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# From Ilustrado Visions to Neocolonial Politics

## *Filipinos' Role in Regional (Re)integration, 1880s to 1960s<sup>1</sup>*

CARLOS JOAQUIN R. TABALON

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### ABSTRACT

Conventional geography and historiography have constantly defined Southeast Asia in relation to the outside, thus implying that the construction of the Southeast Asian regional identity has seemed to be inextricably linked to how external actors have perceived the region. But even prior to the formal founding of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, prominent historical figures from the Philippines already had an active role in envisioning and espousing regional (re)integration in the eight-decade period stretching from the Propaganda Movement until the Third Philippine Republic. I use the term “(re)integration” because, as this paper will strive to show, one aspect of the historical process of Filipino regional conceptualization during this eight-decade period was that Filipino historical figures saw themselves as part of a wider transnational sphere, which was already existing as a region even before the coming of the Western colonizers. But what exactly was the basis for the region which these Filipino figures believed that the Philippines belonged to was fluid; ranging from the anthropological and ethnocultural “Malay world,” to the Pan-Asianist and propagandistic “Greater East Asia,” to the ambiguous and realpolitik “Southeast Asia.”

### KEYWORDS

anti-colonialism

pan-Malayanism

pan-Asianism

Southeast Asia

regional integration

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally written to fulfill one of the requirements of Kasaysayan 115: Diplomatic History of the Philippines, a class offered by the University of the Philippines Diliman's Department of History during the First Semester of Academic Year 2021-2022. I am grateful to my professor, Dr. Ricardo T. Jose, for providing invaluable insights as I was still in the process of writing this paper and for permitting me to have this published. I am also grateful to the editors of *Dunong: UP Diliman Journal of Student Research*, for pointing out that many of the ideas of this paper have been similarly and more extensively discussed in Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912*, Columbia Studies in International and Global History (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020). I would like to clarify that before the editorial board pointed this out, I had yet to read, let alone be aware of Dr. Aboitiz' work, which is why I have done my best to properly cite and attribute ideas that have already been discussed beforehand in *Asian Place, Filipino Nation*, while of course endeavoring to honestly show that this essay is an original work of mine.

Conventional geography and historiography have constantly defined Southeast Asia in relation to the outside; in fact, our region's name has gone through many incarnations throughout history, and they have all been exonyms, which implies that the construction of the Southeast Asian regional identity has seemed to be inextricably linked to how external actors have perceived our region. The Chinese have called us *Nanyang*, from which the Japanese derived their own terminology for us—*Nan-yo*. Both meaning “South Seas,” the terms *Nanyang* and *Nan-yo* correspond to the geographical fact that our region lies to the south of both China and Japan.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese, particularly, owing to their ethnocentric worldview of living in the “Middle Kingdom,” saw the marginal South Seas as a world of barbarians wherein the Chinese cultural sway could be extended through the tribute system.<sup>3</sup> Our Indian neighbors, meanwhile, have labeled us as *Suvarnabhumi*, which roughly translates to “land of gold.”<sup>4</sup> Whether deliberately or not, they injected a degree of mythical imagining into their characterization because, as archaeological evidence shows, our ancestors seemingly took gold for granted because of its natural abundance in our lands.<sup>5</sup> Owing to existing networks of trade and commerce, the Indian imaginative geography of Southeast Asia as a “land of gold” reached Europe, with its people eventually harboring Orientalist imaginations fantasizing our region. Then, when Western colonialism was implanted in our land, the practice of labeling persisted as the imperial powers arbitrarily carved the boundaries of their colonial possessions.

Among the famous terms for our region during this time was “Farther India,” which French scholar George Coedes and British colonial administrator Hugh Clifford popularized in their works.<sup>6</sup> As can be deduced from the name itself, “Farther India” connoted that the cultural sway of India extended over the traditional states of Southeast Asia. Finally, with our region becoming entangled into the events of the Second World War, Allied strategists christened the term “Southeast Asia” to organize their regional base of operations situated within our area.<sup>7</sup> Following the Second World War and the subsequently ensuing Cold War, the now-independent Southeast Asian nations strove to overcome their particularistic differences by committing to work together for shared prosperity, as they formed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, in what is usually seen as the first time that Southeast Asians actively and concretely contributed in the regional identity discourse.<sup>8</sup>

But even prior to the formal founding of ASEAN in 1967, there had already been efforts among entities from within the Southeast Asian region to formulate a regional identity that transcended colonial and, later on, national borders. In particular, prominent historical figures from the Philippines had an active role in envisioning and espousing regional (re)integration in the eight-decade period stretching from the period of the Propaganda Movement until the Third Philippine Republic. I use the term “(re)integration” because, as this paper will strive to show, one aspect of the historical

<sup>2</sup> Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912*, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Holcombe, *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 8-9. Donald K. Emmerson, “Southeast Asia: What’s in a Name?,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15, no. 1 (March 1984): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463400012182>. For an excellent study on early Philippine and Maritime Southeast Asian relations with Dynastic China, see William Henry Scott, “Filipinos in China Before 1500,” *Asian Studies Journal* 21 (1983): 1-19.

<sup>4</sup> Emmerson, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Anna T. N. Bennett, “Gold in Early Southeast Asia,” *ArcheoSciences. Revue d’archéométrie*, no. 33 (December 31, 2009): 99-107, <https://doi.org/10.4000/archeosciences.2072>.

<sup>6</sup> George Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowling, Third Edition (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 1975), <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/115019/2/b11055005.pdf>; Hugh Clifford, *Further India* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, Ltd., 1904), <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.106887>; Emmerson, 1, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Seung Woo Park and Victor T. King, *The Historical Construction of Southeast Asian Studies: Korea and Beyond* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013); Emmerson, 7-9.

<sup>8</sup> Aboitiz, 4. To read more about the interesting historical development of the construction of the geographical term “Southeast Asia,” see Emmerson, 1-21.

process of Filipino regional conceptualization during this eight-decade period was that Filipino historical figures saw themselves as part of a wider transnational sphere which was already existing as a region even before the coming of the Western colonizers. Colonial rule needed to be overthrown so that this preexisting region, which these Filipino figures believed that the Philippines belonged to could be reintegrated and incorporated into the modern world. But during this eight-decade period, what exactly was the basis for the region which these Filipino figures believed that the Philippines belonged to was fluid; mainly owing to the changing political developments which the Philippines faced? Thus, the conceptual basis for political integration in the region ranged from the anthropological and ethnocultural “Malay world,” to the Pan-Asianist and propagandistic “Greater East Asia,” to the ambiguous and realpolitik “Southeast Asia.” Thus, it would be interesting to look at how Filipino figures navigated through the dynamic and tumultuous eight-decade period of the formation of a regional identity that transcended colonial, and, later, national borders, not least because Filipino figures were active players in this historical process. Following a linear tracing of the historical development of Filipinos’ role in the construction of a Southeast Asian identity, this paper will then synthesize the historical information presented by taking a comparative approach as a concluding analysis. Such an

approach would positively substantiate the notion that Filipino figures remained persistent in their efforts to concretize the sense of region that they had for the Philippines despite the changing contexts, which enveloped the country in a span of eight decades.

### THE ILUSTRADOS’ THRUST OF MALAYAN REVIVAL AND VISIONS OF MALAYAN REUNITY

The ilustrados extensively utilized history to legitimize their nationalist agitations. Building upon their advanced level of education, which they attained from their exposure to modern epistemological methods and approaches during their time, the ilustrados rediscovered and reoriented the understanding of Philippine history. During the pre-Hispanic period, they wrote of how the communities of the Philippine archipelago had a thriving culture closely related to its neighboring maritime states, the so-called “Malay world.”<sup>9</sup> In doing so, they not only provided a nationalist counter-narrative against Spanish skepticism toward the native Filipino civilization, they situated the Filipinos as part of a wider regional identity that transcended colonially created boundaries. Pedro Paterno rooted the “Tagalog civilization” to the arrival of the Malay peoples.<sup>10</sup> Trinidad Pardo de Tavera illustrated how the Tagalog language was linguistically linked to the Malay language through their common Sanskrit lexicon.<sup>11</sup> Isabelo de los Reyes postulated

<sup>9</sup> This view of the Filipino intellectuals that the “Malays” (i.e., Filipinos, Indonesians, Malaysians) are the ones who comprise the people of the wider region which they belong to should not be taken as exclusivist toward those living in present-day Mainland Southeast Asia (i.e., Vietnamese, Thai, Lao, Cambodians, Myanmar). Rather, this “narrow” view of what and who comprises the region should be seen as being a product of pre-World War II and pre-ASEAN geographical discourses of the region which saw present-day Southeast Asia as two (2) distinct regions; (1) Indochina, which denoted the mainland section, and (2) the Malay Archipelago, which denoted the maritime section. Since the Philippines is considered or grouped as a part of the latter, it thus follows that it has greater cultural affinity with the maritime peoples of present-day Southeast Asia, who were then called the “Malay race” in line with the dominant Western practice of placing people into racial categories. Among the works which is said to be influential in amplifying the distinctiveness of the maritime section is Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, Third Edition, 2 vols. (London and New York: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1872).

<sup>10</sup> Resil B. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes, and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (Ateneo University Press, 2006), 1-118; Portia L. Reyes, “A ‘Treasonous’ History of Filipino Historiography: The Life and Times of Pedro Paterno, 1858–1911,” *South East Asia Research* 14, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 87–121, <https://doi.org/10.5367/00000006776563686> both of which are cited in Rommel A. Curaming, “Filipinos as Malay: Historicizing an Identity,” in *Melayu: The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness*, ed. Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (National University of Singapore Press, 2012), 246, 247, 268, 269, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1qv383>; Aboitiz, 39, 45.

<sup>11</sup> Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, *Contribucion Para El Estudio de Los Antiguos Alfabetos Filipinos* (Losana: Imprenta de Jaunin Hermanos, 1884), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15421/15421-h/15421-h.htm>; Ibid., *El sanscrito en la lengua tagalog* (Paris: Imprinta de la Faculte de medecine, 1887) both of which are cited in Mojares, 119-252 and Curaming, 246, 247, 268, 269; Aboitiz, 39, 41.

that the Malays who settled in the Philippine archipelago initially spoke a proto-Malay language common to everyone in the “Malay Archipelago,” but as time went by, the proto-Malay language spoken by these Malay settlers in the Philippines supposedly splintered into numerous “dialects,” thus explaining the presence of various regional languages spoken by different Filipino ethnolinguistic groups.<sup>12</sup> Among all the ilustrados, it was Jose Rizal who had the most significant vision of how the Filipinos’ Malayan roots factored into the interconnectedness of the precolonial past, the colonial present, and the postcolonial future.<sup>13</sup> While unlike his fellow ilustrados, who concluded that Filipinos indeed descended from an “original” proto-Malayan race, Rizal nonetheless argued that the Filipinos shared with all the other people of the Malay race the trait of resiliency, wherein despite having gone through much brutality and oppression because of colonial subjugation, they have survived and would continue to survive. Moreover, he pioneered in debunking the commonly held

belief among European colonizers that the subjugated natives were indolent by nature, citing historical evidence that prior to foreign rule, pre-colonial Filipinos lived prosperous lives in their traditional communities.<sup>14</sup>

Cultural revival founded on scholarly work would then translate into sentiments of political irredentism that necessitated political action. Most notably, one of the subgroups of the *Indios Bravos*, the organization Rizal founded, aimed to reunite the Malay peoples scattered throughout the Malay Archipelago who have long been separated by colonially created borders.<sup>15</sup> At the end of the Philippine-American War, which the Filipino revolutionaries who kept fighting saw as a continuation of the struggle for independence that started in the Revolution of 1896, Apolinario Mabini continued to share this dream of reuniting all of the Malay peoples into a confederacy to resist the colonial powers in the region.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Isabelo de los Reyes, *Prehistoria de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de D.E. Balbas, 1889), 9-10; *Ibid.*, *Las islas Visayas en la epoca de la conquista* (Manila: Tipo-Litografia de Chofre y ca., 1889), 68, <http://archive.org/details/lasislasvisayaseooreye>; both of which are cited in Mojares, 299 and Curaming, 246, 247, 260, 268, 269; Aboitiz, 39.

<sup>13</sup> For more information on Rizal as well as his fellow propagandists’ “tripartite view” of history, see Zeus Salazar, “A Legacy of the Propaganda: The Tripartite View of Philippine History,” in *Mga Babasahin sa Agham Panlipunang Pilipino: Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Pilipinolohiya, at Pantayong Pananaw*, ed. Atoy Navarro and Flordeliza Lagbao-Bolante (Quezon City, Philippines: CandE Publishing, 2007), 81–101, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V1FMAzV7zw97OWmSb-OAxdfiVo3jAJRS/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>14</sup> José Rizal, *The Philippines a Century Hence*, ed. Austin Craig, Noli Me Tangere Quarter-Centennial Series (Manila: Philippine Education Company, 1912), <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/35899/pg35899-images.html.utf8>; *Ibid.*, “Annotations to Morga’s 1609 Philippine History,” accessed March 10, 2023, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12zQ5tmvRWBoDO43elpNd7OEB59zjosNF/view?usp=sharing>; both are cited in Curaming, 248–49, 269; Rizal, *The Indolence of the Filipino*, 1913, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6885/pg6885.html.utf8>; Aboitiz, 40, 50–2, 56–57, 59–60. For a sociological treatment of Rizal’s myth of the “lazy native” and his wider sociopolitical thought, see Syed Farid Alatas, “On Eurocentrism and Laziness: The Thought of Jose Rizal,” *Global Asia* 6, no. 1 (March 2011), [https://www.globalasia.org/v6no1/book/on-eurocentrism-and-laziness-the-thought-of-jose-rizal\\_syed-farid-alatas](https://www.globalasia.org/v6no1/book/on-eurocentrism-and-laziness-the-thought-of-jose-rizal_syed-farid-alatas) and *Ibid.*, “Jose Rizal (1861–1896),” in *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon*, by Syed Farid Alatas and Vineeta Sinha (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 143–70.

