

The Survival of Philippine Hostess Clubs in Japan: An Ethnographic Research After 2005 Tightening of Entertainment Visa Issuance

Abstract

As Southeast Asian countries were integrated into the international tourism market in the 1960s, commercial sex work expanded, with migrant women entering as sex workers. Governments have attempted to regulate such sex industry and linked migration, but full elimination has been challenging, and the sex industry continues to thrive in many places. In response to this situation, this report explores how enforcing specific regulations impacts the nature of the sex industry. Previous studies of sex tourism and human trafficking have focused on controlling prostitution and addressing human rights violations, but have rarely asked how such laws and regulations would change the sex industry itself. In this report, this point will be discussed from the case of Philippine hostess clubs in Japan following the 2005 tightening of entertainment visa issuance. The analysis primarily relies on data from participant observation conducted at a Philippine hostess club in city A, Kanagawa since April 2022, the findings are as follows. First, The tightening control over the Entertainment Businesses Law, implemented simultaneously with the visa restrictions, eliminated illegal prostitution while allowing hostess clubs to operate legally, providing Filipino women with employment opportunities. Secondly, the tightened visa issuance disrupted the traditional migration network to hostess clubs in Japan. As a result, to comply with the law, hostess clubs started hiring former indentured workers, who had become permanent residents, as well as Japanese spouses, as voluntary

employees. Third, Unlike sex work involving sexual activity, hostess clubs focus on selling companionship and long-term relationships with clients, sometimes spanning more than a decade. This emphasis on non-sexual interactions facilitated clients' sense of belonging. Consequently, hostesses and clients aged together, fostering a distinct business environment. These factors have enabled Philippine hostess clubs to survive in Japan despite attempts at regulation while changing its business model.

1. Introduction

Beginning in the 1960s, Southeast Asian countries entered the international tourism market. Developed further by the spending of American servicemen for the rest and recreation industry, or the residual effects of controlled prostitution practiced where the Japanese military occupation had taken place, cities like Bangkok, Saigon, Manila, and later Phnom Penh are now prominent for their sex tourism and attracting tourists around the world (Reid 2015, 380-4). These global dynamics of transnational mobilities in the nightlife economies are constituted not only by tourists but also by workers.¹ Considering the mobilities in nightlife economies in Japan, the case of Filipino entertainers is most significant. Filipino entertainers in this paper refer to those who have worked as dancers, singers, hostesses, etc., in the nightlife economies especially in hostess clubs.² Except for a few such as band players, the majority are women.

¹ Jumpei Ichinosawa referred to the accumulation of the organized prostitution sector as the "sex industry" (Ichinosawa 2010, 10 note 6; see also Lim 1998). On the other hand, this paper uses the term "nightlife economy" to refer to the sex industry and the surrounding businesses as a whole. It includes business types such as food and beverage, bars and restaurants, as well as entertainment, dance clubs and cabarets, etc.

² The business units where Filipino entertainers work are commonly called "Philippine pubs" in Japan. Although the term has no fixed definition, it is generally thought to refer

From the late 1970s until 2004, the population of Filipino entertainers in Japan experienced a significant surge. Initially, the market was dominated by undocumented Filipinos, but since the mid-1980s, Filipinos who obtained entertainment visas in Japan became the predominant group, with over 80,000 entertainment visas issued in 2004 (Inaba 2008, 53). This migration trend persisted until 2005 when a tightening of entertainment visa issuance disrupted the flow (Parreñas 2011, 4). However, the subsequent cumulative increase in the number of Filipinos settling in Japan through intermarriage with Japanese men has continued, creating a gender-imbalanced migrant population. As of the end of 2021, approximately 277,000 Filipinos resided in Japan, of which 196,000 (71%) are women (Immigration Services Agency of Japan 2021). As we will explore, Filipino entertainers who married Japanese men and established their lives in Japan have emerged as key figures in the present-day nightlife economy of the country.

This reveals that not only undocumented migrants but also those with entertainment visas and those who have entered into intermarriage, have worked as entertainers in Japan's nightlife economy. Additionally, some migrants who started in different occupations upon their arrival in Japan eventually entered the nightlife economy. These varied life courses of Filipino entertainers have differentiated their working conditions and experiences. As such, this paper will examine the transitions in the conditions of these entertainers' stay and employment in Japan. Shedding light on these changes will help us better understand why Philippine hostess clubs continue to thrive and why Filipino women continue to be involved in the nightlife economy. This, in turn,

to business types that combine Filipino entertainers' dance shows, hostessing, and serving food and alcohol. In this paper, I will use the term "Philippine hostess clubs" to refer to especially the business units where hostessing plays a central role in interactions (cf. Parreñas 2011, 284 note 62).

will allow us to reframe our perspective which tends to consider the mobilities within nightlife economy as involuntary labor through sex trafficking.³

The discussion proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 will focus on the emergence of "Filipino entertainers" in Japan's nightlife economy in the 1970s. Chapter 3 shows the transition of Filipino entertainers from trafficked sex workers to indentured migrants. Chapter 4 further explores the Filipino entertainer's marriage settlements. Chapter 5 will argue why married Filipino entertainers continued employment as hostesses by focusing on the relationship between hostesses and customers, which sometimes spans decades.

