how Filipino-Americans bring their colonial history to the U.S. and how this history plays out in the religious context. Specifically, Dimaano notes that fiestas stem from the colonizing power of Spain's Catholicism, and that it is a "Spanish activity and [yet] it's our way of celebrating life." He proceeds to explain that those fiestas, originally imported Catholic celebrations, are now an adopted way that Filipinos receive "support that we give to each other and it's our way of coping with difficulties and hardships." This co-opted practice perhaps explains how the assimilating intentions of the colonizer's faith is now deployed to foster a pan-Filipino identity in the U.S. Mr. Dakila, a retired Navy veteran who is highly active at St. Gregory Catholic Church, describes his sense of regionalism:

It is really something to think about because of the regional differences; for instance, I came from the Visayan region. I can integrate with the northern parts the Ilocanos, the Kampangpangan, or the Bicol, or the Visayans. Some of the Visayans integrate easily into Mindanao. So with that as a statement like that, it will more or less succeed in our dealing with these regional differences, which is the cause of the problem when it comes to socialization.

Mr. Dakila highlights a positive function of regionalism when he notes that he can easily “integrate with the northern parts of the Ilocanos.” But he notes that regional differences are also “the cause of the problem when it comes to socialization,” in this case, socialization into U.S. citizenship as a sense of Filipino-American identity and belonging. Filipinos consistently expressed this concern throughout my interviews and fieldwork.

Father Dimaano’s discussion of fiestas elucidates the colonial legacy of Spain and its long-lasting Catholic influence on the Philippines. Filipinos cope with and commemorate the hardships of life through fiestas. Thus, regionalism, as influenced by Catholicism, may actually *help with the adaptation process* in the U.S. and may subsequently be important for civic engagement. Mr. Gumabay, highly active at St. Gregory and a Filipino choir member, elaborates on the various, local and national fiestas within the community:

Santo Niño Cebu is more cultural the way they do. It’s more cultural awareness, if there [is] such a thing. I want[ed] [it] to be the same thing, not cofounder, but we brought it in... Now the Santo Niño Cebu, the celebration, is the third Sunday of January every year, and also incorporate in Cebu and it [is] celebrated at the same time in Cebu, it is synchronized with them. That’s more like the offerings of all the, you know, the good harvest, maybe something like that. Yearly, we just do the dress, his outfit. We change his clothes every year and the decoration during his fiesta.

Our Lady of Namagcapan is the month of October, where this lady is from La Union in the Philippines and this image. This town [is] the reason why they call it Namagcapan, because the name of the place is feed people. Clarify this, confusing to reader There was a plague and a place did not receive the plague because they were feeding the poor people. They were blessed.

San Lorenzo Celebration is in September. San Lorenzo was a deacon in the Philippines way back in 1800s and he was marked here in Japan. Clarify. So they celebrate in San Lorenzo his being a saint. Then the San Lorenzo that is being held here in Philippine Cultural Center, it’s in October during his canonization in Rome.

Flores Di Mayo means flowers so it’s a celebration of spring, and also the celebration of Virgin Mary. That is one of her feast month feast day. Clarify. So each parish has their own way of celebrating the feast of Blessed mother, incorporating with flowers. But then the Flores Di Mayo in Samahan Tagalog, that is more incorporate with the Filipinos where they have the segales. It’s just like when they had the tradition in the Philippines where they have the mighty Alena and the Constantino...

Santo Niño Cebu, Our Lady of Namagcapan, San Lorenzo Celebration, and Flores de Mayo are but a few of the fiestas that Filipino-Americans celebrate in Hampton Roads. Our Lady of Namagcapan fiesta celebrates not only resilience through the hardships of life, but the accompanying miracles that Filipinos experienced to endure these hardships, such as surviving plagues, etc. These fiestas tend to designate special patron saints that do God’s will, receive the Lord’s favor for charitable and kind acts, and so forth. While some fiestas are more nationalistic in nature, like the Flores de Mayo or the Flowers of May, it appears that there are also distinctively region-specific ways of celebrating this holiday. Moreover, certain narrowly defined ethnicities (e.g., from one specific region or town) tend to especially value certain patron saint holidays more than others. These holidays evolve to take on a special significance, as Gumabay notes when he shares that “each parish has their own way of celebrating the feast of Blessed mother incorporating with flowers.” It is clear that fiestas and novenas are a highly vibrant facet of their lives. Filipino-Americans clearly transnationally connect to the homeland as is evident by the discussion of Saint Cebu above. It is interesting to note that regionalism, in this case, need not be divisive, though it is a consistent issue that emerges across interviews. For instance, in the above quote, Mr. Gumabay recognizes and respects the wide diversity of regional holidays celebrated in the Hampton Roads community.