<sup>15</sup> Curaming, 249; Aboitiz, 59. I share the same sentiment with what Curaming expressed in “Filipinos as Malay,” wherein he posited that the fact that such a revolutionary goal had existed as early as 1889, which was the year when Rizal founded the *Indios Bravos*, potentially implies the need to further set back the onset of revolutionary ideas in the late Spanish colonial period, of course pending additional evidence and studies.

<sup>16</sup> Cesar Adib Majul, *Apolinario Mabini: Revolutionary* (Manila: National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 1970), 204 as cited in Curaming, 249, 270; Ferdinand Philip F. Victoria, “Notes on Tan Malaka’s Pan-Malayan Views in His Letter to Manuel Quezon,” *Jurnal Sejarah* 3, no. 1 (May 16, 2020): 65; Augusto V. de Viana, “The Dream of Malayan Unity: President Diosdado Macapagal and the MAPHILINDO,” *SEJARAH: Journal of the Department of History* 24, no. 1 (2015), 44, <https://doi.org/10.22452/sejarah.vol24no1.4>; Aboitiz, 109.

Despite a new imperial power, the United States, possessing control of the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century, nationalist figures were not deterred from continuing irredentist visions. For instance, renowned student leader Wenceslao Q. Vinzons of the University of the Philippines, inspired by the Pan-Malayan views of Rizal and Mabini, founded the *Perhimpoean Orang Melayoe* (Pan-Malayan Union), whose aim was to academically and culturally bring together “peoples of Malay descent.”<sup>17</sup> Vinzons’ Perhimpoean admitted members who were of other nationalities, such as youth from Siam, Malaya, and even Polynesia. Vinzons also delivered an impassioned speech entitled *Malaysia Irredenta*, wherein he advocated the “reunion” of all the Malays scattered from Madagascar in the west to Polynesia in the east. This, according to Vinzons, must be done not just to form an effective bulwark against the already-existing Western imperial occupation of “Malay territories,” but to counter Japan’s already-manifesting expansionist tendencies, which he foresaw would lead to a major war that would collectively affect the Malays.<sup>18</sup>

When Vinzons finished his studies in UP and became a lawyer-politician, he turned the *Perhimpoean Orang Melayoe* to the “Young Philippines” movement, which eventually became a political party. Vinzons’ renaming of the organization, however, did not mean that Filipino nationalism now occupied greater importance; on the contrary, he maintained

that Filipino nationalism and Pan-Malay irredentism were inseparable causes. As a political party, the Young Philippines made it its mission to reclaim Philippine independence through legislative means, as seen in their support for the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act. Once the campaign for independence was accomplished, the Young Philippines would endeavor to realize Vinzons’ vision of a united Malayan confederacy. Famous Filipino political figures of this period, such as Manuel A. Roxas, Jose P. Laurel, Rafael Palma, and Maximo Kalaw, supported the Young Philippines. A notable member of the Young Philippines was Diosdado Macapagal, who would later on play a role in the Philippines’ efforts in “reintegrating” Filipinos with their fellow Malays in Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>19</sup>

The anti-colonial ideas first propagated by the Filipino revolutionaries spread outside Philippine borders, and they resonated among other fellow Asians who were also under the shackles of colonial rule, such as the Indonesian communist revolutionary, Tan Malaka. Malaka greatly idolized Rizal and Andres Bonifacio, as well as the masses of Filipinos who partook in the Revolution, for being valiant trailblazers in the struggle for independence. In fact, when he conceptualized a Taman Manusia (Garden of Humanity) monument for Indonesia, he placed Rizal and Bonifacio at the summit of homegrown heroes from whom his Indonesian compatriots must take inspiration.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> While at present we use “Austronesian” or “Malayo-Polynesian” as umbrella terms to denote the ethnic groups of maritime peoples stretching from Madagascar to Polynesia, at that time “Malay” was the more popular term because the Malays were considered as constituting of a particular race, in line with the dominant Western practice of grouping people into races. An example of a colonial era textbook which popularized the notion of Filipinos as belonging to the so-called “Malay race” is David Prescott Barrows, *A History of the Philippines* (American Book Company, 1905), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/38269/38269-h/38269-h.htm> as cited in Curaming, 249. To read a more accurate theorization of the Filipinos’ ethnocultural connection with Malays, see F. Landa Jocano, *Questions and Challenges in Philippine Prehistory* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975), 49–50, as cited in Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, Eighth (Quezon City, Philippines: Garotech Publishing, 1990), 21–22. For more recent and updated discussions tackling the topic of Filipinos’ perception as belonging to the Malay domain, see Zeus A. Salazar, *The Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (Quezon City, Philippines: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998); Curaming, 241–73; and Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887–1912*.

<sup>18</sup> Caroline S. Hau, “Transregional Southeast Asia: Perspectives from an Outlier,” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 68, no. 1 (March 16, 2020): 11; de Viana, 46–47; Aboitiz, 178, 180.

<sup>19</sup> de Viana, 46–47; Aboitiz, 178, 180.

<sup>20</sup> Ramon Guillermo, “Andres Bonifacio: Proletarian Hero of the Philippines and Indonesia,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 18, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 338–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2017.1350498>; Aboitiz, 152–53.

Owing to his affinity with Filipino nationalism, as well as his assignment as Communist International's emissary for Southeast Asia in 1923, which provided him an opportunity to establish contacts with people who were all under the yoke of colonial rule, Malaka then developed pan-Malayan views of his own, linking it to the international communist cause of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism.<sup>21</sup> At one point, in one of his visits to the Philippines, he mentioned that a pan-Malayan confederation should be established, and he suggested that Davao be assigned as its capital. According to Malaka, the concrete step to transforming this vision into reality was that Filipinos ought to enlist the help of their fellow Malays "from the South" in their continuing struggle for national independence.<sup>22</sup> His rapport with Filipinos had earned him the respect and support from other prominent Filipino political figures of this time, such as Former President Emilio Aguinaldo, House Speaker Manuel A. Roxas, Jose Abad Santos, and Senate President Manuel L. Quezon.<sup>23</sup> In fact, it could be even inferred that Malaka influenced Quezon, since the two corresponded with each other, albeit very briefly, after the former was deported from the Philippines.<sup>24</sup> Quezon, upon his election as President of the Philippine Commonwealth, is said to have also entertained the prospect of a Pan-Malayan union, the composition of which

greatly mirrored that of Malaka's final version of his envisioned Pan-Malayan confederation, the *Federasi Aslia* (Aslia Federation).<sup>25</sup> Both Quezon and Malaka's proposals involved confederating Annam, Siam, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines. However, because not much is written about Quezon's plan, we will need to relegate this to the realm of tentativeness for now.<sup>26</sup>

## WARTIME AND POSTWAR: THE CHALLENGE TO TRANSLATE REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS INTO REALITY

At the dawn of the 1940s, Japan swiftly supplanted the Western imperial powers in the wider Asia Pacific region, thereby effectively rendering the region as a major theater in the Second World War. Amidst the brutality of their occupation towards their Asian brethren, the Japanese strove to groom themselves not as fascists who stifled the development of those who they subjugated just as the preceding Westerners did; but as "saviors" who would lead their fellow Asians on the road to shared prosperity. The Japanese were possibly aware of the preconceptions of many Asian nationalists who looked up to Japan as an exemplar of economic progress and technological advancement,<sup>27</sup> so they tried to

<sup>21</sup> Aboitiz, 152. Some scholars label Malaka's pan-Malayan views as "pan-Indonesian" owing to the obvious fact that Malaka's frame of reference was his being an Indonesian. To read more about the development of his pan-Malayan/pan-Indonesian views, see Ahmat Adam, *Melayu, Nasionalisme Radikal dan Pembinaan Bangsa* (Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2013); Rudolf Mrázek, "Tan Malaka: A Political Personality's Structure of Experience" 14 (October 1972): 1–48; both of which are cited in Victoria, "Notes on Tan Malaka's Pan-Malayan Views in His Letter to Manuel Quezon," 66.

<sup>22</sup> "Tan Malacca's Two-Faced Views," *Philippines Free Press*, September 10, 1927 as cited in Victoria, 69.

<sup>23</sup> de Viana, 48–49; Victoria, 66–72.

<sup>24</sup> Victoria, 73–78.

<sup>25</sup> Helen Jarvis, trans., *From Jail to Jail*, vol. I (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1991), xcvi–xcvii; Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Pergulatan Menuju Republik, 1925–1945* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1999), 385; Mrázek, 33, 34, 35; all of which are cited in Victoria, 66, 69–70. The term *Aslia* is a portmanteau of "Asia" and "Australia." Interestingly, *asli* in Bahasa Indonesia means "native"; but whether Malaka meant this to have an implied or deeper meaning is not known.

<sup>26</sup> Only one reference cites Quezon's vision of a pan-Malayan union, which is that of Eduardo L. Martelino, *Someday Malaysia* (New York: Pageant Press, 1959).

<sup>27</sup> To read more about how Filipino nationalists perceived Japan during the period that the Philippines was still a Western colony, see Elpidio R. Sta. Romana and Ricardo T. Jose, "Never Imagine Yourself to Be Otherwise...: Filipino Image of Japan Over the Centuries," *Asian Studies Journal* 29 (1991): 71–73, 76–78; and Jose, "Reformists and Revolutionaries: Filipinos View Meiji Japan, 1880s–1980s," in *Revisiting Japan's Restoration: New Approaches to the Study of the Meiji Transformation*, ed. Timothy D. Amos and Akiko Ishii, Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia (Routledge, 2021), Chapter 7.



meet these expectations to mask the brutality they inflicted and to hasten popular support for their regime. One way they did this was through the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, an umbrella paradigm that envisaged economic and cultural unity among Asians. Pan-Asianism, which was confined to the circles of the learned beforehand,<sup>28</sup> was now being practiced at a wider scale because of the dictations of the Japanese Empire. Notwithstanding the evidence that reveals that the Japanese propped up the Co-prosperity Sphere as a propaganda tool to placate Asian nationalist sentiments while slyly exploiting the resources of their occupied territories,<sup>29</sup> the Co-prosperity Sphere nonetheless provided an avenue for inter-Asian exchanges that proved formative to a wider Asian regional consciousness, as particularly exemplified in the Greater East Asia Conference held in Tokyo in November 1943, wherein the delegations of Asian countries displayed, at least rhetorically, a united front versus Western imperialism and support for the Japanese cause of winning the “War of Greater East Asia.”<sup>30</sup> It is also worth mentioning that Burma and the Philippines strove to forge closer ties through the Co-prosperity Sphere when Ba Maw briefly visited the Philippines after attending the Greater East Asia Conference, and more significantly, when

the Burmese Research Commission visited the Philippines in June 1944 to learn from the latter’s experience in developing a relatively more sophisticated political system.<sup>31</sup>

In the case of the Philippines, which was *de facto* headed by the Japanese-sponsored Second Republic,<sup>32</sup> its participation in the Co-prosperity Sphere had the effect of unanchoring Filipino officials from their pro-American, pro-Western tendencies, as most exemplified in the personae of President Jose P. Laurel and Minister of Foreign Affairs Claro M. Recto. As figures who held important positions during the Second Republic primarily because of their crucial roles in handling the country’s diplomacy, Laurel and Recto were the ones who were most exposed to these ideas of Pan-Asianism. Despite their disapproval of the Japanese imperialists’ oppressive methods of governance, they nonetheless realized and recognized the significance of reorienting the Philippines away from the orbit of the United States, and instead towards its more proximate Asian neighbors whose experiences and psyches mirrored that of the Filipinos.<sup>33</sup> It was also this same exposure that shaped Laurel and Recto’s more nationalist views, which they amplified following the war and were further bolstered by their disillusionment with the

<sup>28</sup> As Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912*, has made clear, Pan-Asianism is a wide-ranging, complex concept not confined to Japan and/or the Japanese Empire. To read more about Pan-Asianism in Japan, see Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders* (Routledge, 2007), as cited in Aboitiz, 15.

<sup>29</sup> To read more about the Co-prosperity sphere, see “The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere” (Research and Analysis Branch, Office of Strategic Services, Central Intelligence Agency, August 10, 1945), [https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC\\_0000710366.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000710366.pdf); John W Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> To access a copy of the conference’s joint resolution, see “Joint Declaration of the Greater East Asia Conference,” November 6, 1943, World War II Database, <https://wwzdb.com/doc.php?q=492>.

<sup>31</sup> Jeremy A. Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War*, The Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2019), 178, 194.

<sup>32</sup> Two governments were administering Philippine affairs during the Second World War; the *de jure* Commonwealth government which was in exile in the United States, and the *de facto* Second Republic, also known as the “Laurel Republic,” which was directly governing the Philippines.

<sup>33</sup> Aboitiz, 164-71. See Claro M. Recto, “Letter to Lieutenant-General T. Wati,” June 13, 1944, for a source which belies the claim that the officials of the Second Republic were mere “puppets” to the Japanese Empire. To know more about the Second Republic’s diplomatic efforts despite operating within the political constraints of the Japanese empire, see Ricardo T. Jose, “Test of Wills: Diplomacy between Japan and the Laurel Government,” in *Philippines-Japan Relations*, ed. Setsuho Ikehata and Lydia N. Yu-Jose (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003), 185-222.

US' presumptuous attitude towards the Philippines on the issue of collaboration and the US' neocolonial meddling in Philippine affairs, despite the Filipinos having already reclaimed independence in 1946.<sup>34</sup>

The end of the Second World War ushered in the worldwide process of decolonization and provided an opportunity to finally realize desires for regional integration. However, the newly independent nation-states struggled with charting their own trajectories, having to contend with the persistent influence of both old and new imperial powers, especially amidst the backdrop of the Cold War. Consequently, the trend in the decades of the Cold War found military and security matters, rather than historical-cultural reasons, as the more potent motivation for regional integration. The emergent region of Southeast Asia, which had been initially named for Allied military strategists' convenience during the Second World War, was not exempt from this.