The data are based on an ongoing participant observation conducted at a Philippine hostess club in City A, Kanagawa, starting in April 2022. I have been working at the club as a boy⁴ on weekends. The purpose of my research was explained to all the employees on the first day of my work. During the investigation, I conducted informal interviews with fourteen women working as hostesses. One of them is the club's owner, and two are male customers. All of the interviews were conducted during business hours.

³ Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000) defines the term "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as, (A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or (B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (see also Parreñas 2011, 287 note 1).

⁴ The term "boy", barmaid here refers to employees who serve dishes and perform cleaning.

2. Filipino Entertainers as Trafficked Sex Workers, ~ 1990

A massive migration of women from East and Southeast Asia to Japan's nightlife economy started in the 1970s. These migrants have been called Japayuki. Tetsuo Yamatani, who investigated the women migration from East and Southeast Asia to Japan states that the number of arrests of female migrants living in Japan by the Immigration Bureau began to increase in 1979, called "the first year of Japayuki" by immigration security officers. The number of arrests for activities outside the status of residence and illegal residency doubled from 486 in 1978 to 907 in 1979, 1771 in 1981, 1889 in 1982, and 2339 in 1983 (Yamatani 1992, 140).

The condition of these women's daily life and employment in Japan was depicted by Yamatani's reportage "Japayuki-san, Onna-tachi no Asia," published in 1992. It addresses private and managed prostitution, sex shows in strip theaters, and the brokerage network of Japanese organized crime syndicates in central Tokyo. Not only Yamatani's reportage, much of the reportage around the early 1980s points out that migrant women from East and Southeast Asia in the nightlife economies in Japan were employed at store-based managed prostitution, non-store-based private and street prostitution, strip theater sex shows, which were beyond their visas' restriction (Ishii 1986; Mizutani 1988; Usuki 1992; Yamatani 1992). The Japayuki portrayed in the 1970s to 80s can be characterized by unbridled sexual exploitation through managed prostitution by private brokerage and migrants' illegal status of stay.

Among these women from East and Southeast Asia, Filipino women in Japan began to surge in the 1980s due to the development of the entertainers' labor exportation scheme between the Philippines and Japan. In 1974, the Philippines enacted an overseas employment policy in the Labor Code to promote labor migration as a national policy

under the Marcos regime (Yamagata 199, 147; Sasaki 2005, 139). In 1982, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, POEA was established to manage businesses in destination countries (Satake & Da-anoy 2006, 21). Under the labor-sending scheme, a system of certifying the skills of entertainers to be sent out as Overseas Performing Artists; OPA had developed. According to Mark Maca (2019), the Department of Labor and Employment; DOLE implemented the OPA skills certification from the mid-1970s to 1994, and the Philippine Entertainer Certificate Card; Blue Card, which was implemented in 1981, was designed to certify Filipino entertainers going to Japan. The Blue Card was reformed into the Artist Accreditation Certificate; AAC in 1985, which the Artist Record Book succeeded; ARB in 1994 (Maca 2019, 99). The death of the Filipino entertainer Maricris Sioson in Japan in 1991 prompted the Philippine government to protect their citizen who worked abroad (Satake & Da-anoy 2006, 20-3). The role of skills certification was taken over from DOLE by the Technical Education Skills and Development Authority; TESDA, an agency under POEA, after the ARB was enacted in 1994 (Maca 2019, 99).

The Japanese government issued entertainment visas to accept these entertainers from the Philippines, which allows for a period of stay of three months per visit to Japan and can be renewed for another three months for a total stay of up to six months. After the expiration of the visa period, the entertainment visa holder must leave Japan once but can renew the visa after staying out of Japan (Takahata 2020, 40). According to Katsuhiko Tsuzaki, Filipino women interested in working in Japan are first recruited and selected through a promotion company in the Philippines. The promotion company has a Special Power of Attorney, SPA, with a Japanese production company that trains Filipino women as entertainers and then sends them to Japan. The Philippines government will conduct a skills test and issue an ARB to the entertainers. The Japanese production company applies

to the Japanese government for a Certificate of Eligibility, COE, and once it is granted, the Filipino women are issued an entertainment visa through the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines. After the Filipino woman obtains an entertainment visa, the Japanese production company becomes the employer of the Filipino woman and dispatches her to the nightlife economies in Japan (Tsuzaki 2008, 41).

However, the argument that the labor export scheme with entertainment visas has increased the number of women working in sexually exploitable environments as Yamatani describes in his reportage is somewhat inapplicable after the 1990 amendment to the Immigration Control Law and the 1998 amendment to the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law, both aimed at establishing penalties for employers for the crime of encouraging illegal work. The following Chapter will discuss the transition after the law amendments.