Ms. Halina, who is highly active at St. Gregory Catholic Church, adds more detail about fiestas and novenas:

Simbang Gabi is every year. Simbang Gabi with different churches. We do it with other churches; in some, a lot, we we're sponsoring the last day. Nine days' novena. Nine different churches and we sponsor the last day. We're working together, that's the Filipino community in turn, churches... Let's say the first night is the Holy Spirit. Then we go to Holy Spirit Catholic Church. We don't do a lot of fiesta because we're under the umbrella of St. Gregory's Catholic Church. [It is also] because the members of the ministry are members of different provinces. The members are from different provinces. Servers, fiestas...,all [of] them belonging to the same province and the celebrating this patron saint of the province. They belong to different from their hometown, especially the Cavite. (insert footnote of what Cavite is) The Cavite, they have a celebration tomorrow at St. Gregory, 12 noon, Thursday...

Though Halina states that Filipino-Americans do not "do a lot of fiestas because we are under the umbrella of St. Gregory's Catholic Church," she proceeds to then list several fiestas and novenas at this church and at local and surrounding parishes. It is also compelling to note that while Filipino-Americans host regional-specific religious holidays, such as the fiestas and novenas, to some extent there appears to be collaboration among Filipinos across regional groups and parishes to celebrate national festivals, as in the case of Simbang Gabi, as expressed by Halina: "We're working together, that's the Filipino community in turn, churches." The Filipino community works together across nine parishes to host a nine-day Christmas event. Thus, regionalism allows Filipino-Americans to access their localized religion but yet does not necessarily prove a hindrance toward wider, transregional identification.

The Catholic Church is ambivalent regarding the extent to which Filipino-Americans reappropriate their fiestas and novenas into religious practices because the Church would like to simultaneously serve other demographic groups while not appearing to favor one culturally-specific celebrations of one immigrant group over another. Moreover, the Catholic Church in Hampton Roads would like its Filipino parishioners to smoothly integrate into their specific neighborhood parishes at-large despite the fact that these parishes likely lack the region-specific feast celebration practices of the homeland. Specifically, by the parish expressing reservations and not allowing Filipino-Americans to utilize its official parish spaces to celebrate novenas and fiestas, it acts to limit these localized cultural-religious expressions, as hinted by Halina and as Ms. Dakila directly states. I asked Ms. Dakila whether fiestas are Filipino-specific, per se, and she explains that they stem from the

Catholic Church. But in the Philippines, we add all the cultural trimmings. It's not like the American parishes because the Philippines, being under the Spaniards for 300 years or so, our culture is very much the Catholic Church in Spain. So when we have these fiestas, before we had San Lorenzo, we had to use the different parishes and sometimes it's kind of difficult because we had American audience, not only the Filipinos. So it's a little bit where we kind of feel a little awkward doing what the cultural celebration calls for, so when we had San Lorenzo we got the sort of freedom to celebrate the culture.

Filipino-Americans like Ms. Dakila feel "a little awkward" to fully culturally express their religious novenas and fiestas because they realize that American Catholic parishes do not celebrate fiestas and novenas in the same way. The issue of space, or where to practice, is brought up here. Logistically, "different parishes" are utilized to host these celebrations, which suggests that fiestas and novenas are not necessarily seen as part of the organizational structure of the Richmond diocese, per se.