Immediately after the war, the Philippines regained its independence, thereby ushering in the period of the Third Republic. But because the national economy was in tatters, it had to rely greatly on the assistance of more affluent countries. However, following the war, there was no other affluent country which the Philippines could turn to for aid other than its wartime ally, the US, which emerged from the Second World War in an unprecedentedly stronger position than ever before.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the administration of Manuel A. Roxas, the first President of the Third Republic, initiated the policy of maintaining close relations with the United States. Roxas' exceptionally favorable view of the US constituted a reversal of the

Philippines' nascent reorientation towards its Asian neighbors in the preceding Japanese occupation. While the Roxas administration did send a delegation to the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1947 that allowed Filipino representatives to come into contact with the many Asian nationalist movements during this time, nothing really concrete came out of this attempt to forge a regional organization that sought to be independent from both Western and Soviet influences. Apart from this, any more attempts from the Roxas administration at forwarding regional cohesion would be eclipsed by the country's very active participation in establishing the United Nations (UN), as well as the government's preoccupation in securing military agreements with the US.<sup>36</sup>

When Roxas suddenly died midway into his term in 1948, his Vice President and concurrent Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SFA) Elpidio R. Quirino succeeded him in the presidency. Although Quirino continued his predecessor's policy of siding with the US on key international issues, as most evidently seen in his sending of a Philippine contingent to the Korean War to assist the side of the American-backed Republic of Korea, as well as depending heavily on American support in postwar rehabilitation and quelling insurgencies particularly the Huk rebellion, he nonetheless was more open to establishing closer ties with other nations in the region that the Philippines belonged to, perhaps realizing the significance of diversifying relations to further strengthen the Philippine position in the international arena during his stint as SFA. In particular, Quirino seemed keen in cultivating friendlier ties with newly independent Indonesia, as seen

<sup>34</sup> On the Philippine side, Laurel was the proponent of the 1955 Laurel-Langley agreement, which amended the rather "extreme" parity rights given to Americans as stipulated in the previous 1946 Bell Trade Act. Meanwhile, Recto is known for his incisive commentaries critical of American meddling in Philippine affairs, such as *Ibid.*, "Three Years of Enemy Occupation, The Issue of Political Collaboration in the Philippines," in *Philippine History Source Book: Annotated Compilation of Selected Philippine History Primary Sources and Secondary Works in Electronic Format*, by Earl Jude Paul Cleope et al. (National Commission for Culture and the Arts-National Committee on Historical Research, 2021), 298–304; and *Ibid.*, "Our Mendicant Foreign Policy," 1951.

<sup>35</sup> Ricardo T. Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946–1986," in *Cold War Southeast Asia*, ed. Malcolm H. Murfett (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2012), 50–4.

<sup>36</sup> Milton Walter Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic* (University of Hawaii Press, 1965), 29–82; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946–1986," 50–8.



in his support for the Indonesian independence movement, which was in line with the Philippines' diplomatic stance of advocating national self-determination of former colonies. Later on, Quirino also provided humanitarian assistance to Indonesia when the country was hit by a natural calamity.<sup>37</sup>

In an attempt to show that the Philippines was at the forefront in diplomacy amidst deepening Cold War tensions, Quirino met with President Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China in Baguio in 1949 to lay the foundation for a "Pacific Pact" to counter communism and concurrently promote economic and cultural cooperation among its member states.<sup>38</sup> The following year, Quirino convened representatives from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Thailand, Indonesia, and Australia in Baguio to establish the regional bloc. Moreover, Quirino invited the US to join the bloc, but the US did not approve of it because it saw that the bloc's prospective member states, with the exception of Australia, were not ideologically aligned with the US. This, coupled with the fact that the Quirino administration found itself preoccupied in salvaging its tarnished domestic image amidst allegations of corruption, made Quirino's Pacific Pact fail to further materialize.<sup>39</sup>

Quirino's former Secretary of National Defense, Ramon Magsaysay, succeeded him in the presidency upon winning the

1953 election. Magsaysay was known for his staunchly pro-US stance, not least because of his reliance on American support during his election campaign and putting an end to the Huk rebellion.<sup>40</sup> While Magsaysay did attempt to prove that the Philippines had a sense of community with its Southeast Asian neighbors, he nonetheless still struggled in getting out of the American shadow. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which Magsaysay had a role in organizing, was seen as an organization that had a shallow ideological basis, merely fixating itself on anti-communism as a collective security issue and nothing more.<sup>41</sup> Only two Southeast Asian countries, Thailand and the Philippines, joined SEATO because they saw communism as a genuine threat to national security. The other non-communist Southeast Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Burma, and Malaya, did not join because they felt that joining SEATO would belie their neutral stance during the Cold War, especially in light of their commitment to neutrality following their participation in the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. These setbacks to regional unity notwithstanding, Magsaysay still believed that the Philippines had a responsibility to its fellow Southeast Asians, as seen when he sent medical assistance to the South Vietnamese side in the Vietnam War through Operation Brotherhood.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Meyer, 83-140, 142-43, 146-47; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 58, 60.

<sup>38</sup> "Joint Statement of President Quirino and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek," July 11, 1949, Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1949/07/11/joint-statement-of-president-quirino-and-generalissimo-chiang-kai-shek/>.

<sup>39</sup> Meyer, 141-162; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 60-1.

<sup>40</sup> Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 68-69. To read more about the manifestations of neocolonialism during the Magsaysay administration, see Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr., *The Third Philippine Republic, 1946-1972* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1993), 149-50, 168-69, 183; Stephen Roskham Shalom, *The United States and the Philippines: A Study of Neocolonialism* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1981), 92-93, 98-99, 103-109, 117-119, 134-13; and Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York, NY: Random House, 1989), 355.

<sup>41</sup> Meyer, 163-248; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 69. For a criticism on the "ineffectualness" of SEATO as an organization, see John K. Franklin, *The Hollow Pact: Pacific Security and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization*, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 70.

Magsaysay's unexpected death in a plane crash in 1957 propelled his Vice President and concurrent SFA Carlos P. Garcia to the presidency. Garcia, who possibly took offense at other countries' accusations that the Philippines was nothing more than a puppet of the US, made it his administration's agenda to prove that Philippine independence was real and ought to be respected. Thus, Garcia's "Respectable Independence" foreign policy meant that the Philippines would be more diplomatically assertive on pertinent issues, and that the country would unequivocally prioritize its own interests rather than those of other countries. While Garcia never intended to ultimately sever ties with the US because he recognized the importance of continuing American assistance, his "Respectable Independence" policy nonetheless strained Philippine-American relations. Lukewarm relations with the US under Garcia's administration provided an opportunity for the Philippines to actuate regional integration out of its own initiative,<sup>43</sup> as seen when the country co-founded with Thailand and the Federation of Malaya the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961. ASA was meant to focus more on harnessing cultural relations among its members, in contrast to the security-fixated SEATO. ASA, however, met its immediate demise when Garcia's Vice President and political rival, Diosdado Macapagal, won the 1961 Philippine election, as Macapagal ignored ASA and sought to flex his own diplomatic abilities through his "The Philippines Turns East" policy.<sup>44</sup>

Importantly, Macapagal's "Turns East" policy did not really depart from what the

Garcia administration had already started, which was to balance the Philippines' diversification of diplomatic ties with that of its traditionally close relations with the US. Because of this, the Americans were also not fond of Macapagal as they were of Garcia.<sup>45</sup> Macapagal paid no attention to the Americans' opinion of him, and he set out to implement his "Turns East" policy. Taking inspiration from his earlier participation in Wenceslao Vinzon's "Young Philippines" movement that espoused Pan-Malayanism, from June to July 1963 Macapagal convened Indonesian President Sukarno and Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in a series of conferences that paved the way for the establishment of the Greater Malayan Confederation, better known as MAPHILINDO (Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia). The more overt rationale for MAPHILINDO's formation was to provide an avenue wherein the three countries could resolve together the interconnected problems plaguing the region, which mainly centered on the fate of North Borneo, also known as Sabah, vis-a-vis Malaysia's plan to include Sabah in its newly-formed federation, the Philippines' territorial claim to Sabah, and Indonesia's fears of British encroachment. Nonetheless, MAPHILINDO still gave the impression that it represented a pivotal step in finally realizing the longtime dream of "reuniting" the peoples of the Malay Archipelago.<sup>46</sup>

However, it soon became apparent that the Philippines and Indonesia's intentions in being active proponents of the confederation were less motivated by historical-cultural considerations than the preservation of their respective countries' territorial integrity. In

<sup>43</sup> H. Bradford Westerfield, *The Instruments of America's Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1963), 420; Gleeck, 236, 252; Meyer, 247-70; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 72-75. For a more in-depth survey of Garcia's foreign policy, see Severo Canete 1981- Madrona, "Respectable Independence: The Foreign Policy of Carlos P. Garcia, 1957-1961" (University of the Philippines, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> See Diosdado Macapagal, *The Philippines Turns East* (Quezon City, Philippines: Mac Publishing House, 1966) for an explanation of this diplomatic policy from Macapagal himself.

<sup>45</sup> Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 43; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 75; Gleeck, 273.

<sup>46</sup> Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946-1986," 75; de Viana, 49-54; Aboitiz, 179-80. To read primary sources pertaining to MAPHILINDO and its related issues, see "Philippines, Federation of Malaya and Indonesia: Manila Accord" (United Nations Treaty Series, December 30, 1965), <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20550/volume-550-I-8029-English.pdf>; and *Philippine Claim to North Borneo (Sabah)*, First Reprint, vol. II (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1968).

particular, the two countries feared that British supervision in the formation of Malaysia constituted a threat to their territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Philippine and Indonesian antagonism toward Malaysia would only worsen when the UN, the entity which the three countries assigned as a neutral arbiter on Sabah's fate, ruled that the decision of the people of Sabah to join the Federation of Malaysia must be respected by both Indonesia and the Philippines. Consequently, just a month after the formation of the confederation, MAPHILINDO was eventually dissolved as Indonesia adopted the *Konfrontasi* ("Confrontation") policy toward Malaysia, and Malaysia severed ties with Indonesia and the Philippines.<sup>47</sup>

In 1965, then-Senate President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. defeated Macapagal in the race to the Philippine presidency. While the Marcos Sr. administration maintained that the Philippines' Sabah claim remained, he eventually did not pursue the claim any further especially after the failure of Operation Merdeka<sup>48</sup> that resulted into the highly controversial 1968 Jabidah massacre, as well as his preoccupation to preserve the integrity of the ASEAN, which had just been formed in 1967, in which the Philippines and Malaysia were founding members.<sup>49</sup> Since then, ASEAN has striven to become the successful embodiment of hopes of regional integration to its member states, which are not only restricted to the maritime countries,

but also to those on the mainland subregion.<sup>50</sup> For the Philippines, the founding of ASEAN represents a culminating point in its historical figures' decades-long efforts of finally (re)integrating a region, which they saw as the rightful place of the mother country.

## SYNTHESIS / CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

### *A Comparative Look into the Filipino View of a Wider Regional Identity in Three Time Periods*

From this historical survey of Filipino historical figures' efforts in integrating the Philippines to wider collective imaginaries, comparisons will now be drawn in the evolving Filipino conceptualization of a regional identity. The fluidity surrounding what Filipino figures thought of as comprising of the region which the Philippines belonged to reflects shifting perspectives given the constantly changing context throughout the eight-decade periodization of this study.

From the given periodization, three distinct periods of Filipino regional conceptualization can be observed. The first is the period coinciding between the Propaganda Movement until the American occupation of the Philippines, wherein Filipino intellectuals, such as Rizal, Mabini, and Vinzons, thought of the Philippines as belonging to the supranational "Malay world." They framed the Malay world

<sup>47</sup> Gerald Sussman, "Macapagal, the Sabah Claim and Maphilindo: The Politics of Penetration," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 13, no. 2 (January 1, 1983): 210–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472338380000141>; Jose, "The Philippines During the Cold War: Searching for Security Guarantees and Appropriate Foreign Policies, 1946–1986," 75; de Viana, 54–62.

<sup>48</sup> Operation Merdeka was a secret plan commissioned by the Philippine government to train Muslim Filipino soldiers so that they could infiltrate Sabah and cause instability there so as to provide a pretext for a Philippine-led invasion of Sabah which would supposedly lead to the Philippines reclaiming the said territory. This group of soldiers was then named "Jabidah." However, when the Muslim Filipino soldiers, who had an affinity with their fellow Muslims in Sabah, found out the real purpose of their plan, they rebelled, and the higher military command of the Philippine government decided to kill them and conceal all evidence of the secret plan and the massacre of the Muslim soldiers. The control of information which surrounded this issue has thus sparked immense controversy.

<sup>49</sup> To view a copy of the document which formally established ASEAN, see "The ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)," August 8, 1967, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, <https://agreement.asean.org/media/download/2014011754159.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> In recent times, however, ASEAN has faced criticism over its non-unity on the issue of Chinese incursions to its member states, as well as its member states' incoherent stance on the 2021 Myanmar coup which unseated the democratically elected government there. To read a recent editorial article critiquing the recent "ineffectualness" of ASEAN, see David Hutt, "Has the ASEAN Chair Become Too Powerful?," *The Diplomat*, January 14, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/has-the-asean-chair-become-too-powerful/>.

as a manifestation of regional cohesion or unity already existing even before the coming of the Western colonizers. Western colonialism, however, would interrupt this idyllic state of things and plunge the natives of the region into misery and an ignorance of the tranquil past. For these pan-Malayan Filipino figures, rekindling the kinship ties with their “fellow Malays” would lead to a collective struggle against colonial oppression; the success of the overthrow of colonial rule would mark the return of prosperity for the peoples of the Malay world. However, with the continuance of the colonial-imperial order until the end of the Second World War, fully realizing this idealistic vision remained unattainable.

Filipino regional conceptualization would widen in scope during the Japanese occupation. As a result of the Japanese imperial ideology of Pan-Asianism, the basis for the Filipino sense of region was not anymore confined to Malay ethnocultural affinity, but to every Asian nationality belonging under “Greater East Asia.” Anti-Western sentiments flared up by Japanese imperial propaganda proved to be a galvanizing force for a Pan-Asian regional consciousness positively received and appropriated by Asian leaders, who, despite still being under a brutal imperial power, were made to feel that they were finally charting their own destinies, not just as individual “independent” nations, but also as a fledgling region emerging from years of bondage to oppressive Western colonialism. The Pan-Asianist convictions of Laurel and Recto, and the diplomacy between the Second Philippine Republic and Burma concretely exemplified the shift in the Filipino regional conceptualization from Pan-Malayanism to Pan-Asianism during this time.