3. Filipino Entertainers as Indentured Migrants, 1990 ~ 2005

The migration of Filipino entertainers into Japan's nightlife economy has increased through the trafficking circuit since the end of the 1970s (Ballescás 1993; Inaba 2007). However, Rhacel S. Parreñas, based on her participant observation in the Philippines Hostess Club in Tokyo conducted in the 2000s, stated that their mobilities are based on the workers' will. They are not necessarily trafficked, but they can be referred to as indentured mobilities because their residency status and labor contracts bind the mobilities (Parreñas 2011, 1-24). The indentured mobilities, a situation in which a certain degree of freedom for workers is ensured rather than in the case of trafficking in persons, arose only after employers were better regulated. The 1990 amendment to the Immigration Control Law and the 1998 amendment to the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law contributed to this transition.

According to Yoshikazu Nagai, the nightlife economy has been regulated not by the Anti-Prostitution Law which aimed at controlling individual prostitutes, but by the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law, which aimed at holding the employers and businesses.⁵ This is because it is easier to manage where prostitution takes place than to detect the act of prostitution (Nagai 2002, 92-3). The Amusement and Entertainment Business Law framework, amended in 1985, categorizes restaurants and night clubs offering dancing and entertainment as Amusement and Entertainment Businesses and allows them to operate under a licensing system. On the other hand, sexual services such as strip clubs and adult stores are categorized as Sex-related Businesses and are required to notify their businesses (Act on Control and Improvement of Amusement Business 1985, Art 2).

This categorization became important to employers of Filipino entertainers after the 1990 amendment to the Immigration Control Law. In the 1990 amendment, Article 7-1 indicates that the immigration inspector conducts the visas applied for and the activities. The criteria for such inspections are clearly stated in "Ministerial Order to Provide for Criteria Pursuant to Article 7, Paragraph (1), Item (ii) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. According to this, if the employer of migrant workers on an "entertainment visa" is categorized as Amusement and Entertainment Businesses, there

⁵ In 1958, the Japanese government implemented the Anti-Prostitution Law to encourage former prostitutes to switch to alternative professions such as waitressing. However, as early as 1959, it was widely seen that women who had changed their jobs were still involved in prostitution (Fujino, 2001: 258-9). Thus, the Japanese government shifted its focus from individual regulation to monitoring employers and businesses such as hotels and restaurants that provided a platform for prostitution through enforcing the Entertainment Business Law.

must be a minimum of 5 employees whose duties are exclusively hostessing customers. The persons residing in Japan under the status of residence of "Entertainer" who engage in activities related to performances will not take part in hostessing customers (Ministerial Order to Provide for Criteria Pursuant to Article 7, Paragraph (1), Item (ii) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 1990).⁶

Additionally, the 1990 amendments to article 73-2 newly established penalties for employers who induce illegal employment. It states "A person who has a foreign national engage in illegal work in relation to their business activities," "A person who places a foreign national under their control for the purpose of having the foreign national engage in illegal work," "A person who arranges on a regular basis for a foreign national to engage in illegal work or who makes arrangements for the act set forth in the preceding item" was punished with imprisonment for not more than 3 years or a fine not exceeding 3 million yen, or is to be subject to the cumulative imposition of imprisonment and a fine (Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 1990, Art 73-2). Furthermore, in 1998, the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law was amended to provide that an employer encouraging illegal employment under Article 73-2 of the Immigration Control Law would not be allowed to operate an entertainment business (Act on Control and Improvement of Amusement Business 1998, Art 4).

⁶ In addition, there are rules below: there must be "a stage that exceeds 13 square meters," "a room for performers that exceeds 9 square meters (1.6 square meters for each additional performer if there are more than five performers)," "at least five employees," or "no manager or employee must be a member of a criminal syndicate." (Ministerial Order to Provide for Criteria Pursuant to Article 7, Paragraph (1), Item (ii) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 1990)

The regulations of these amendments brought about the following changes. First, the employers must be categorized as Amusement and Entertainment Businesses, not a Sex-Related Businesses, to issue the "Eligibility of Certificate," which is a requirement for issuing an entertainment visa. Second, the employer must have at least five employees dedicated to providing hostessing who are without entertainment visa. Third, failure to comply with the above regulations could result in the revocation of the business license and possibility of imprisonment or fine. In practice, however, the effectiveness of these regulations depended on the intensity of police enforcement. As Nobue Suzuki states, there were fewer cases of entertainers coming to Japan on entertainment visas offering sexual services. On the other hand, it seemed that performing dance and singing as regulated by the status of residence and the informal practice of hostessing became more and more common (Suzuki 2009, 4). Flore, one of my informants who came to Japan on an entertainment visa in 2005, said,

I first came to Japan on a six-month talent (entertainment) visa. The store was called T (in City X, Kanagawa). But after the 5th month of my arrival, the immigration authorities caught a talent at a sister store in City X, and all the talents (entertainers with entertainment visas) at our club, which the same employer owned, were sent back to the Philippines. Only those who were married could stay. At the time, the talent could not hostessing customers, only dance with them. In January 2006, we were all called to the immigration office and left Japan in order (Fieldnotes July 6th, 2022).

The data indicates that Flore's hostess club employed married Filipino entertainers and Filipino entertainers on an entertainment visa. This suggests that by hiring at least five Filipino entertainers who were married and working as full-time hostesses and having Filipino entertainers working on entertainment visas to dance and sing exclusively, Flore's hostess club would appear to be an establishment that could obtain an Amusement and Entertainment Business license. Filipino entertainers working

on entertainment visas sometimes worked as hostesses, and their illegal activities were discovered when the immigration authorities or police discovered the situation during on-site inspections. Married migrants, unlike those with entertainment visas, were not restricted from working as hostesses. Thus, married entertainers were not subject to any legal restrictions as long as they worked as hostesses in a licensed Amusement and Entertainment Business.