The Richmond diocese originally endorsed the creation of the San Lorenzo Spiritual Center, a specific space where Filipino Catholics could celebrate their respective fiestas and novenas, but this building has since become a source of contention between the Richmond diocese and Filipino-American practitioners. San Lorenzo Spiritual Center is under the leadership of St. Luke's Catholic Church. Father Salvador Anonuevo, the Catholic priest at St. Luke's Catholic Church, is the lead administrator of San Lorenzo. There is also a Leadership Board that helps supervise the activities at San Lorenzo. Pam Harris of the Cultural Diversity Initiative team (Office for Black Catholics/Asian Ministry), an umbrella organization under the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, explains that, in respect to San Lorenzo, it is "not a parish" and is intended to serve as a "center for different [Filipino] cultural festivities and any type of cultural celebration, gathering, or reception." According to the Cultural Diversity Initiative, San Lorenzo was "established to meet the spiritual needs of people from the different islands of the Philippines" (Richmond Diocese). Harris states that Filipino-Americans from different parishes celebrate cultural-specific religious festivities at San Lorenzo. Both the administrator (Father Anonuevo) and Leadership Board oversee "anything that goes on in San Lorenzo," says Harris.

4. How Regionalism Contributes to Social Fragmentation

Regionalism carried over from the Philippines into the U.S. contributes to social fragmentation. As I have discussed, Filipinos tend to self-identify based on the region from which they migrated from in the Philippines: As Mr. Carunungan, an eye doctor, stated, regionalism can be summarized as “It’s almost like you’re a New Englander, and a New Yorker, and a Southerner. Same thing.” Mr. Huyla is a retired Navy veteran and highly active in Fil-AM CAG, which, as noted before, is the only local Filipino political organization in the Virginia Beach/Hampton Roads area. He argues that, for this community, “regionalism matters.” Similarly, Ms. Dakila, another interviewee who is highly involved at St. Gregory Catholic Church and to a lesser extent politically engaged, shared, in respect to regionalism and its impact on the public sphere:

The regional ties, and in the Philippines is really very strong, that I think is one of the problems that we have in terms of political engagement, because we give so much weight to our individuals from our own region, for example, and we tend to, kind of, we are biased most of the time...

Catholicism, and particularly the regionally-based patron-saint holidays, reinforces regional ties among Filipinos. Father Dimaano clarifies this point:

I see it for myself that sometimes people miss the whole point of celebrating the fiesta. They get so engrossed in this organization. Did it, you know, that organization did not do it, so eventually they did it, not the way they want to do it, the way we want to all do it, and so on and so forth. So look at the result is, one group is celebrating this fiesta and another group is celebrating the same fiesta...Yeah, like for example the fiesta of Santo Nino. In others, one group of Filipino Americans, Filipino immigrants celebrating the fiesta here and the other groups said no, we’ll celebrate our own fiesta of the Santo Nino.

In the above quote, Father Dimaano illustrates how regionalism can contribute to social fragmentation. Father Dimaano is stating that celebrations like the Santo Nino should, in theory, be pan-Filipino, trans-local celebrations. Instead, divisive regionalism is exacerbated by some of the leaders in the Filipino community who insist upon “celebrat[ing] our own fiesta of the Santo Nino.” This separatist behavior distresses Father Dimaano because “people miss the whole point of celebrating the fiesta” since instead of celebrating as a unified, Filipino-American community, they are engrossed in regional differences while celebrating “our own fiesta,” as in the case of Santo Nino.

Kalaw, president of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations region II (NaFFAA³) and former president of Filipino-American CAG, argues that religion directly impedes political engagement by Filipino-American Catholics. Catholicism siphons away from political engagement because Filipinos have to coordinate, organize, and plan ethnic-Catholic events like fiestas and patron saint holidays. Kalaw notes that, due to the cultural-religious fragmentary nature of regionalism, patron saint holidays are as diverse as the various regions in the Philippines, and that there are differences of “religious culture:” namely, some regions “don’t agree” with patron saint holidays, which in turn reinforces social fragmentation. Kalaw reinforces this point by arguing that regional associations like Bataan are “purely just pandawan sa ilaw, and tinikling. Oh we will have the Bataan fiesta on June 4th...it is mostly cultural activities...I’m trying to kind of steer them to political activities.” When asked whether his hometown mates or regional co-ethnic peers are interested in political activities, she shares, “They are not. They said, ‘We are not engaged in politics. We are not engaging in political campaign.’” Subsequently, Filipinos who invest their time and energy in their regional associations and celebrate Catholic patron-saint holidays leave little else for political involvement:

I think religious activities occupy 95% of your time and then 5% is just for your family. And you don’t have much time now to spend for politics and that’s what it is. Nothing left for you to do civic and political activities because the Catholic activities are almost 95% of your life. Their time is being consumed too much by religious activity and not much about politics, which to me is important because it will kind of bring up or uplift your social standing.