As the Second World War ended, the contemporary region of Southeast Asia then came into being as decolonization ensued. With neighboring states finally becoming independent nations, Filipino leaders remained persistent in their attempts to finally integrate the Philippines with its neighbors. However, with the shadow of superpower

rivalry of the Cold War also falling upon the region, there would be an observable shift in motivations for regional integration. While there would still be pronouncements of harkening back to shared cultural roots and a common resolve to overcome problems inherited from preceding colonial experiences parallel to the earlier two periods of Filipino regional conceptualization, regional security and stability seemed to be the more potent overriding justification for the organization of these postwar regional groupings, as was the case of Quirino’s stillborn Pacific Pact, Macapagal’s short-lived MAPHILINDO, and even the successful ASEAN. Of note as well on the side of the Philippines is its struggle to get out of the American neocolonial shadow through its leaders’ aforementioned initiatives in concretizing regional integration, in a bid to show that the country valued its place in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia.

Notwithstanding seemingly apparent discontinuities, divergences, and shifts in the historical development of Filipino conceptualization of a wider regional identity, it is clear that, in the eight-decade period examined in this study, Filipino historical figures believed, in varying ways, that the Philippines has always belonged to Asia. This was not just by virtue of geographical location, but also of commonalities conditioned by history; pre-colonial ethnocultural unity; shared experiences of colonialism; and a post-colonial vision of wanting to be free from dictation from outside forces. Amidst the constraints of Western colonialism, Japanese imperialism, and neocolonial Cold War politics, Filipinos have navigated their way through the tumultuous world of an increasingly anti-colonial Asia from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, and have consistently endeavored to be active participants in the dynamic discourse of regional integration. As Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz has comprehensively and excellently shown in her work, the significance of Filipino-led efforts in the construction of an Asian identity cannot be underestimated because of their role in mobilizing peoples in different places and times throughout Asian

history;<sup>51</sup> as in the case of the aforementioned example of Indonesian revolutionary figure Tan Malaka, who also shared the ilustrado desire of turning into reality a Pan-Malayan union.<sup>52</sup> Such an appreciation of these efforts not just proves that the Philippines and its inhabitants are neither outliers nor outsiders to the Southeast Asia and wider Asian region,<sup>53</sup> but also, leads us to better identify with native and more organic conceptualizations of our home region because these efforts are nearer to our collective experience.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912*.

<sup>52</sup> Apart from Tan Malaka, other non-Filipino Southeast Asians who also espoused Pan-Malayanism were Muhammad Yamin of Indonesia, as well as Ibrahim Ya'acob of Malaya, as cited in de Viana, 49. While not explicitly advocating the political union of the Malay Archipelago, Malaysian scholar Syed Hussein Alatas nonetheless placed the Malay, Filipino, and Javanese natives in an equal cultural footing with each other in his seminal work, which is Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and Its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: Frank Cass, 2006).

<sup>53</sup> To read about the way the Philippines is positioned often ambivalently in relation to wider Southeast Asia, see Hau, "Transregional Southeast Asia."

<sup>54</sup> For an introductory survey of the way the region of Maritime Southeast Asia has been intellectually constructed in various ways, see Guat Peng Ngoi, "Editorial Introduction: The Pluralistic Thoughts and Imagined Boundaries in Nusantara," trans. Jia Jia Teo and Ying Xin Show, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 18, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 313-16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2017.1353399>.

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# Kuwento ng digmaan, digmaan sa kuwento:

## Ang Naratibo ng Panulat at Manunulat sa Tagalog sa Panahon ng Okupasyong Hapones sa Pilipinas

KEVIN ARMINGOL

### ABSTRAK

Layunin ng pag-aaral na ito na tukuyin ang mga tampok na pangyayari at kaganapang may kinalaman sa usaping pampanitikan at manunulat sa Tagalog noong Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig, partikular ang librong *25 Pinakamabubuting Maikling Kathang Pilipino ng 1943* bilang primaryang batis ng pananaliksik. Susuriin ng pag-aaral ang mga ng tumatalakay sa napipinto o nagaganap nang digmaan bilang kritika at/o obserbasyon ng mga manunulat sa Tagalog na hindi maisatinig ng kasalukuyang panahong iyon ng okupasyon ng mga Hapones sa Pilipinas. Sa kabila ng sensura ng *Manila Shimbunsha*, ang pangunahing pangkultura't pampropagandang ahensiya sa ilalim ng Kagawaran ng Impormasyon ng Pamahalaang Militar ng mga Hapon sa Pilipinas, inaasahang matukoy nito ang katangian ng mga kuwentong may kinalaman at/o tumatalakay tungkol sa digmaan ng panahong iyon na napabilang sa 25 pinakamabubuting maikling kuwento at masuri ang namamayaning nilalaman at anyo ng mga ito sa pangkalahatang sipat. Nais ding mapalitaw sa pag-aaral na ito ang mga sakripisyong ipinuhunan ng mga manunulat at ng mga nagsikap na magsulat upang mabuhay at manatiling buhay—ang kanilang mga laging napapanahon at nananaig na aral sa kani-kanilang naratibo't salaysay na may saysay, na bukod sa pagkatha, pinili ng marami sa hanay ng manunulat na landasin ang armadong pakikibaka laban sa mga dayuhan alang-alang sa Inang Bayan.

### MGA SUSING SALITA

manunulat

kuwento

Tagalog

Hapon

digmaan

Isa sa mga pinakamalubhang nawasak ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig na naitala sa buong mundo ang Maynila. Ang Maynila, bago ang digmaan at nang matapos ito, ang siyang lugar ng huntahan ng mga itinuturing na gitnang saray ng lipunang Pilipino—ang mga edukado't intelektwal, lalo na ng mga manunulat at artistang Pilipino, na siyang isa sa mayoryang bumubuo at nag-aambag sa produksiyong pang-intelektwal at pampanitikan bilang sentro ng pampulitikang kapangyarihan at komersiyo. Gayunpaman, sa kabila ng kanilang angking talino, kasanayan, at kakayahang hinubog ng sistema't kaayusang kolonyal ng Amerika, sinubok ang kanilang uri sa pakikisama sa panibagong dayuhang mananakop: ang Hapones.

Samot-sari ang reaksiyon ng mga manunulat na naabutan ang panahong ito. Sinong makakapagsabi na magiging batayan ng kanilang buhay at kamatayan ang kanilang mga akda sa panahon ng digmaan?

Layunin ng papel na ito ang suriin ang 25 *Pinakamabuting Maikling Kathang Pilipino ng 1943* na nagsilbing markang-bato ng panitikang Tagalog sa panahon ng okupasyong Hapones sa Pilipinas sa ilalim ng *Manila Shimbunsha*, ang pangunahing pangkultura't pampropagandang ahensiya sa ilalim ng Kagawaran ng Impormasyon ng Pamahalaang Militar ng Hapones sa Pilipinas. Sa pamamagitan nito, nais pulsuhan ng pag-aaral ang itinuturing na pinakamabubuting kuwento at pag-unlad nito sa panahong bago at habang nagaganap ang digmaan at papaano ito umangkop sa prinsipyong “Asia for Asians” ng mga Hapon sa ilalim ng kanilang adbokasyang Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACPS). Sasagutin din ng papel na ito ang mga hakbang na isinagawa ng mga Hapon nang sa gayo'y tuluyan nilang nakuha ang loob ng mga Pilipino—na siyang nagtulak ng kanilang mga pang-ekonomiyang interes at agenda para sa kanilang pagpapalakas sa Asya-Pasipiko. Sa kabilang banda, susuriin din nito ang danas na sinapit ng ilang manunulat sa Tagalog noong okupasyon ng mga Hapon, at ang kanilang pakikiangkop at pakikitunggali sa kanilang kalagayan.

## MGA TUGON SA NAGBABADYANG DIGMAAN

Maugong na ang pangalan ng bansang Hapon humigit-kumulang isang dekada bago pa maganap ang Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig. Ito ang pangamba ng mga malalaking kolonyalistang bansa tulad ng Estados Unidos at Inglatera nang sakupin ng Hapon ang Manchuria noong 1932, at Indo-Tsina noong kalagitnaan ng 1940 (Agoncillo 1989, 399). Upang pigilan ang pamamayagpag nito sa Asya-Pasipiko, nilimitahan at pinamahalaan ng Estados Unidos ang eksport ng mga materyales ng Hapon, kabilang na ang mga iniaangkat na produkto mula sa Pilipinas (Agoncillo 1980, 399-400; Jose 1991, 38.).

Samantala, nagsikap ding maghanda ang Pamahalaang Komonwelt ni Manuel L. Quezon sa napipintong pandaigdigang digma sa kabila ng pagtatransisyon nito sa pagsasariling bansa (Gripaldo et. al., 2003, 246.) Noong ikalawang bahagi ng 1941, nilagdaan ni Quezon ang Kautusang Tagapagpaganap Bilang 335 na lilikha ng Civilian Emergency Administration o CEA (Jose, 1991, 39-41). Sang-ayon sa nilagdaang batas, inaasahang tutugon ang CEA sa pangkalahatang pangkagipitang pangangailangan ng mga sibilyan o kalakhang mamamayan sa oras na pumutok ang pandaigdigang digmaan. Kabilang sa mga programang ito ay ang pagtuturo sa mamamayan ng wastong paglikas at pagtungo sa mga ligtas na lugar, makukuhanang sapat na pagkain, at iba pang katulad. Ngunit nanatiling ambisyon ang kalakhang plano ng CEA at hindi nito naitumbas sa katunayan ang mga nakasulat sa nilagdaang papel ukol sa hakbang-hakbang sanang pagpapaplano ukol sa nasabing panahon. Wala ring malinaw at sapat na koordinasyon sa pagitan ng militar at pagkukuhanan ng napakalaking pondo para maging matagumpay ang nasabing mga programa (Jose, 1991, 45-6).

Sa kabilang banda, nauna nang nagpaabot ng pakikiisa at suporta ng pakikisangkot ang bagong-tatag na Philippine Writers League—na itinatag noong Pebrero 1939 na kauna-unahan at marahil ang pinakahuling samahang pangmanunulat na itinatag at pinondohan sa

ilalim ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas. Nabuo ito sa pamamagitan ng paglikha ng manipesto na siyang bumuo ng epektibong alyansa para sa pangkulturang pagtatanggol sa mga Pilipinong manunulat, at iba pang progresibong puwersa ng bayan, kaugnay sa kaliwa't kanang balita ng pasismo sa iba't ibang panig ng mundo (Agoncillo 2001, 596; Arguilla et al. 1940, 6-7).

## ANG BANSANG HAPON SA PILIPINAS BAGO ANG DIGMA

Samantala, lalo pang sumidhi ang pagnanasa sa pagdambong sa likas na yaman ng bansa bukod sa Estados Unidos (Yu-Jose 1992, 123) ang bansang Hapon, na siyang nangunguna sa pagpapakita ng pang-ekonomikong interes sa Pilipinas. Sa katunayan, bilang pagsalubong sa mga “makabayang” agenda at batas ng Pamahalaang Komomwelt, lumobo ang industriya ng pagmimina mula 1936 hanggang 1938; at dumami rin ang itinayong mga pabrika sa Pilipinas mula 1930 hanggang 1940—kung saan ang lahat ng ito ay nabuo sa pangunguna ng bansang Hapon. Dagdag pa, upang ikutan ang isasabatas pa lamang noon ukol sa Bagong Imigrasyon na maglilimita sa bilang ng mga pumapasok na dayuhan sa bansa, dumagsa ang hindi inaasahang bilang ng mga Hapon sa Pilipinas na tinatayang 67.3 porsiyento ng kabuuang populasyon ng mga Hapon na nasa Timog-Silangang Asya (Yu-Jose 1992, 129-30).

Bukod sa mga pampulitika at pang-ekonomiyang pagluluwag upang makatugon sa mga kinakailangang kahingian sa Pilipinas, inalar din ng mga Hapon ang wikang Tagalog na noon ay hinirang bilang wikang pambansa at nagsagawa ng mga pamamaraan upang maaral at maunawaan ito. Nagresulta ito ng pagtatayo ng natatanging departamento ng Tagalog sa bansang Hapon noong 1938 at paglalathala ng librong nasusulat sa Tagalog bilang gabay sa praktikal na pakikipagkomunikasyon ng mga Hapon noong 1939 (Yu-Jose 1992, 140).

Upang makuha naman ang loob ng mga Pilipino sa kabila ng mga anti-Hapong propaganda mula sa Tsina at Estados Unidos dulot ng umiigting na sigalot, napagkaisahan ng mga Hapon na magtayo ng pangkulturang organisasyon na tutugon sa mga suliraning

ito bilang pangkulturang propaganda, habang ipinagpapatuloy pang lalo ang pang-ekonomiyang ganansiya sa likas na yaman ng bansa (Barte ed. 1992, 23-33). Isa sa hakbang na isinagawa nila ay ang pagpapalaganap ng kulturang Hapon gamit ang mass media at panghihikayat sa mga Pilipino na mag-aral sa kanilang bansa sa halip na sa Estados Unidos (Yu-Jose 1992, 142-3).

Naglunsad din ng mga pangkulturang gawain at pagpapalitan sa pagitan ng bansang Pilipinas at Hapon, kabilang na ang mga kumperensiyang pangmag-aaral at ng mga propesor na Hapon na kakikitaan ng mga pagbabago ng pananaw at pagtingin sa mga Pilipino: na sa halip na makatulong sa pagkuha ng loob sa mga Pilipino ay lalo pang nag-iwan ng malaking panlipunang agwat, lalo na sa mga Hapon na higit na mataas ang pagtingin sa sarili kaysa sa huli (Yu-Jose 1992, 147-54).