The Immigration Control Law, amended in 1990, and the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law, amended in 1985 and 1998, tightened the restrictions on employers of Filipino entertainers. The Filipino entertainers with entertainment visas performed dancing and singing, and the married Filipino entertainers served as hostesses. The experiences of these entertainers with different visas are very different. Angel, one of my informants who came to Japan in 2005 on an entertainment visa and got married in 2006, said,

I lived in a room above the club's building with other talents (entertainers with entertainment visas). (...) The talent (entertainment) visa only gave me 60,000 to 70,000 yen a month. In return, I don't have to pay for food or a room. After becoming a free worker (by being married to a Japanese citizen), I could choose which stores I wanted to work at, and the salary was different (Fieldnotes July 2nd, 2022).

When Flore and Angel came to Japan on entertainment visas, they experienced low wages due to the deduction of brokerage fees, limited access to changing jobs and length of stay, and group living with other entertainers on entertainment visas. Such experiences can be understood as indentured mobilities, which Parreñas (2011) suggested. However, the married entertainers who worked with them in the workplace could have their own families and earn a reasonable salary without the deductions of the brokerage fee. Flore and Angel eventually settled down through marriage and obtained more

reasonable working conditions. Thus, indentured mobilities in Parreñas (2011) is just one aspect of entertainers' experiences in hostess clubs where people with different visas work before they get married and settle down. The trend of replacing entertainers on entertainment visas with married settled entertainers accelerated when the tightening of the operation of the Immigration Laws in 2005 led to a sharp decline in the issuance of entertainment visas. The following Chapter discusses the changes since 2005.

4. Filipino Entertainers as Marriage Migrants, 2005~

The number of marriage migrants started increasing as early in the mid- 1980s. According to Suzuki, Japan-Philippines marriages were the leading type of international marriages in Japan from 1992 to 1996, with most of their marriages being a combination of Filipino women and Japanese men (Suzuki 2010). As many scholars have already mentioned, this international marriage between Japan and the Philippines increased due to the acquaintance of women and men who came to Japan through entertainment visas, Filipino women's desire for the West, Japanese men's fantasy of chaste Asian women, and the strength of the yen (Suzuki 2010; Takahata 2020).

Figure 1 shows the Filipino population in Japan by the status of residency. In the 1980s, the two largest categories of Filipinos' residency status in Japan were entertainment visas and dependent (spouse or child of Japanese citizen) visas, with the number of the population for both categories remaining at the same level. In other words, less than half of all Filipinos in Japan had already obtained dependent visas since the 1980s. The number of marriage immigrants began to overtake the number of entertainment visa holders in the 1990s; in the late 1990s, the switch from dependent visas to permanent resident visas began. According to the "Guidelines for Permanent Resident Permits" published by the Ministry of Justice, the applicant must have resided in Japan

for at least three years to switch status from a dependent visa to a permanent resident visa. Filipino women who married in the 1980s began to meet the requirements of the guideline, and the switch to permanent residence accelerated. In the 2000s, the number of permanent residents increased faster than the number of dependent visa holders, and as of 2005, the number of permanent residence visas for Filipinos reached the top of the population of Filipinos residing in Japan. In addition, the number of Filipinos who do not meet the requirements for permanent residence but are permitted to continue to live in Japan due to, for example, having a child with a Japanese national has obtained long-term visas and has been increasing since the 1990s. It is not often mentioned, but by 2005, when immigration laws tightened and it became more difficult for Filipino entertainers to enter Japan on entertainment visas, the majority of the Filipino population in Japan had already switched to permanent residence, dependent, or long-term visas, which has no restrictions on the length of stay and the working conditions.