As noted above, Filipinos not only invest their time but they also invest their money in fiestas. Kalaw notes that this practice originates from the homeland. Even when Filipinos do not necessarily possess the means to organize and celebrate fiestas, Filipinos take loans out in order to fund them and subsequently become in debt to that end. While none of my interviewees

³ Please see appendix for NaFFAA files. Region II refers to: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

explicitly reported getting into debt into the U.S. or taking out loans to fund fiestas, it is clear that Filipinos expend a tremendous amount of time and energy in order to celebrate them. This religio-ethnic significance that Filipinos have placed on fiestas indicates not only a strong desire to connect to the homeland, but also the transnational connections that Filipinos feel they must preserve (at whatever cost) with their homeland. Kalaw's observation highlights yet again the sense that regionalism siphons away energy from gaining entry into the American public sphere, since regional-ethnic Catholic practices are focused on the homeland rather than the host-nation state, *per se*.

While a hyphenated identity, like 'Filipino-American,' is perhaps assigned to racialized immigrants upon their arrival in the U.S., Filipino-Americans tend to self-identify as being from their respective region: they are from Ilocos, or from Tarlac, or from Mindanao. Mr. Dimasuy, current president of Fil-Am CAG, shares his issue with regionalism:

All the organizations that I see...look at the Hispanic Americans. Japanese Americans. Chinese Americans. Filipino Americans. Why are we always putting where we came from first?...Instead of using it as American-Filipino. And now you are forwarding yourself first—American first, and then Filipino second. And that's the reason why we cannot... get into the more general mainstream...there is always infighting because of the cultural differences and also the Philippines. [There are] so many cultures and so many ethnicities because of the various islands, because of their language, and even the big islands...have different tribes and everything. They are protective of their own little village.

Dimasuy disapproves of regionalism, because the resulting social fragmentation hinders Filipino-Americans from "forward[ing] yourself first" and assimilating into the "general mainstream." He points out that other ethnic minorities appear to have a more unified identity, such as Hispanic Americans, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans, rather than a regionalized, extremely localized one. They are "putting where we came from first;" that is, their hyphenated, assimilated, broadly defined national ethnic identity. Moreover, when Dimasuy refers to "many ethnicities because of the various islands, and language" he is describing regionalism and how it leads Filipinos to feel "protective of their own village," rather than developing a unified, hyphenated identity. This sense of protectiveness leads to "infighting," which in turn prevents Filipino-Americans from integrating into the "general mainstream." I should note that Dimasuy is not entirely correct in his observations and that intra-ethnic and interracial tensions seem to persist in a wide range of contexts and communities.

Similarly, Mr. Casama, a retired U.S. Navy veteran, co-founder of the Philippine Cultural Center, and highly active member of Fil-Am CAG, laments, "We want them all together, but they do not want to mix with us now...they are so segregated. We are most racist people in the world, I believe, because of our ethnicity. They are Ilocano, Visayan...They are regional race, that's why... they want to go on [by] themselves." Casama is clearly highly distressed because of the persistence of Filipino regional ties in the U.S., even going so far as to say that Filipino-Americans are the "most racist people in the world." He believes that Filipino-Americans largely self-segregate themselves into regional enclaves and identities because they "want to go on [by] themselves." Their ethnic affiliations and identities thus are based on geography and reinforced by Catholic-designated patron saint holidays. One interviewee describes Filipino identity as the following: "It is more ethnic that I'm Tagalog, I'm Pampango, but there's a religious tone on that. Like the Bicol, the way they celebrate the Pina Francia observance here, to some group, they don't subscribe to that. Just like they don't subscribe to incorporate that Ati-Atan observance of their patrons." Therefore, even though Virginia Beach is among the most densely populated Filipino areas in the country, many Filipino-Americans say there is major social fragmentation within the community due to the persistence of these strong regional affiliations. Religion, in this light, socially fragments Filipinos because, depending on the region they originate from, Filipinos may celebrate specific patron-saint holidays that are *only* honored by one ethnic group from a respective region, while another regional group may not "subscribe to" or recognize their respective patron saint at all. The Catholic Church may not officially intend to foster social fragmentation within the Filipino-American community, yet in Virginia it has been known to encourage unique Filipino expressions of Catholicism, specifically through regional patron saint fiestas:

The diocese is very much supportive of it. But then again, with the caution they lead into the deepening of one's faith, and deepening one's conviction and commitment of a Catholic and a Christian is, you know, to love one another, give service to the community and, you know what I'm saying? Building community, to build community, not to build walls but to build bridges.