## ANG KUWENTA NG KUWENTO SA PANAHOON NG HAPON

Sa pag-okupa ng mga Hapon sa Pilipinas, lahat ay masistemang ginawa ng bagong dayuhang mananakop sa pagnanasang ito ang mabuting pamamaraan ng pagbubura ng anumang bahid o labí ng naitayong muhon ng dominasyon ng Kanluran. Noong Mayo 1942, nagpatawag ng pagpupulong si Ishikawa Kin-Ichi, Direktor ng mga Publikasyon na kontrol ng Hapones, sa mga manunulat ng Tagalog at inimbitahang maghapunan sa Peacock Garden sa Calvo Building sa Escolta upang pag-usapan ang kalagayan ng mga manunulat. Naging mabunga ang nasabing pagpupulong kaya noon ding ika-31 ng Mayo, muling nagbukas ang *Liwayway* na noong una'y dalawang beses naglalathala at naging lingguhan pagkaraan. Mapapansin sa edisyon ng *Liwayway* 1942, reprint lamang ang kalakhan ng mga akda noong bago pa magkadigma (Agoncillo 2001, 628).

Pagdating ng 1943, sang-ayon sa dikta ng GEACPS, nakitaan ng pagsigla sa paglikha ng mga kuwentong nagsasalarawan sa mga pangkaraniwang-buhay at iyong nakapadron sa kahingian ng mga Hapon sa inaasahan nilang mga kuwentong nais mabasa at maipabasa sa mga Pilipino. Noong ika-25 ng Marso nang

nasabi ring taon, sa pangunguna ng *Manila Shimbunsha*, nagsagawa ito ng patimpalak sa kuwentong Tagalog upang higit na makuha ang simpatiya ng intelihensiya, partikular ang mga manunulat. Bunga nito, noong 1944, mula sa humigit-kumulang na dalawang daang maikling kuwento, nailathala ang 25 *Pinakamabuting Maikling Kathang Pilipino ng 1943*.

## MABUBUTING KATHA PARA KANINO?

Sa gabay ng *Manila Shimbunsha*, lumikha ito ng Lupon ng mga Tagasuri na kikilatis at susuri ng humigit-kumulang na dalawandaang kuwentong nalathala noong 1943. Pinangunahan ito nina Jose Esperanza Cruz, Punong Patnugot ng *Liwayway*; Agustin C. Fabian, Patnugot ng *Graphic*; Arsenio R. Afan, dating Patnugot ng *Sampaguita*; AB.L. Rosales, Tagapamahalang Patnugot ng *Liwayway*; Clodualdo del Mundo, Patnugot-Pampanitikan ng *Liwayway*; F.B. Icasiano, Patnugot ng magasin ng *Sunday Tribune*; Buenaventura G. Medina, Patnugot ng *Taliba*; at Teodorico Santos, Patnugot ng magasin ng *Taliba*. Anila, ang mga sumusunod ang sangkap ng paraan ng pamimili sa mga kuwento: una, ang “KALAMNAN” na tumutukoy sa “pinakapangunang bagay sa lahat ng sining, ay dapat magsaalang-alang sa diwa ng Bagong Kaayusan; at, bagaman ang mga kathang mapipili ay maaaring hindi magtaguyod at puspusang mangaral ng mga simulain ng Sangkasaganaan ng Lalong Malaking Silangang Asya, sa anu’t anuman ang mga iyon ay dapat na maging katugma nito, dili kaya’y huwag man lamang tumaliwas sa mga adhikain nito” [akin ang diin]. At ikalawa, ang “PAMAMARAAN, o ang makasining na paraan ng paghahayag... sapagka’t ang pamamaraan, bagaman kadalasa’y napapailalim sa kalamnan, ay malimit namang siyang kinasasaligan ng pagiging mabisa ng paghahayag ng isang kaisipan, ng pagtatanghal ng mga pangyayari, ng paglalarawan ng mga tauhan, at ng pangwakas na kabuuan at kasiyahang dapat maidulot ng isang kuwento” [akin ang diin] (Medina 1992, lxi-ii). Sa ganitong pormula ng pagtataya ng mga pipiliing kuwento ay kinakailangang umangkop sa bagong kolonyal na kaayusan ngunit inililina na hindi dapat isinasaalang-alang ang taglay nitong sining bilang akdang pampanitikan.

Ang mga susing salita at parirala para sa paraan ng pagpipili batay sa nilalaman at anyo sa panahon ng digmaan ay makikita mismo sa ipinagpapalagay na katangian ng isang kuwento: ang “mangaral” para sa nilalaman at “kasiyahang dulot ng kuwento” para sa pamamaraan—na kahit pa kalakhan sa lupon na ito ay binubuo ng mga batang henerasyon ng manunulat, di naiwaglit ang katangian ng pagbibigay ng aral at aliw bilang tatak ng unang dalawang dekada ng kolonyal na pamamahala ng mga Amerikano sa Pilipinas (S. Reyes 2012, 202-3).

Hinati ng mananaliksik sa tatlong katangian ang 25 pinakamabubuting maikling kuwento noong 1943: Una, domestiko at pampamilyang usapin, katutubong gawi, at kultura; ikalawa, naturalistang lapit; at ikatlo, ukol sa digmaan. Marapat linawin na sa isinagawang pagkategorya sa mga kuwento, hindi nangangahulugang ito ay napapaloob lamang sa iisang katangian. Sa madaling sabi, maaaring taglayin ng isang kuwento ang mahigit sa isang katangian. Ang dahilan ng paghahati ay upang matukoy ang namamayani o tampok na katangian ng bawat isa.

Tumutukoy ang unang katangian sa mga kuwentong may kinalaman sa relasyong pampamilya at/o mahal sa buhay, samantalang ang katutubong gawi at kultura ay iyong mga kuwentong nagpapamalas at nagpapakita ng tatak ng kulturang maka- at para sa Pilipino. Sinadyang pagsamahin sa iisang katangian ang mga kuwento rito ‘pagkat higit na tampok ang mga katangiang sentimental at romantisasyon o labis na pagpapamalas ng pag-ibig sa iba’t ibang pinapaksa ng kuwento.

Sumunod, tumutukoy ang ikalawang katangian sa konsepto ng naturalismo sa sining ukol sa pinakatapat na pagsasalarawan ng kalikasan sa lahat ng bagay tulad ng unibersalistang pananaw-sa-daigdig na lahat ng tao o nilalang ay may tiyak na katapusan, at malimit na tao laban sa kalikasan ang tampok na tunggaliang namamayani. Kalahati ng mga kalipunan ng mga katha ay nasa ganitong katangian. Tumutukoy ang naturalismo bilang kilusang pampanitikan noong huling bahagi ng ika-19 na siglo at unang bahagi ng ika-20 siglo.

Lumalampas ang naturalismo sa realismo kung saan inaasam nito ang pinakatapat, walang-kinikilingang representasyon ng katunayan at madalas humahantong ang wakas ng kuwento dulot ng pagkakaaksidente, pisyolohikal na kalikasan sa halip na moral o rasyunal na pagsasalarawan (Britannica).

Habang ang panghuli at ikatlong kategorya ay nauukol sa digmaan—magaganap pa lang, nagaganap na sa kasalukuyan, at naganap na sa kuwento. Narito sa huling kategorya nakatuon ang atensyon ng pag-aaral. Nais isalaysay dito ang usapin ng kalagayan at epekto ng kasalukuyang digmaan sa pinakamatapat na pamamaraang hindi magpapanting ang tainga ng mga Hapon at mga kolaborador nito. Kabilang sa kategoryang ito ang mga kuwentong “Tabak at Sampaguita” ni Pilar R. Pablo; “Kadakilaan: Sa Tugatog ng Bundok” ni Brigido C. Batungbakal; “Sinag sa Dakong Silangan” ni Macario Pineda; “Madilim Pa Ang Umaga” ni Teodoro A. Agoncillo; at “Lunsod, Nayon, at Dagat-dagatan” ni N.V.M. Gonzales.

## APOKALIPTO ANG UMIIGTING NA DIGMA

Bagaman pag-iibigan ang tema ng kuwentong “Tabak at Sampaguita” ni Pilar R. Pablo, mas umiinog ito sa kalagayan ng kapwa-mangingibig sa panahon ng nakabitin at papalapit na ang digmaan. Tila may apokaliptikong pananaw ang pangunahing tauhan sa nasasaksihan niyang magiging epekto ng digmaan kung sakali itong maganap.

“At siya’y namaalam isang dapit-hapon. Nakangiti siyang lumapit sa aking luklukan sa isang sulok ng halamanan at buong pitagang yumukod. Namalagi siyang hindi umiimik sa pagkakatayo sa aking harapan na may mga ilang sandali. ‘Pagkatapos ay itinuro niya ang mapulang kanluran, kinagat ang kanyang labi at saka umiling-iling. Ako’y nanghilakbot nang siya’y aking maunawaan. Sa balintataw ng aking mga mata ay waring nabanaagan ko ang hantungan ng kanyang palad.

Namalas ko ang naghambalang na mga bangkay, ang nagsabog na dugong tumitina sa lupa at damo, ang nakaduduling na tilamsik ng liwanag na may dalang kamatayan. Naulinigan ko ang nakabibinging putok at dagundong. Nasamyong ko ang makapal na usok ng digma at nagsikip ang aking paghinga. Yao’y mga pangitaing nabasa ko lamang sa mga aklat. Gaano pa kaya ang katotohanan, O, Diyos ko! Huwag!”

(MEDINA 1992, 115–6)

Malinaw na malagim ang sasapitin ng sinumang bahagi ng digmaan: sibilyan man o sundalo o gerilya, lahat ay di makaiwas sa bangis ng umiigting na digma. Mayaman sa simbolismo ang kuwento na bagaman hindi inuugnay kung kanino magmumula o manggagaling ang puno’t dulo ng “naghambalang na mga bangkay,” tila nakaturo ang lahat ng hintuturo sa kasalukuyang mananakop ng panahong iyon.

Interesante rin ang pagsasalarawan na nais ipabatid ng manunulat kung saan tinutukoy na kawal ang iniibig ng persona sa kuwento. Bagaman tipikal na kawal lamang ito, may binabanggit ang persona na “pagkakaiba” o “kaibahan” sa katangian nito. Pansinin kung paano idinetalye ang kawal: ang kawalang-imik nito bilang mangingibig sa karelasyon ay mistulang problematiko ngunit para sa persona, sagrado itong pakikipagniig sa katahimikan sa kanyang minamahal:

“Pipi pa rin siya. Ako’y nalungkot nang mamasdan ko ang kanyang mga mata. Natitiyak kong sumasamba siya sa aking kaluluwa. Sumasamba siya nang buong katahimikan. Walang naglagos na mga sinungaling na papuri sa kanyang mga labi. Ang kanyang paghanga ay isang piping panalanging kinuyom niya sa kaibuturan ng kanyang puso.”

(MEDINA 1992, 113–4)

Malaki ang pag-aalala ng persona na pansamantala lamang ang nararamdaman niyang pag-ibig ‘pagkat ang hinaharap ng kawal ay “isang kimpal ng makapal na ulap na may babalang unos” at nakapagitan sa kanilang pagmamahalan ay “isang malawak na karagatan” ngunit “[n]ais niyang pagkabitin ang dalawang pampang” na kanilang kinaroroonan. Maaaring isiping batay sa mga nabanggit na pagsasalarawan ay may matinding pagsubok na pagdadaan ang kawal at hindi mismo sa lugar o bayan ng persona permanenteng naninirahan ito. Gayunpaman, patuloy niya pa rin itong mamahalin kung kaya naibulalas na lamang niya na “sa aking lahi’y kayrupok-rupok daw ng isang pusong umiibig.” Sa pagbanggit ng lahi, maaaring basahin ito na ibang lahi ang pinapatungkulan na kawal.

Panghuli, mahihiwatigan kung anong “lahi” ng kawal ang pinapatungkulan sa katha sa pamamagitan ng muli’t muling pagsasaulit ng natatanging kilos nito na sumasalamin sa kulturang kinabibilangan sa kanilang huling pagtatagpo o pamamaalam sa persona: “Lumayo siya ng isang hakbang at saka yumukod. Isang hakbang pang papalayo at yumukod na muli. Isa pang hakbang at isa pang yukod. Tumalikod na siyang tuluyan... Higit na mabuti ang kanyang paglisan, ‘pagkat ito’y nangangahulugan ng pagkakaroon isa pang tapat na suhay ng kanyang bansa (Medina, 1992, 117-8).” Sa madaling sabi, umiibig ang persona sa isang kawal na Hapon at dahil sa napipintong digma, ipinagpaliban na lamang ang kanilang pag-iibigan upang harapin ang mas malaking hamon—ang pagdepensa at pag-aalay ng buhay para sa dangal ng bansang Hapon. Kung babalikan ang nauna nang tunguhin na nais ng bagong mananakop, umaakma ang kuwentong ito ‘pagkat di lamang nito pinapakita ang katapangan ng Hapones, ipinapamalas din ang mataas na pagtingin nito sa kanilang bansa. Sa kabilang banda, maaari ring basahin ang komplikadong relasyon ng persona sa kawal na Hapon ‘pagkat ganito rin kung titingnan ang nagaganap na ugnayan ng mga Pilipino at Hapon sa panahon ng digma: komplikado at tiyak na may pagwawakas.

## ANG KATUNAYAN NG KATHA, PAGKAKATHA NG KATUNAYAN

Tila sumasabay naman sa masamang balita at pangyayari ang pambungad ng kuwentong “Kadakilaan: Sa Tugatog ng Bundok” ni Brigido C. Batungbakal. Magtatakip silim at papalubog pa lang ang araw nang dumating si Kiko, ang sundalo at pangunahing piksyunal na tauhang natatanging nakauwi sa kanilang nayon buhat pa sa Capas, Tarlac. Mahalagang bigyan agad ng pansin ang bahaging ito ‘pagkat sariwa pa, isang taon makalipas, sa isip ng mga Pilipino nang mga panahong iyon ang nasabing lugar bilang pinakahuling destinasyong ruta ng “Death March” na binubuo ng marami sa sundalong Pilipino at mga Amerikanong walang-humpay na pinagmartsa nang tuluyang sumuko ang Bataan sa kamay ng mga Hapon.