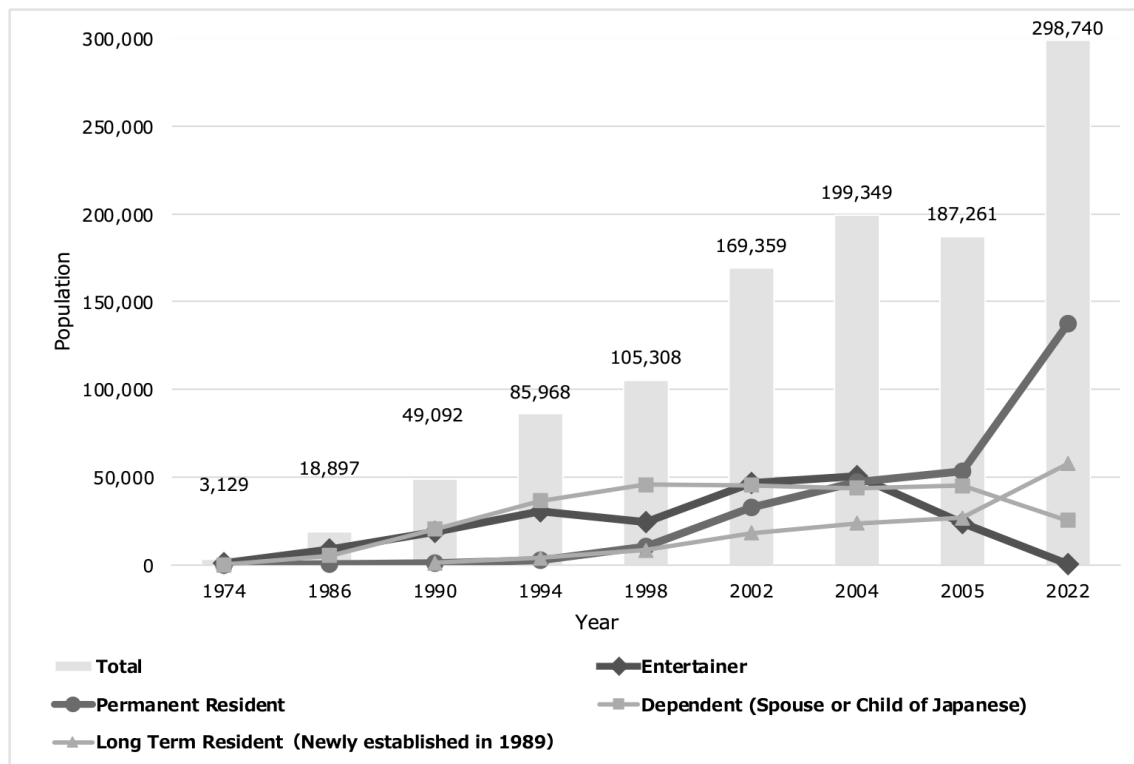


Figure 1. Filipino Population in Japan by the Status of Residence⁷

As discussed in Chapter 3, an entertainment visa limits the working conditions in Japan to performance, and the period of stay is limited to a maximum of six months at a time. However, permanent residence, dependent, or long-term visas have no restrictions on working conditions, so these visa holders can work in nightclubs as hostesses or performers as long as they do not violate the anti-prostitution or entertainment business law. For example, a Filipino entertainer who came to Japan as an OPA through an entertainment visa and got married. She will be able to obtain a dependent visa and, later, a permanent resident visa and continue working in the club. Moreover, since there are no restrictions on working conditions, she can engage in hostess work, which she could not do under an entertainment visa, without any legal problems.⁸

Satake & Da-anoy (2006) surveyed Japanese-Filipino married couples in November 2004 before tightening the entertainment visa issuance in 2005. According to this study, 35 out of 60 informant couples reported that the wife came to Japan as an entertainer, and 13 of them continued to work in the hostess clubs after marriage (Satake

⁷ Draw by the author based on Ministry of Justice "Zairyu Gaikokujin Tokei," and before 2011, Ministry of Justice "Toroku Gaikokujin Tokei."

⁸ Kosho Nakajima (2017) discussed that entertainers in the Philippines hostess clubs obtained dependent visas to settle in Japan through "fake marriage," in which they were not having a married life but worked in hostess clubs. Indeed, eight of my fourteen informants divorced after obtaining permanent residence, and one stated that "my marriage was just a piece of paper" (Field note September 29th, 2023). However, it is hardly possible to distinguish between marriages made solely to obtain residency status and marriages made solely with the desire to a "normal married life." Marriage contains more or less the elements of romantic love and material interests. Therefore, It needs to be more cautious in judging the marriages of Filipino entertainers as fake.

& Da-anoy 2006, 48-51). Thus, it was in the 1980s that the number of Filipino women with dependent visas increased, and it was also in the 1980s that Filipino hostess clubs, which combined performance and hostess work, were established. as shown in Chapter 3, Philippine hostess clubs from the 1980s likely became spaces where entertainer, permanent residents, and spouses of Japanese mixed. However, In my fieldwork in Club Alpha in City A, Kanagawa, fourteen of my informants have experienced a marriage with Japanese men at least once and acquired permanent resident visas. Their age was between 34 to 58 years old (Fieldnotes July 6th, 2022). This suggests that the current employees in Philippine hostess clubs are primarily married women in their 40s or older who migrated to Japan before 2005, and entertainers on entertainment visas or other visas have disappeared. The Filipino hostess clubs, once dominated by entertainers on entertainment visas, have been replaced by Filipino entertainers who have married and settled in the country.

The discussion has revealed that being married-settled was an institutional requirement for employment in Philippine hostess clubs in Japan after 2005. However, This does not show why those who were married-settled women intentionally continued to work as hostesses. Therefore, in the next Chapter, I will focus on the relationship between hostesses and customers, especially on the aging of hostesses and customers, and the focus on intimate care as a commodity rather than a sexual service, making the relationship long-term.

5. Money-based Intimate Relationships

5.1. Maintaining the Intimate Relationships

My field work was conducted at Philippines hostess club Alpha, City A, Kanagawa. The establishment has approximately twenty hostesses and three full-time dancers, making it

one of the larger clubs in the neighborhood. Performers such as dancers, singers, guitarists are hired every day, and the nationalities of these performers are not limited to Filipinos, including Japanese and Russian. Four employees moved to other clubs between April 2022 and November 2023, and four new employees started working there. One Japanese woman also works as a hostess. No Filipina women are working at Club Alpha on entertainment visas. However, one nearby club employs Filipinos on entertainment visas (Fieldnotes July 5th, 2022).