While Filipino Catholic Priest Father Dimaano noted that the diocese intended for these ethnic-specific Catholic celebrations to “build community” and “build bridges,” unwittingly, these practices had ambiguous effects: On one hand, Filipinos are preserving their traditional culture and sustaining deep ties to the homeland, albeit specifically to their regions; on the other hand, due to the highly ethnically diverse nature of the Filipino-American community, these Catholic practices reinforce social divisions and ethnic boundaries within the new community. When I asked Father Dimaano whether fiestas reinforce division in the community, he elaborated on the dissonance between the Catholic Church’s intention to “build community” and “build bridges” and the idea that fiestas paradoxically reinforce divisions:

Well, it all depends on the leaders of these organizations. Originally, that was not the intention of celebrating fiestas, so I guess it all depends on the leaders of these Filipino-American organizations. It should really, you know, unite Filipino-Americans. That is supposed to be the foundation. The religion should make Filipino-Americans live their faith. I think now what I’m seeing is, I think, we are slowly going into that direction. In this way it appears that, while the Catholic Church may intend to “unite Filipino-Americans” and “live their faith,” these ethnic-regional practices unintentionally “build walls,” depending on the “leaders of these organizations.” Nonetheless, Father Dimaano is still optimistic that the Filipino-American community is “slowly going into that direction;” that is, uniting Filipino-Americans.

Social fragmentation due to regionalism is an overwhelming concern and issue for many Filipino-Americans. Throughout my fieldwork, Filipino-Americans voiced distress regarding the social fragmentation of their community due to regionalism. Dimasuy concurs:

There is always infighting, because of the cultural differences and also the Philippines, because of so many cultures and so many ethnicities, because of the various islands, because of their language, and even the big islands that have different tribes and everything. They are protective of their own little village... Our community is so complex, because it’s a combination of various ethnicities in our community. We have a background of Hispanics with their own problems and we carry them. We have a background of Chinese that carry their own problems. We carry the problems that the Indonesians brought us, and then we apply all of them and mix them with our own natural Filipino ways. So now if you are adding them altogether, it is really hard to unravel the whole problems that we are facing. Because of all the problems of the various ethnicities that came to the Philippines, we improve all of them.

Evidently, regionalism leads to social fragmentation due to the “infighting because of the cultural differences.” Dimasuy illuminates how interethnic strife persists over time because regionalized identities lead to Filipino immigrants being “protective of their own village.” This “complex” issue deeply inhibits a sense of collective identity within the U.S., a sense of being ‘Filipino-American.’ Among both the young (i.e., second-generation Filipino-Americans) and the old (i.e., first-generation Filipinos), and in various civic and religious settings, the topic of Filipino unity was a theme that frequently emerged.

Mr. Halimaw, another retired navy serviceman and Filipino-American CAG member, in similar fashion to Galang, talks about regionalism and its implications in respect to the public sphere:

I see members of Pangasinan, Ilocano, Tagalog. They are members of organizations, but I feel like they are all Filipinos even though we are from different provinces, speak different dialects; we are here now in this country. Filipinos are regionalistic. So, if you’re Tagalog, well I’m Tagalog, you’re Ilocano so..Yeah, there’s always that friction between organizations, different dialects; because of the different dialects, different provinces that still exists.

Similarly to Galang, Halimaw describes how, because of regionalism or ethnic insularity, “friction between organizations” persists due to “different dialects,” and regional identities. Due to this powerful sense of regionalism, divisions persist among Filipino-Americans that prevent the formation of a sense of Filipino identity, and the cohesiveness and social solidarity necessary to more effectively participate in politics.