Sa katha, sinalubong si Kiko ng taumbayan sa kanilang nayon sa kanyang pagdating. Naghatid siya ng balita ukol sa mga kasamahang tumungo rin sa digmaan ngunit di na niya kasamang bumalik. Sa gitna ng mga pagtatanong at usap-usapan, di maiwasang tanungin siya ng kanyang mga kanayon ukol sa kanilang mga anak at nobyo ngunit wala siyang naimik kung nasaan ang kanyang mga dating kasamahan. Pansinin kung paano pinanghawakan ang subjek na Hapon at pagsasalarawan sa mga kanayon bilang mga tauhang bahagi ng naratibo ng kuwento.

**“Parang hindi nagambala ang ating nayon, ano?” ang nasabi ng katabi ni Kiko.**

**“Opo,” ang narinig ng marami. “Wala pong nabago sa atin” ...**

**Hindi naupo si Kiko nang dahil sa mga taong nagdating-dating. Ang iba’y may dala pang lilik na siyang nagpapakilalang nandaramo nang dumating si Kiko. At ang iba’y humihingal pa kung magtanong at mangusap. Mabuti naman at ikaw ay**



di napatay. Salamat sa mga Hapones at buhay ka pang nakarating sa ating nayon. Talagang tayo ay kaibigan nila, ano? Magsalita ka.

**(MEDINA 1992, 139–41)**

Walang sinabing anuman ang pangunahing tauhan, tila maging ang piksyunal na tauhan ay tikom din ang bibig sa dayong “kaibigan.” Ganoon din ang saya na mararamdaman sa tono at pananalita na maririnig sa pananalita ng mga kanayon. Lumalabas na bagaman piksyunal ang mga tauhan at pangyayari, tila wala nang hanggahan ang nais turulin ng mismong kuwento sa pagitan ng katha at katunayan. Sa ganoong disposisyon, tila isang parikala (paradox) pa ngang maituturing na silang mga nabubuhay ang umaaktong katha ‘pagkat nawalan na ng imik at sumusunod na lamang sa magiging takbo ng naratibo ng digmaan sa halip na lumikha ng panibagong kuwento at itakda ang magiging wakas. Samakatwid, hindi kataka-taka ang ganitong pagsasalawhan at pagkatha mula sa bahagi ng manunulat ‘pagkat sa ganitong anyo at nilalaman makikita kung gaano kalaki ang impluwensiya ng dikta at utos ng mga Hapon sa malilikhang katha ng panahong iyon, sang-ayon sa pangkultura nitong agenda sa pakikidigma.

Sa kuwento namang “Sinag sa Dakong Silangan” ni Macario Pineda, salimbayan ang kaganapan sa pagmumuni ng pangunahing tauhan na kawal sa kanyang masasayang alaala ng pagkabata habang nasa gitna ng sagupaan sa hindi nakikitang mga kaaway. Sa panitikan, tila pananda na ito ng may mangyayaring hindi maganda sa pangunahing tauhan. Ang paggugunita ng masasayang alaala ay kakabit ng malungkot na katunayan na nadarama ng kasalukuyang obhetibong kondisyon ng isang tauhan. Gayunpaman, iba ang naganap sa pagwawakas ng katha.

Habang abala sa pagmumuni ng masasayang araw ang kawal—ang pangunahing tauhan sa kuwento—sa pagitan ng maya’t mayang pagpapaputok ng baril sa magkakaibang direksiyon, isa sa tampok niyang naalala ang pag-uwi sa sariling bayan ng matalik niyang kaibigan na si Sinsiro o si Iro, anak ng mag-

uuling sa kabundukan na si Osima. Kung pagbabatayan ang pangalan, mahihinuhang isa itong Hapon. Ayaw pa sanang umuwi ni Iro sa kanilang bayan, na maaaring ang bansang Hapon, ngunit buo na ang loob ng ama ni Iro.=

Ngunit ayaw si Osima. Wika ni Osima sa atin: “Ikinarurungkot ko. Hindi maaaring si Sinziro ay maiwan. Pero, magkikita rin kayo ng aking anak. Dadaraw kami sa amin: tapos barik uri. Hane, Ponsoy. Hane, Karding. Hane, Berto. Hane, Pedro. Babarik kami. Huwag kayo karimot sa aking anak.”

**(MEDINA 1992, 245)**

Sa bahaging ito, ‘di direktang tinutukoy na may mabubuting loob ang mga Hapon na malapit sa buhay ng pangunahing tauhan bagaman malinaw ang representasyon nito bilang mabubuting tao, na higit na litaw dito kaysa sa naunang katha sa itaas. Kung kaya, pagdating sa kasukdulan at pagtatapos ng kuwento, ang pahayag ng ama ni Iro na “magkikita rin kayo ng aking anak” ay tila pag-uugnay sa pahiwatig kung bakit hindi pinatay ang pangunahing tauhan: posibleng ang aninong tinutukoy na lumapit sa kanya ang kanyang nakababatang kaibigan:

(Isang anino ang biglang bumulaga sa kawal. Isang anino ng kamatayan ang biglang sumulpot sa ibabaw ng kanlungan. Ang kawal ay pumitlag, ikinamot ang mga kamay sa ibabaw ng kanlungan at waring sasalubungin ang aninong yaon. Ngunit ang katawang hapung-hapo ay wala nang ibigay na lakas. Dumupilas ang mga paa ng kawal. Napaluhod. Tuluyang nagulapay sa lupa. Ngunit isang baril na may bayoneta sa ulo ang kanyang nakapa. Sinunggaban ito at ang kawal ay nagpumilit pa ring makatayo upang salubungin ang aninong may hatid na kasawian. Isang saglit na makadurog-pusong paghuhumindik ng katawang sugatan upang maisaksak ang patalim sa dulo ng baril, isang saglit ng pagsusumamo

ng diwa sa bawat kaliit-liitang himaymay ng laman, isang huling saglit na katumbas ng isang buong buhay— ngunit nabitawan din ang baril at ang kawal ay nabulagta sa ibabaw ng mga bangkay ng kanyang tatlong kaibigan. At ang anino ay padaluhong na lumapit sa kawal. Inaninaw nito ang yayat na mukhang yaon. At isang tila buntonghininga ang namulas sa mga labi ng anino... [akin ang diin]  
**(MEDINA 1992, 248–9)**

Kung pag-uugnayin ang kabuuan ng kuwento sa pamagat nito, tila ang tinutukoy na “sinag” sa dakong Silangang bahagi ng Asya ay ang bansang Hapon na nais palabasin sa kuwento bilang marunong tumanaw ng utang na loob o pagkilala sa matalik na pakikipagkaibigan, ito man ay may malinaw na kaibahan ng kultura at anyo ng pakikipag-interaksiyon sa panahon man ng giyera.

Sa kuwento namang “Madilim Pa Ang Umaga” ni Teodoro A. Agoncillo, ang diskontento ng isang kawani sa kanyang lugar na pinagtatrabahuhan at kawalang-paki at pakiramdam ng kanyang kapwa-kawani ang nagtulak sa kanya upang higit pang maramdaman ang dulot ng nagaganap sa paligid, na bagaman walang sinasabi kung ang tinutukoy na pangyayari ay ang kasalukuyang digmaan, malinaw na inihahambing ng pangunahing tauhan ang tumitinding agwat ng saray sa lipunan, partikular ng maykaya at walang-wala.

Si Ruben, ang pangunahing tauhan, bilang dating masaya at mababakas ang tuwa sa kanyang mukha, ay hindi na mapalagay sa nararamdamang kawalang-malasakit at kawalang-hustisyang nagaganap sa paligid. Tila walang pagbabagong naganap, at maipagpapalagay pa ngang lalong tumindi ang kawalang-paki sa paligid magpapalit-palit man ng namamahala sa bansa.

Sa pamagat pa lamang, mapapaisip maging ang mambabasa: posible kayang ang umagang tinutukoy ay ang bandilang Hapon na nasa

madilim o malagim ang sasapitin ng mga naniniwala sa ikakaloob nito? Kataka-taka ring nakalusot ito sa sensurang sintalim ng bayoneta ng mga Hapon na naglalahad ng panlipunang ligalig ng panahong iyon.

Panghuli, ang kuwentong “Lunsod, Nayon, at Dagat-dagatan” ni N.V.M. Gonzales, isang malaking problema para kay Tony, ang pangunahing tauhan, ang pahayag ng ama ng kanyang iniibig sa pananatili ng pamilya nito sa kanayunan, matapos lumagay sa tahimik nang lumikas mula Maynila nang magsimula ang digmaan. Tila hindi makapaniwala sa ganitong kapasyahan si Tony bilang tagalungsod kung kaya nagtatalo sa kanyang loob kung sasalungatin ba ang pahayag ng kanyang magiging biyenan o hahayaan na lamang ang kagustuhan nito na tiyak may malaking implikasyon sa pagmamahalan nila ni Nena, ang kanyang karelasyon.

Sa bahagi ng ama ni Nena, higit na panatag at maalwan ang kalagayan nila ngayon kaysa noong nasa Maynila pa, at sa halip na matakot at mag-alala gawa ng nagpapatuloy na digmaan, lalo pa ngang nakumbinsi itong manatali sa kanayunan.

...”Bakit kami aalis sa pook na ito ngayon?” tanong niya. “Sagana kami rito sa lahat ng bagay. Hindi kami kakapusin sa pagkain. Sa isda? Masagana sa isda ang dagat-dagatan. Bigas? Maaari kaming kumuha kahit na ilang kaban at hindi namin kailangang magbayad ng kahit isang sentimong higit sa dapat naming ibayad,” ang tuwirang wika niya sa akin, “Ngunit mayroon akong kakilalang malapit dito na dating naglilingkod sa pamahalaan; sinabi niya sa akin na maaari kong bilhin ang ilang ektarya ng kanyang lupa. Naiisip kong mag-itikan at magtanim ng gulay. Ano ang palagay mo riyan, Antonio?”

“Noong una’y para kaming nahihintakutan dito,” patuloy niya. “Kami’y nababahala nang gayon na lamang sa magiging buhay namin. Ngunit kung may ipagkakaloob na anuman ang digmaan sa amin, iya’y ang lakas ng loob.”

(MEDINA 1992, 27–8)

Sa katunayan, hindi rin ang digmaan ang siyang pinoproblema ng pangunahing tauhan, sapagkat sa unang bahagi ng katha pa lamang, nauna na nitong binanggit na wala namang dapat ikatakot noong naglalakbay ito mula Maynila patungong kanayunan—sa tonong tila ‘di direkta nitong sinasabi na halos walang nabago sa panahon ng digmaan at tila bumuti pa nga ang kalagayan (Medina, 1992, 26). Sa halip, mas nais palitawin sa kabuuan ng katha ang konsepto ng pagpili ng pamumuhay sa pagitan ng kalungsuran at kanayunan, sa halip ang matingskad na pag-uugnayan nito. Kaya bagaman bukas sa samot-saring interpretasyon ang pagwawakas ng kuwento, tila may paggigiit pa rin ang pangunahing tauhan sa itinitibok ng puso’t isipan niya, ang bumalik sa lungsod.

Kung lalagumin ang kabuuang mga kuwentong nauukol sa digmaan sa *25 Pinakamabuting Maikling Kathang Pilipino* noong 1943, hindi maalis sa panulat ng mga Pilipino na kahit pa sa gitna ng digma, may magtatangka at magtatangka pa ring sumulat ng sadlak na kalagayan sa panahong ito anumang pagbabawal o sensura ang gawin, kahit pa ang isinusugal nilang pahayag o linya o pagsasalawanan sa mga Hapon, ang kalagayan ng bansa o kapwa Pilipino ay simpleng kapalit na ng kanilang buhay. Kapit pa ang mga nasulat na mga kuwentong ito ay walang pagsasalawanan sa Hapon bilang mga kaaway o kalaban, na siyang isa sa pinagmumulan ng lahat ng paghihirap ng mga Pilipino ng panahong iyon, mararamdaman ito sa kawalang-imik (“Kadakilaan: Sa Tugatog ng Bundok”) o pagkadismaya o pagkatuliro ng kani-kanilang mga tauhan sa kinaiiralang panahon ng kanilang mga kuwento (“Madilim Pa Ang Umaga”). Panghuli, ang diskontento at kawalang-katiyakan ng buhay at pamumuhay na siya ring tampok sa pagsasalawanan ng nagaganap na digmaan sa mga kuwento ay

hinding-hindi mapasusubalian ng nagaganap sa katunayan kung kaya naroroon iyon sa kanilang di-malay at gumigitaw sa kanilang pagkakatha (“Tabak at Sampaguila” at “Lunsod, Nayon, at Dagat-dagatan”).

## DIGMAAN SA KUWENTO, KUWENTO NG DIGMAAN

Makapangyarihan ang panlipunang kaayusan na siyang nagtatakda ng dominanteng uri ng panitikan at produksiyong pampanitikang tatangkilikin at ipapalaganap sa isang lipunan. Sa kaso ng *25 Pinakamabuting Maikling Katha*, panahon ng digmaan at ang panlasa ng mga Hapon sa panitikan ang siyang namamayani na nararapat ay iyong nagtataguyod ng maka-Asyanong kaugalian o kultura at sumasalungat at tumutunggali sa dominasyon ng Kanluraning kaisipan o paksain. Sinasagot ng ganitong kalagayan ang madalas nang nagiging diskusyon sa mga umpukan at talakayang pampanitikan at pansining sa pagkakasasangkot ng pulitika sa panitikan, pati na ang pulitika sa estetika o sining ng isang akda.