One thing I have noticed through my fieldwork at Club Alpha is that many of the regular customers and hostesses maintain a relationship with each other that spans more than decades. Over this long period of time, the hostesses and customers form an intimate sphere and mutually understand each other's things in life such as family and work. Also, over a long period, the customers become acquainted with all the hostesses in the club. Thus, the intimate sphere for customers includes the whole club. This intimate sphere has been maintained for decades, and the customers continue to pay tens or hundreds thousands of yen each month by which the club is run.

Meanwhile, regular customers expect to see their favorite hostesses, not the clubs themselves. So, when a hostess moves to a new club, the customers also move with her to another club. Therefore, the club must also maintain a relationship with the hostess. In addition, the close relationship that hostesses and customers maintain can be said to be family-like. However, hostesses and customers were reluctant to engage in behavior that would destroy the family relationship, such as making customers pay too much money and ruining their lives, or neglecting their families by becoming too close to each other. The intimate sphere of the club is built on these complex relationships.

Therefore, this Chapter tries to explain how such relationships and dynamics are at work, and will focus on three dimensions of relationships, hostesses and their customers, hostesses and their families, and hostesses and their club.

5.2. Hostesses and Customers

Case 1, “I Saw Your Face, and I'm Relieved”

One day I asked Aika, a hostess in Club Alpha, about her regular customer. Aika then told me about one of her regular customer she had known for 17 years.

It's been 17 years now. He is a long-time customer. Can you imagine what he said when he requested me for the first time? "Ahh, your skin is black and hick. I feel sorry for you because probably no one will request you. Maybe you're not the type of Japanese man, so I'll take care of you."

That's what he told me. He is an alcoholic, but he has a good life. He has his own house and stocks. He is sixty-five now and living on a pension. Whenever he comes over, he buys me daily things like milk and bread and only stays club for half an hour. He says, "I saw your face, and I'm relieved to see you look fine, so I'm going home." He leaves like this every time.

———Is that man coming today?

When I called him earlier, he said he would come at 10p.m., but he was already drunk and might not come. He is always like this. He might call me back later like this. "I fell asleep on the train. Sorry." This happens every time (Fieldnotes May 24th, 2023).

He has been a regular customer of Aika for seventeen years, since before Aika moved to her current club. Now he turned sixty-five years old, and he still visits the club every week and stays for half an hour. He gives Aika groceries when he visits Club Alpha. For this customer, seeing Aika's face regularly and supporting Aika's life by buying groceries has now become his weekly custom.

Case 2, “He Won't Be Here Anymore”

One day around 11:30 p.m., a fight broke out outside Club Alpha. A customer who couldn't enter the club because it was full at the time brought a fight, and he argued to another customer who had left the club afterwards. O-mama went to calm them down and I was told to lock myself in the kitchen because it was dangerous. After about 30 minutes, the fight ended(Fieldnotes June 16th, 2023).

The other day, Melissa, one of a hostess showed me her phone and asked me. “What does this say?” Melissa had received a threatening message from her customer.

The message on Melissa’s phone, “I was hit in the back of the head and injured. I have left all the photographs of the other guy. I will talk to a lawyer and sue him. Please tell your boyfriend about this.”

According to Melissa, the earlier fight occurred between two of Melissa's customers. Melissa invited the man who sparked the fight to visit the club, but Melissa was unable to serve him at the time because she was serving another customer. And because the club was full and he could not get in, the man punched the man whom Melissa was serving. Melissa says.

This guy (who couldn't enter the club last time, sparked the fight, and threatening Melissa afterwards) is always like this. He always gets into fights with other customers. He's difficult.

—————What are you going to do with this guy?

He won't be here anymore. He won't take me up on my offer, and I cannot stand anymore (Fieldnotes June 23th, 2023).

The customer that Melissa shunned did not respect Melissa's relationships with other customers in the club and caused problems with Melissa. Therefore, Melissa decided not to try to fix the relationship with him and chose to leave him away.

5.3. Hostesses and Families

Case 3, “I Introduce Him to My Family as a Friend”

One day, I had an opportunity to have an informal interview to Susan, a hostess, and Iwata a customer of Susan. The interview was taken during the business hour.

———When was the first time you (Iwata) became a customer of Susan?

Iwata, It's been 15 or 20 years ago. It's been a long long time. I've even met Susan's family in the Philippines twice or thrice.

Susan, Oh yes, we traveled to the Philippines together.

———So, Susan is like your girlfriend?

Iwata, Yes, yes (Fieldnotes September 8th, 2023).

Susan and Iwata are both not talkative. Iwata stayed for about an hour that day, drank only two Coca-Colas, and left the club. After he left, I asked Susan about how she thinks about Iwata.

Susan, Iwata is unmarried and alone, so he must be lonely. He is afraid of going to a new club alone. He afraid of getting ripped off. If he came here, he would feel safe because he knows everyone here, and everyone here knows him.