Since regionalism is a powerful phenomenon for Filipino-Americans, what are the implications of regionalism in respect to Filipinos’ entry into the public sphere? What is at stake? Mr. Galang, a retired Navy veteran who is highly active in Filipino-American CAG, sheds light on the implications of regionalism for Filipino-Americans’ participation in the public sphere:

In the mainstream America, people will get you from the distance to say they are Filipinos out there. They will never say, like, you're Filipino from one part of the island or other. So they stereotype you as one. Now you have to go back in history, which most Americans do not know of. There are about how many islands in the Philippines? Seven thousand. How many languages or dialects? Seventy-six plus. And I happen to know six or seven of those at one time. But through lack of somebody to talk to, I missed it, but I'm still fluent in some. And because of them, there is a tendency for the Filipinos in general to say I'm from the South, and they will find somebody from the south to associate with and they will say you're not part of our society.

Galang describes the disparity that Filipino-Americans feel as they immigrate to the United States. Namely, although officially the U.S. government broadly defines Filipinos as 'Filipino-Americans,' Galang notes that due to the geographically and ethnically diverse cultures in the Philippines, Filipinos who immigrate to the United States may not necessarily identify with the official hyphenated identity, *per se*. Instead, they will have a "tendency" to regionally affiliate, or as Pancho says, "in general to say I'm from the South, and they will find somebody from the south to associate with and they will say you're not part of our society." When Galang states "society," he refers to the regional sense of cultural belonging and identity among Filipinos. Yet again we see a nuanced understanding of regionalism. As a member of Fil-Am CAG, Galang also believes that Filipino-Americans should transcend regionalism and embodies this belief. As shown in the above quote, he demonstrates a broad knowledge of other Filipino regional languages, which illustrates that Galang is able to transcend regional boundaries in the United States. Subsequently, due to these regional ties, it is clear that Filipino-Americans socially fragment themselves, which in turn negatively influences their collective ability to connect to the American public sphere.

Second-generation Filipino-Americans tend to self-identify themselves as Filipino-Americans, rather than with their parents' region or hometown. Ms. Dajao, a second-generation Filipino-American, concurs with Dakila and says that regionalism "is more prevalent among the elders in the community," though it is "the exclusivity [she] shies away from." This comment corroborates Dakila's idea that regionalism weakens among the second-generation. Ron Villanueva, second-generation Filipino-American and the first Filipino-American Virginia State delegate, states:

I think regionalism is definitely strength in the first generation but it's also a hindrance. Second-generation, we really don't have too much regionalism because we're born here in America. Other than...your parents' regional association...that's really your only affiliation.... You know it's tough. It's an interesting dynamic. I mean, for example, when Lyndon Dondas was a school board member, or a candidate, he came out of nowhere. This guy had a good resume...very well-read, a professional guy, had kids, he was involved in soccer and involved in Key Club But his parents, they were involved in, I want to say not sure which group they were, but they were really involved. They were in Norfolk. They were, geographically, living nowhere near his family was, and a lot of Filipino leaders did not know who this guy was, because he was not involved in community organizations like me. Before I was elected, I was chairman of the Filipino-American Friendship for 3 years, I ran that picnic, you know what I mean? So all the leadership...versus him, when he ran the first time, a lot of Filipino-Americans were like, "I don't know who this guy is," so he had to work doubly hard to get elected. He lost his first race. He lost first race by one hundred votes. And you can blame a lot of things...bottom line is another candidate won the race. The second time he ran, I was much more interested. By then I was in my second term. I helped him out a lot...everybody knew him...'you better support him'...so if the Filipino leadership does not buy into you first, it's a tough thing. There's an interesting dynamic.

Villanueva shares a compelling story that illustrates the direct impact of regionalism on politics. Villanueva noted that, even though Lyndon Dondas possessed strong qualifications to represent Filipino-Americans in political office, because Filipino-Americans did not know or recognize him, they failed to rally and support him. We can infer that Dondas most likely came from a lesser-represented region that many Filipinos in the Virginia Beach community felt unsure or skeptical about. Even though Dondas is a second-generation Filipino-American, he still needed the socially influential first-generation Filipino-Americans to endorse him to be successful. Therefore, even if regionalism appears to be weakening among second-generation Filipino-Americans, regionalism still impacts their lives and the intergenerational possibilities for Filipino-American political representation in the public sphere. I should note; however, Filipinos have been able to transcend their regional boundaries in order to increase their political representation at times. After all, Ron Villanueva became the first Filipino-American Virginia Delegate largely because the Filipino

community supported him. Nonetheless, this account regarding Dondas indicates the critical negative impact that regionalism can have on Filipinos' entry into the political public sphere.