Bagaman marami sa hanay ng mga manunulat at artista ang tumugon sa mga pangkulturang programa sa pangunguna ng Pamahalaang Militar ng Hapones sa Pilipinas sa anyo ng patimpalak—sa pamamagitan man ng dahas, takot, o sariling kapasyahan—nananatili sa kaibuturan ng puso ng mga Pilipino na ang mga gawaing ito ay paimbabaw lamang na pagpapakita ng suporta sa kahusayan at kagalingan ng mga Pilipino at pagiging Asyano. Sa halip, mas nararapat tingnan ang mga patimpalak na ito sa panahon ng digmaan bilang nakadiseno sa mas malalim at malawakang propaganda nang sa gayon ay tuluyang makuha ang loob ng mga nasa gitnang saray ng lipunang Pilipino at maging tagapagsalita at tagapagdepensa sa mga isinasagawang aktibidad ng mga Hapon sa Pilipinas sa makasaysayang panahong iyon (Agoncillo, 2001, 641). Sa kabilang banda, tila may kabalintunaan man kung iisipin, lumabas din sa panahong ito ng digmaan ang malaon nang panunupil ng Amerika sa makabayang diwa ng Pilipino, tulad halimbawa ng paghihikayat ng mga Hapon sa tuluyang pagpapagamit at

pagpapaunlad ng wikang Tagalog at iba pang pangunahing wika sa Pilipinas (R. Constantino 1969, 120-21). Sa puntong ito, bahagyang nakatulong sa pagpapaningas ng diwang makabayan sa mga Pilipino ang programa ng mga Hapon at sa pagpapaunlad ng mga wika sa bansa, kahit sa sandaling panahon lang.

Sa kabilang banda, naging timbangan din ang akto ng pagsusulat sa buhay at kamatayan ng mga tumugon sa panawagang ito. Kuwento ng isang manunulat noong panahong iyon:

Alas tres ng umaga, hinahatid ako ng nanay ko sa plasa ng Malinta para makasakay sa isa sa mga karitelang naghahatid ng mga produkto ng bukid sa palengke ng Malabon... Kaming mga pasahera—oo, pulos babae kami at lahat ng mga kasama ko ay tindera at puro mga lalaki noon. Pag nasumpungan ng mga guwardiyang Hapon sa mga checkpoint patungong Malabon, hinuhuli ang mga lalaki at kinukulong sa bilangguan, kasi balitang-balita na ang Malabon sa pagiging sentro ng mga gerilya. Ang gawa ng mga kasama kong tindera sa karitela, pinagigitna nila ako para hindi mapuna ng guwardiyang Hapon. Nakadamit ako ng luganggang para magmukhang matanda, nakasalamín at nakapugong ng lumang bandana sa ulo ko. Pagdating namin sa bayan, inaalís ko ang pugong at naglalakad na ako hanggang makarating sa kasunod na baryo ng Ibaba at doon magbibihis nang maayos, sa tinitirhan ng aking tiyuhin. At saka ako maglalakad uli hanggang sa kasunod namang baryo ng Concepcion na kinaroroonan ng typing school.

... [B]ago umalis sa bahay namin sa Malinta ng alas tres ng madaling-araw, nakapagkape na't nakakain ng

almusal. Kaya nakahanda na 'kong magsulat, ng kuwento sa makinilya. Pagkaraan ng mga dalawang oras, tumitindig na ako'[t] naglalakad uli hanggang bahay ng tiyuhin ko sa Ibaba, magpapalit naman ng damit na kupas at luganggang, pero hindi muna nagpupugong ng lumang bandana. Pag nakasakay na 'ko sa karitelang pauwi sa Malinta at nakagitna na naman sa matatandang tindera saka nagpupugong... Siguro, mga apat na beses akong nagpabalik-balik sa Malabon para mabuo at maging final draft ang aking kuwentong "Luad." Sa loob 'yon ng dalawang linggo. Dahil ayaw naman akong payagan ng nanay kong araw-arawin ko ang punta sa Malabon at delikado na nga rin, kahit nagkukunwari akong matanda. Pag wala siyang kaba at saka lang ako papayagang pumunta sa typing school para isulat ang aking "Luad"

**(TORRES-YU, SARILAYSAY, 85 - 6)**

Ang pagsusulat ay isa ring pagpapasya. May kalayaan ang manunulat na manatili sa kanyang kumportable at pribadong espasyo ngunit mas pinili niyang magsulat, anumang panlipunang at ekonomikong krisis o ligalig mayroon ang kanyang panahon. At sa kabila ng akto ng pagsusulat, may mga manunulat ding di na lamang nagkasya sa nasasaid na tinta ng kanilang panulat at sa halip ay piniling tumangan ng armas (J.C. Reyes, 2012, 173-83; Torres-Yu at Aguirre ed., 2004, 330).

Bukod sa proseso ng pagsusulat, tila nakaumang na baril sa sentido ang sensura at paglalathala sa panahon na ito ng digmaan. Ang suspetsya at kawalan ng pagtitiwala sa isa't isa, ng Pilipino sa Hapon, at Hapon sa Pilipino, ay hindi lamang makailang ulit naging sukatan ng katapatan kundi naging timbangan din ng buhay at kamatayan (Agoncillo, 2001, 642-3).

Akalain mong pinagawa ako ng mga pinunong editor na Hapon ng literal translation, word for word, ng aking kuwento. Hindi basta synopsis na ginagawa ko para sa ibang mga kuwento. Samantalang nasa staff naman ako. Talagang duda ang mga Hapon sa mga Pilipino, maging lalaki't babae, matanda't bata. Buti na lang, hindi nila napunang kung minsan, pinalalabo ko ang synopsis ng mga kuwentong may himig subersibo. E ito pang inusenteng-inusenteng kuwento ko tungkol sa isang kapatid na kawal na namatay sa Bataan, buhay sa paningin ng isang dalagita, ang kanilang napag-initan. Tin-ranslate ko, word for word sa Ingles, at hindi na nila pinagdudahan. Na-publish naman sa Liwayway noong Disyembre 4, 1943

**(TORRES-YU 2000, 87).**

Habang tumitindi ang digmaan, tumitindi rin ang paghihigpit ng mga Hapon sa pagsusulat nang magkataong tila sinasalamín ng isang kuwento ang nalalapit nang pagkatalo ng mga dayuhang mananakop at pagwawakas ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig (Torres-Yu 2000, 89).

Ang tiyak, hindi lamang ito basta kuwento-kuwento: malinaw na malinaw sa mga Pilipino, na kahit na ang mga gawaing ito ay may katumbas na merito o tumataginting na salapi, marami-rami pa rin ang naghihintay lamang ng pagkakataon at panahon upang ikonsolida ang kanilang mga lakas sa pagbubuo ng hukbo ng sambayanan sa pagdedepensa at pagtatanggol laban sa dayuhang mananakop (Maceda 1996, 118-30). Sila na mismo ang lilikha ng kanilang komunidad at lipunang malaya at mapagpalaya, na hindi na lamang nakukulong sa apat na sulok ng mga pahina at mga espasyong kinapapalooban nito. Sila na rin mismo ang lilikha ng kanilang kuwento—ang naratibo ng kanilang paglaban at pakikitunggali sa mga lokal at dayuhang mang-aapi't mapang-abuso, na di lamang simpleng katha o kuwento-kuwento. Sa madaling sabi, sa oras na magpasya

na silang humawak ng armas, mas malaya na silang makalilikha ng panitikan at sining na mas may lalim, naghihilom ng mga sugat ng karahasan at pang-aapi, at sining at panitikang malaong magiging armas nila sa pagpapalaya ng sarili at bayan.

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# Documenting and Analyzing Folk Healing Practices in Tabaco City, Albay

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## ABSTRACT

**T**raditional and alternative medicine has always been a curious case. Despite the availability of health centers, clinics, and local hospitals, there is persisting support, reliability in practice, and study on its various mediums. A comprehensive body of literature has already tackled why this is, but not yet on the scale of Tabaco City, Albay. This research attempts to document the practices of Tabaco City's folk healers, augmenting the scientific, cultural, social, spiritual, and socio-economic aspects of the folk healers' stories and experiences. The study also analyzes how these practices reinforce folk healing as a powerful alternative to modern healthcare, and in so doing, offer and give light to possible action plans for integrating this unique form of healing into the mainstream healthcare system. The study conducted a semi-structured interview as a data-gathering method with a total of 40 folk healers coming from 23 barangays of Tabaco City using over-the-phone calls and limited on-site assistance. The data gathered were then organized into a matrix and were used to create maps showcasing how the healers relate to space attributes and with other modern healthcare units. It was found that multiple variables factor in toward cementing Tabaco City folk healing as a potent alternative to hospitals such as affordability, convenience, and the cultural elements underpinned in the practice. These variables hopefully foreshadow the possible efforts that can be taken to revolutionize public health care toward ensuring it reaches the outskirts.



## INTRODUCTION

Traditional medicine refers to “the sum total of knowledge, skills, and practice on healthcare, not necessarily explicable in the context of a modern, scientific philosophical framework, but recognized by the people to help maintain and improve their health toward the wholeness of their being, the community, and society, and their interrelations based on culture, history, heritage, and consciousness” (Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act 1997). In Filipino traditional medicine, folk healers offer a multitude of services including midwifery, pulse diagnosis, bone setting, herbology, suction cupping, skin scraping, herbal steam and smoke, energy medicine, and other forms of metaphysical healing that many folks continue to avail of despite the existence of modern health care facilities (Nomoto 2020).

Folk healing has had a long history in the Philippines. The *Babaylans*, for example, were respected spiritual leaders who were also considered experts in the field of folk medicine. But navigating through this long, often tumultuous history, traditional medicine has battled different forms of suppression brought on by the arrival of different and arguably more powerful frameworks of healing and spirituality that sought to erase or replace them (Alarilla 2021). The Spanish conquerors brought with them a Catholic paradigm that saw local folk healing practices as heretical and paganistic, while the modern scientific approach to medicine views much of these practices somewhat correctly as ineffective, superstitious, and even harmful. Trends and trajectories have always been unsure how to treat folk healing—whether to leave it all behind as nothing but a historical or cultural asset or to keep it as a practical healthcare service.

The current times offer optimism. Republic Act No. 8423 or Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA) of 1997 seeks to fund and accelerate the development of traditional and alternative health care in the country. It also stipulates action plans on integrating traditional medicine into the public health care system. Nonetheless, this legal milieu alongside a wide body of literature detailing this form of

health care speaks volumes on the legitimacy of traditional medicine as a source of knowledge and health services. With the growing number of works documenting these practices, we are getting a better understanding of the general state of Filipino folk healing practices in the modern day.

This paper seeks to add to this body of knowledge by lifting off from the case of Tabaco City in Albay, an area not yet specifically tackled in literature. Tabaco City has a population of around 140,691 people residing in an area of 117.14 km<sup>2</sup>. The city holds a territory containing an urban center based around a port and rural outskirts of fields near volcanic slopes and an entirely separate island. Despite its city status, rapid urbanization, and settlement expansion, Tabaco City has a thriving traditional healing practice. Thus, through interviews, recordings, and essays on the traditional healers of Tabaco City, this paper aims to provide valuable insights into the status of folk healing practices in places like Tabaco City experiencing modern challenges, and how these practices persist, decline, or carry on to future generations. In so doing, we expound on how traditional medicine becomes an ideal alternative for the people in Tabaco as well as offer hope on how this unique form of health care can be integrated and utilized to ensure health for all. (Local Government Unit of Tabaco City 2021)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

For this section, we are going to tackle some related literature to situate the study against the larger tapestry of folk healing research. Firstly, we detail the dialectics between tradition and modernity which is the main framework adopted in the study. Secondly, we proceed to survey folk healing practices in the Philippines and lastly, the third section provides some contextual information about Tabaco City, Albay.

### The Dialectics of Tradition and Modernity

When talking about two seemingly opposing forces like tradition and modernity, dialectics is a potent tool for analysis. Dialectics is a method of argumentation that involves “some



sort of contradictory process between opposing sides” (Maybee 2020). Particularly for Hegel, dialectics involves three moments that follow the thesis-antithesis-synthesis framework. The fundamental logic behind these three moments and Hegel’s dialectics overall is that as two opposing matters interact, they cross over into each other’s characteristics until they arrive at a form of stability and universality that encapsulates one and the other.

Take the case of tradition and modernity. The existence of modernity necessitates dialectical analysis. According to Bruno Latour, modernity “designates a combat in which there are victors and vanquished” (Anttonenn 2005). This is as the conception of modernity effectively others and opens a new categorical space of what is considered not modern. And in a comprehensive survey of the two concepts, Pertti J. Anttonen noted the common treatment of taking the tradition as the opposite of modernity. Thus, drawing from this tug-of-war relationship, we can provide a more nuanced understanding of the interaction between the two under the dialectical lens.

Employing dialectics, we see how the two concepts standing in contrast with each other become constitutive of one another in the process. Modernity cannot exist without tradition; and tradition, although threatened, can never be annihilated because it is necessary for modernity’s existence. And as these two frameworks clash, Hegel’s dialectics further implicates that the trajectory of this tradition-modernity interaction involves the arrival at a universal and stable state circumscribing the characters of both.

And in the healthcare context, taking off from the dialectics between tradition and modernity, we see two models considered to be opposites: traditional/folk medicine and biomedicine/Western/modern medicine. This discursive difference is implicated by how the *Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA)* of 1997 defines traditional medicine relative to a “modern, scientific, philosophical framework” reflecting how in dialectics, two clashing forces can be defined relative to the other. Thus, further unpacking the dialectical relationship between these two medical frameworks, we can foresee a

point of compromise between the two, that is, a form of health care that encompasses both traditional and modern medical modalities.

### Traditional Medicine in the Philippines

Traditional medicine is “the total of the knowledge, skill, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness” (World Health Organization 2013). In the Philippine context, traditional medicine has had a long narrative going far beyond colonial times. This long-winded history as a form of healthcare has resulted in an intermesh of qualities coming from Chinese, folkloric, experimental, and Christian influences (World Health Organization 2005). Several studies across regions in the Philippines have well-documented this hybridity such as that of Crisol and Oledan (2016); Rebuya, Lasarte, and Amador (2020); Berdon et al. (2016). An example of this intermingling, which is recurring in literature, can be seen in how Catholic prayers and belief in God’s divine intervention are integrated into the healing practice.

However, as what may be the result of multicultural influences in the Philippines, traditional medicine in the country has come in variegated forms. The folk healing study conducted by Calyd T. Cerio (2020) lifts from the case of Partido District, Camarines Sur, Bicol. Folk healers in the region are generally called *albularyo* or *parabulong*. These folk healers are considered general practitioners whose services can be broken down into types: herbalists, druggists, hydrologists, physiotherapists, traditional birth attendants, faith healers, bone settlers, animal bite healers, skin disease healers, and home remedies. The herbalist uses herbs to treat patients; the physiotherapist employs massage in treatment; faith healers cure illnesses through religious aspirations. Note, however, that different parts of the country have different terminologies for their practice, and even folk healers themselves subscribe to a particular term despite their practice being technically different. Thus, there is a long-standing need to standardize the practice here in the country.