———You are very close to each other. How did you introduce him to your family in the Philippines? As your boyfriend?

I introduced him to my family as just a friend. I have a husband and my family in the Philippines knows that. I also have nephews and nieces in the Philippines and feel bad in front of them.

———How is the relationship with your husband?

We got married in 2007 and have been together ever since. We are the same age and still very close. Working as a hostess is no problem for him at all. He used to be a customer of mine, so I tell him what happened with other customers and where I am now. He is okay because I always return to him (Fieldnotes September 8th, 2023).

Iwata said that Susan was his girlfriend, but Susan told her family that Iwata was just a friend. Susan also values her relationship with her husband. Iwata knows about Susan's family relationship and does not take a serious approach to Susan. By maintaining an appropriate distance, Susan and Iwata have had a close relationship as a hostess and customer for all these 15 or 20 years.

5.4. Hostesses and Club

Case 4, "The Relationship Matters"

One day, I noticed that one of the Chi-mamas of the club, Michell, had been absent. Since I was assigned to drive another hostess Yuki home after she left work at 0 a.m., I decided to ask Yuki why Michell was absent while on the way to send her home.

———*Michell hasn't been here lately, has she?*

Yuki, Yes, the other day, O-mama and Chi-mama (Michell) fought because they couldn't figure out whether the tea they served customers was included in the bill, because it costs 2,000 yen per cup. O-mama got angry and threw the bill paper to Chi-mama. Then Chi-mama said, "How can you treat me like that" and stopped coming from the next day. O-mama apologized to her after that, but I don't know if Chi-mama will return. It's difficult, because the relationship matters (Fieldnotes September 8th, 2023).

According to Yuki, Michell, Chi-mama of Club Alpha stopped coming to the club because she lost the trust with O-mama. Michell could leave away from the club since the contract with the store is based on one-to-one relationship between the employee and the owner. Michell has several regular customers, when Chi-mama is not working at club, those regular customers will not come to the club neither, which means the club lost its profits. It can be said that O-mama has made a painful mistake.

5.5. Coexistence of Club, Hostesses, and Customers

In the previous chapters, through four cases, I have described the relationships between hostesses and their customers, hostesses and families, and hostesses and the club. To discuss the relationships which I draw above, I would like to introduce the concept of the "Intimate Sphere." Junichi Saito tentatively defined the Intimate Sphere as a relationship that is to some extent sustained through the medium of concern/interest in the life of a specific other. The other here is not the other in general, but the other with particular personhood, and is irreplaceable in the sense of "uniqueness." And because the other is an embodied being, we live in a physical relationship with the other and are inevitably exposed to life's needs, desires, and difficulties (Saito 2008=2020, 221). As Saito states, the modern social order has confined the differences in people's lives within limited political possibilities. At the same time, the politics of the intimate sphere has brought about relationships of care and concern among people that are not necessarily based on sexual or blood relations (Saito 2008=2020, 219). In this paper, the relationship of care and concern was established between hostesses and their customers in hostess clubs, although it was mediated by money.

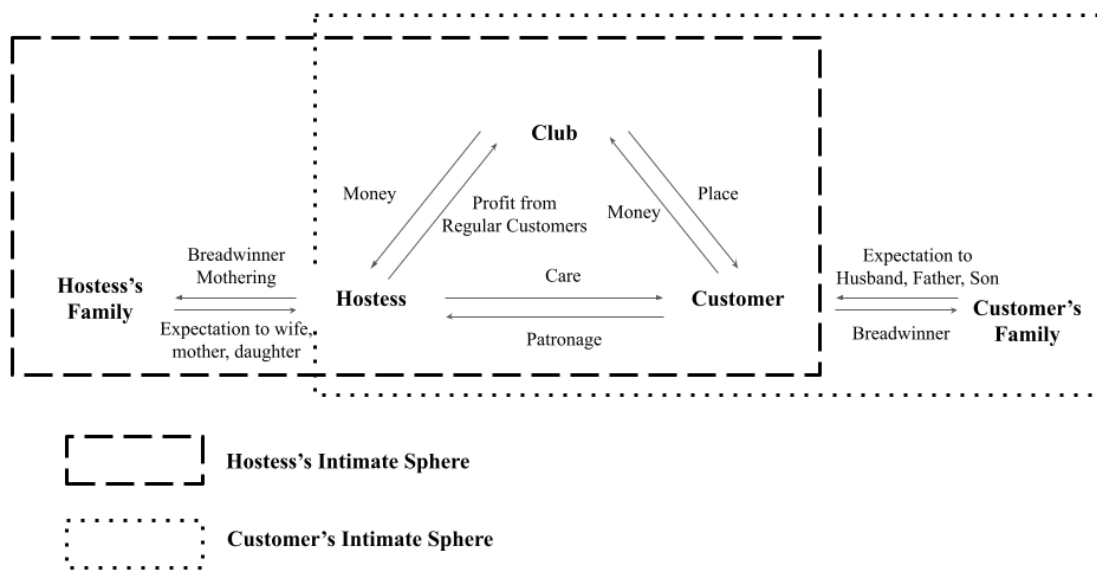


Figure 2. Intimate Sphere Around Hostess Club

Figure 2 above shows the intimate sphere around the club. At the center are the club, the hostess, and the customer; the relationship between the three is shown in the figure. The dashed line represents the intimate sphere of the hostess, and the dotted line represents the intimate sphere of the customer. As defined earlier, the intimate sphere involves exchanging money between the club, the hostess, and the customer.