One interviewee noted that regionalism could perhaps be attributed to human nature: "I think its part of the culture of the Filipinos [that], if you are not from the same province, that you shy away with that guy. I encourage them to become a part of...that we should be more friendlier." It appears that Filipinos are less likely to trust another Filipino from a different region, which of course reinforces social fragmentation. There is also recognition among first-generation Filipino immigrants that, despite regionalism being an issue, Filipino-Americans should "be more friendlier," which perhaps illustrates a latent desire for unity.

5. Conclusion

For the Filipino community in Hampton Roads, regional ties tend to *intensify* transnational links to the homeland with each respective regional association specifically connecting back to their specific hometown. As previously discussed, regionalism also *hinders* the formation of a hyphenated, pan-Filipino identity and subsequently the community's effective political participation in the United States.

This regionalism is not static and universal per se: Since second and subsequent generation Filipino-Americans are not raised in their parents' hometowns and instead are born in the U.S., they are less likely to identify with their parents' hometowns. I should note, however, that Filipinos have been able to transcend their regional boundaries in order to increase their political representation at times. For instance, Ron Villanueva, a second-generation Filipino-American, became the first Filipino-American Virginia Delegate largely because the Filipino community supported him. Part of the process of increasing visibility and representation in the public sphere is to mobilize, and if regional differences lead to competition, this social division may actually defeat these regional associations' stated purposes. Therefore, even if second generation Filipinos do not identify or agree with the inter-regional tensions of their parents' generation, they have to live with these tensions' impact on the Filipino-American community at large; namely, the weakened political representation of Filipino-Americans in the U.S. As a result, I anticipate that a clearer hyphenated American identity will form or that these younger generations will conceptualize themselves as "Filipino-American" rather than Ilocano or Visayan per se. More research is needed to examine these questions and to explore second and subsequent generations of Filipino-Americans in respect to civic and political civic engagement.

This article addresses five key issues. First, it attempts to advance and broaden our understanding of immigrant civic/political engagement and organizing. This paper also addresses Karthick Ramakrishnan and Irene Bloemraad's question: "In the absence of party mobilization, do community organizations and civic associations act as parallel or alternative sites for political incorporation?" In response, perhaps another way to frame Filipino-Americans' civic and political engagement can be described as more diffused and decentralized engagement with participatory democracy. Second, through considering religion as a vital component of analysis, this research addresses how "new immigrants" socially and culturally, through various forms of civic engagement, participate in the public sphere. Third, this paper advances the research on how newcomers to the U.S. learn to become civically engaged via the regional associations in which they participate. These sociocultural spaces (parishes and regional associations) in turn serve as incubators for later participation in the wider public sphere, albeit through in-group identification. This research also addresses our understanding of "post-national citizenship." Along the intellectual vein of Saskia Sassen, I have examined "alternate notions of community membership;" specifically, the role of religion and region in identity politics and in-group identification. Overall, like Sassen, I agree that it is "enormously important to develop forms of participatory politics that decentre, and sometimes transcend national political life, and to learn how to practice democracy across borders." To that end, I hope that I have contributed to a more nuanced perception of Filipino-Americans' post-national citizenship. More research is needed to explore the role of religion in shaping immigrants' civic and political lives. It would also be helpful to further study the sociocultural spaces that shape connections to the wider public sphere.

What we are also seeing is how is how relations within racially-defined groups are shaped by religion and region. On the one hand, my findings about Filipino regionalism in the U.S. may help partly explain why some scholars have found hometown associations (HTAs) to be largely "apolitical;" on the other hand, my research also challenges and complicates current findings that there are few direct links between such clubs and civic or political leaders and organizations (Zabin & Escala, 2002). In other words, in contrast to Zabin and Escala's findings, specifically regarding Latino HTAs, I find that while regionalism may limit political participation, HTAs also strongly connect Filipino-Americans with other civic and religious organizations. More research is

needed to explore this complicated relationship and whether religion similarly influences other immigrant groups in respect to regionalism, political, and civic activism. Finally, more research on regionalism and second-generation Filipino-American immigrants would be useful in enlarging our understanding of the varied expressions of their often complicated and multifaceted citizenship.

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