First, the exchange of money plays an important role in maintaining this intimate sphere. Hostesses work for the livelihood of themselves and their families and need to receive money from the club and their clients. This is perhaps one reason for hostesses to continue working in clubs. The clubs make their profits from the hostesses' regular customers who visit the clubs sustainably. Therefore, clubs must maintain relationships with hostesses to keep them working there. Customers continue to go to the club to draw attention from their favorite hostesses.

If customers try to approach the hostesses without being through the club, the hostesses' relationships with their customers will be in crisis to maintain their relationships with their families and with the club. Cases 1 and 3 show that the relationship between hostess and customer is good and that each intimate sphere is maintained. In Case 1, the customer visits Club Alpha for 30 minutes each week, is satisfied with seeing the hostess, and drops money into the club, which sustains both intimate spheres. In case 3, the customer respects the hostess's family and tries not to break the intimate sphere between the hostess and her family. The hostess also values her relationship with the customer and tries not to destroy the relationship with her own family. This allows both to maintain their intimate sphere with each other. Cases 2 and 4 illustrate cases in which the intimate sphere is destroyed by the actions of one to the other. In Case 2, a customer who could not stand that his favorite hostess was serving other customers when he visited the club became violent toward the other customers. This act damaged the intimate sphere that the hostess had with the other customers. Therefore, the hostess decided to end her relationship with the customer. Case 4 is an example of a club owner's inability to tolerate a hostess's failure and her insulting response to her, which damaged the relationship of trust. Chi-mama earns her living through working at the club, which is possible even if she moves to another club. This is because the regular customers follow Chi-mama, not the club. If Chi-mama moves to a new club, the regular customer will also visit the new club, allowing Chi-mama to form a new intimate sphere.

Using the concept of the intimate sphere, I tried to describe the relationships in the hostess club. This has revealed that even in relationships based on the exchange of money, it is not easy to maintain such relationships. The hostess and the customer each maintain multiple intimate spheres; when they overlap, they can maintain an interest in each other's lives. However, if one does something to damage the other's intimate spheres,

the boundaries of the intimate spheres are quickly transformed, and the relationship becomes unsustainable. Customers who have maintained relationships with hostesses for decades know how to maintain such intimate spheres. In other words, they can respect the hostess's work and family relationships. This, in turn, fostered the Philippine hostess club a distinct business environment.

6. Conclusion

This paper focuses on the Philippine hostess clubs in Japan from the 1970s to present, and examines the reasons for the survival of Philippines hostess clubs in Japan from the perspective of how the legal transition has transformed the space of the hostess clubs.

The findings are as follows. First, the migration flow of women called Japayuki based on the trafficking circuit created an exploitative situation for women in the nightlife economy of Japan in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, in the 1980s, the migration circuit of Filipino women through entertainment visas arose (Chapter 2). Second, a series of amendments to the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law and the Immigration Control Law in the 1980s and 1990s tightened restrictions on employers of Filipino entertainers. As a result, a business combining performances by entertainers on entertainment visas and hostessing by marriage-settled entertainers began to be seen widely. Philippine hostess clubs also became a place where Filipinos with entertainment visas and dependent or permanent residency visas coexisted. The conditions of migrants on entertainment visas, referred to as "indentured mobilities," emerged as a transitional experience between their first arrival in Japan and their marriage settlement (Chapter 3). Third, after the tightening of entertainment visa issuance in 2005, the replacement of entertainers on entertainment visas with marriage migrants accelerated in Philippine hostess clubs in Japan. Marriage migrant entertainers were not restricted in working

conditions and could choose their working environment (Chapter 4). Fourth, the Amusement and Entertainment Business Law and Immigrants Control Law amendments prepare the conditions for marriage migrants to continue working as hostesses. The hostesses' long-term residency in Japan allowed both hostesses and their customers to age together. The relationship of mutual interest in each other's lives continued over the long term through money. These conditions kept Filipino entertainers who had married and settled in Japan working as hostesses for a long time (Chapter 5).

This paper has discussed the social consequences of various attempts to control the nightlife economy from the case of Filipino entertainers in Japan. What has become clear is that the migration of people in the nightlife economy does not occur only through the exploitative circuit of what has conventionally been called "trafficking in persons" but also has aspects such as migration on entertainment visas and marriage migration, and the various modes of mobility make different experiences for migrants. In this context, the Philippine hostess clubs in Japan have survived to the present day. Further research is needed to describe the diversity of experiences carefully, and such attempts will enrich the depiction of the lives of women based on the nightlife economies.

Appendix

This article is a revised version of the author's master's thesis "The Ethnography of Filipina Hostesses, Why Do Settled Women Continue to Work as Hostesses" submitted to the University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 2022. In addition, this work was supported by JST SPRING, Grant Number JPMJSP2108.

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