But in whatever form, there are still a lot of Filipinos who patronize traditional medicine up to this day. The practice's cultural underpinnings play a central role in this phenomenon. (World Health Organization 2002). F. Landa Jocano (1966) provided quite a comprehensive legitimization for this one. Drawing from some Philippine cases, Jocano argued that preference for folk medicine operates according to three levels: Firstly, traditional healers utilize materials familiar to their patrons. Most of the time, the healers just use plants and herbs within the immediate vicinity of their service area and so people are acquainted with the materials used by the folk healer in the treatment. Secondly, word-of-mouth testaments from other patrons give people additional confidence in resorting treatment to folk healers. These testaments often come from people close to them or their tried-and-tested experiences themselves. And thirdly, traditional medicine is accepted because it is ingrained in their way of life. The psychology by which patients see diseases, especially unexplained and mysterious ones, aligns and subscribes to the supernatural constructions by which traditional healers operate. But beyond the acclimatization of traditional medicine to cultural sensitivities, in a developing country such as the Philippines, some people just have no choice but to avail of traditional treatments as these can be the only available healing modality within their area (World Health Organization 2002).

Given these factors that cement traditional medicine's place in Philippine society, we can see that its existence is no mere luck; traditional medicine is a recognized form of healthcare. Thus, there have been efforts to integrate and institutionalize traditional medicine in the country. In their article, Tan, Querubin, and Rillorta (1988) conducted an empirical analysis of how traditional medicine is being integrated into some community-based health programs (CBHP) in the country. It was found that all the programs adopted traditional medicine into their training, and 15 out of 16 of the CBHPs refer their patients to traditional healers. The study suggested an interconnected relationship between traditional medicine and community-based health programs in the country. However, the authors noted that alongside

the positives, there are still ambivalent attitudes and perceptions on traditional medicine such as issues related to hygiene, rituals, and belief system.

Relative to this, the Philippine government has slowly acknowledged the centrality of traditional medicine, both in Philippine culture and in the country's health care system. Policymakers and lawmakers have started putting specific attention to traditional and alternative medicine which now manifests in the form of the *Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997* which aims to "improve the quality and delivery of health care services to the Filipino people through the development of traditional and alternative health care and its integration into the national health care delivery system." This involves increasing scientific research, promoting and standardizing the practice, and shaping policies accordingly. In this way, the disparate attitudes toward traditional medicine can be gradually narrowed.

But despite all this, traditional medicine faces potent threats. In an unpublished report in 1995, the Department of Health recorded that there are 250,000 traditional healers in the country with 1 traditional healer for every 300 persons (World Health Organization 2002). However, according to Crisol and Oledan (2016), belief in traditional medicine is slowly fading as more and more people turn to mainstream medical treatments given inventions and discoveries "brought about by modernity." The current time's technological advancement as well is bound to reshape the practice. The development of transportation and communication channels, for example, expands the service area of traditional healers, making monitoring a little more challenging and compelling a more fast-paced understanding of their practice for people to avail of folk modalities with a more informed choice.

In connection with this, research conducted by Ng, Verhoeff, and Steen (2023) revealed the ramifications of the age of social media on complementary and alternative medicine. In the study, three themes were established showcasing how social media is used in the CAM modalities: (1) to share user beliefs,

attitudes, and experiences; (2) misinformation about CAM on social media; and (3) challenges with social media research in the context of CAM. Thus, about all the issues and challenges faced by traditional medicine, the World Health Organization's *Regional Strategy for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific (2002)* lists the need for political support, standards, an evidence-based approach, and protection and conservation of indigenous health resources in order to combat and ensure the survival of traditional medicine amid these changes.

### Issues in the Philippine Mainstream Health System

The World Health Organization (WHO) labels the Philippines' healthcare system as "fragmented," far from the ideal state of "well-functioning" as the country fails to meet the standards (Kenworthy 2017). In the country, it is apparent that healthcare is a privilege the less well-off have difficulty availing of. This is as the government funds little to the health sector which consequently places the burden of health costs to the individual. The majority of expenses on health, 55% to be exact, come from the pocket of the Filipino people (Weiler 2019). Therefore, on top of worrying about where to find money to bring food to their table, the low-income Filipino family is further pushed to the brink as health inequalities become more disadvantageous for them. Health, therefore, is a money-draining facet of Filipino life and is in effect taken as an option and a luxury rather than a necessity. No wonder why 6 out of 10 Filipino patients die without ever seeing a doctor as nearly half of Filipinos are unsure if they have the capacity to burden medical bills (Baticulon 2020; Chanco 2019).

Aside from that, the Philippine health care system is also short of resources. The World Health Organization recommends 2 beds per 1,000 population, but the country stands at a rate of 1.04 per 1000 population. There is also a scarcity of health care personnel as the ratio of doctors to population is at 1:33,000 Filipinos, a far cry from the recommended 1:1,000. This is bound to be challenged even more by the migration of our workers as the country continues to export nurses and is

unable to control push factors that drive health care workers to migrate abroad. (Department of Health n.d.; Lim 2020; World Health Organization 2018).

### Tabaco City in Context

Tabaco City is located on the northeastern coast of Albay and is one of Albay's growth centers alongside Metro Legaspi and Ligao City. It has an area of 120.14 square kilometers with a population of 140,691 people, the majority of whom are Roman Catholic as suggested by Albay's overall religion demographics. Projection suggests that Tabaco City is bound to experience an increasing population and consequently, the city must reconfigure its land use with a trajectory of incremental utilization for residential, industrial, and commercial spaces. This is alongside the plan to increase forest land allocation despite growing competition in different land uses.

Tabaco City has 6 general hospitals with 5 classified as private and only 1 as a government hospital. These hospitals offer a total workforce of 66 doctors, 187 nurses, and 24 midwives. Moreover, the city government employs around 5 doctors, 15 midwives, and 5 nurses across its expanse. On the other hand, Tabaco's economy is largely agricultural, and among its social sector issues is the high incidence of poverty recorded at 32.2%. The city also suffers from inadequate infrastructure and road networks alongside environmental concerns such as the degradation of natural resources and unplanned horizontal expansion of human settlements. (Local Government Unit of Tabaco City 2021)

### METHODOLOGY

The study utilized semi-structured interviews as a data-gathering tool. There were 40 traditional healers interviewed using the mixed method of over-the-phone calls and on-site one-man assistance due to the constraints of the pandemic. Out of the 47 barangays in Tabaco City, Albay, 23 barangays were included in the roster with the interviewees referred to as Folk Healer (FH) for confidentiality. Guide questions were outlined upon conducting the data-gathering process, and a data matrix was made to organize the responses of the interviewees

attached to the Appendices section. Maps were also created out of the data gathered and a website<sup>1</sup> was released for archiving and the purpose of documentation and discussion. This project was made in coordination with the local government unit of Tabaco City, Albay. Procedures of consent, privacy, and research ethics were taken into consideration and were followed in the study. Task delegation was also systematized by creating three teams assigned to the interviews, writing, and mapping with another team deployed on-ground.

## RESULTS

This section will focus on the socio-demographic profile, background and practices, and the client information of the traditional healers in Tabaco City. There will be three tables and a map to present the breakdown of the variables and spatial distribution of the healers' extent in the city. Each healing nature will be discussed in the *notable herbs, concoctions, and practices* subsection alongside the application and methods.

### Socio-demographic of Folk Healers

The tabulation in Table 1 shows that of the 40 folk healers interviewed, 33 (80%) were female while the remaining 20% were male. For the age groups, the most observable age among the healers is 67 garnering 10%. Meanwhile, the youngest healer is 39 years old, whereas the oldest is 86. Thereupon, 13 (32.5%) of the healers were aged between 61 to 70 years old, during the time they were interviewed.

To analyze the spatial distribution of the folk healers in Tabaco City, the 23 barangays were grouped into four categories, namely: upland, suburban, island, and poblacion. The suburban barangays of Bangkilingan, Baranghawon, Bog nabong, Cobo, Panal, Pawa, Salvacion, San Lorenzo, and San Vicente had the greatest number of healers at 18 (45%). The healers are mostly faith healers and *manghihilots* who also administer faith healing by 33.3%. The upland other 2.5% comes from FH15 who exercises

Category	Variables	f	%
Sex	Male	8	20%
	Female	33	80%
Age	≤40	2	
	41 - 50	3	
	51 - 60	9	
	61 - 70	13	
	71 - 80	7	
	≥81	4	
	Unidentified	2	

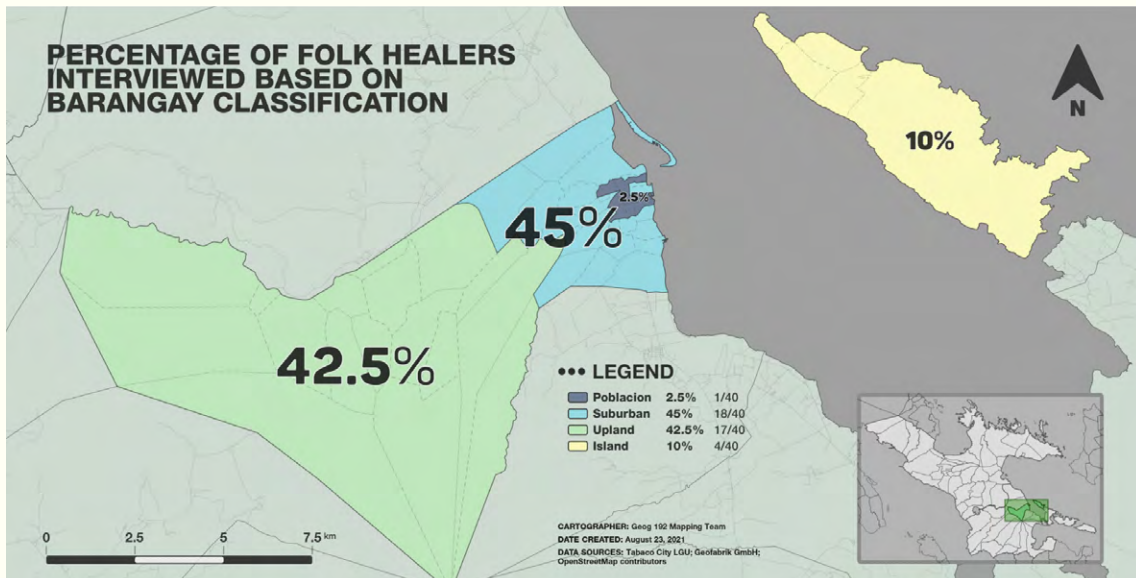
TABLE 1. FOLK HEALERS' SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.

bare hand operations on circumcisions, to boys nine to ten years of age, and even to some young lads who were not able to apply during their younger years. In summary, there is one *tambal* healer and at least one mixed healer practicing faith healing, *hilot*, and *tambal* in the upland, suburban and poblacion. On the other hand, healers on the island are female and commit to only one healing nature. Thus, faith healers and *manghihilots* are the preponderance in Tabaco City.

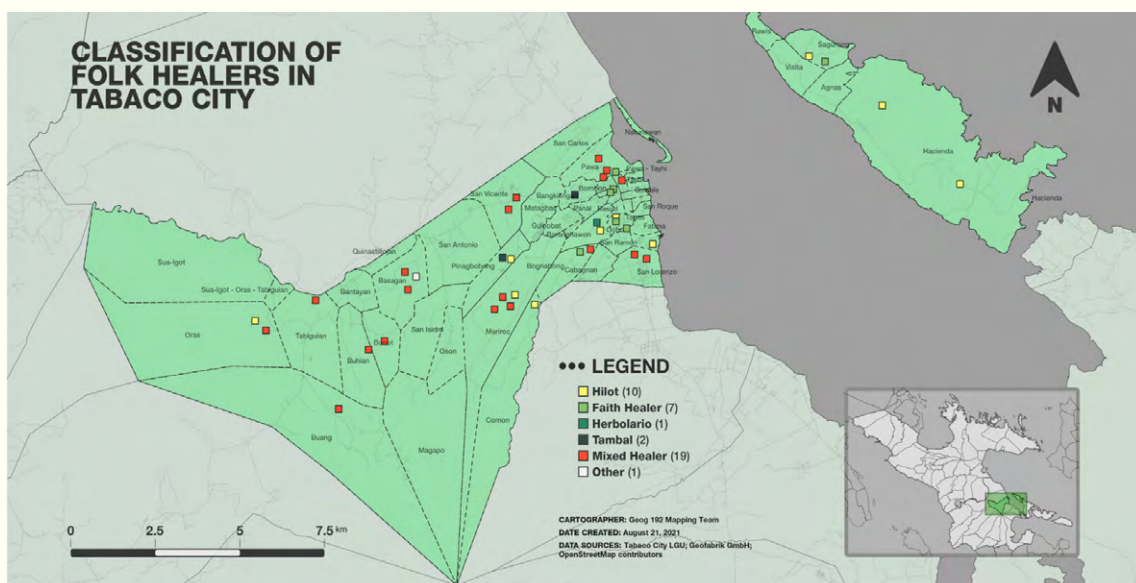
### Origins and Transmissibility of Healing Practice

The interviewed folk healers had a relatively spread-out amount of experience, with them overall having an average of 27 years of practice. The most experienced healer had been practicing for 58 years, while the healer with the least experience had only been practicing for one year. Thus, there may be relatively slower growth than negative in the healers' population in the succeeding years, since out of 21 who gave a definite answer to whether they plan to pass the practice to their next kin, 12 answered yes reflecting the preservation of the healing practices in Tabaco. The transmissibility occurs from the family of healers, their relatives, and children assist them and thus are experienced in the healing proper. On the contrary, healers admit that it is not an easy practice. They often receive bruises, body pains, and fatigue,

<sup>1</sup> <https://geogsocup.github.io/Geog192Field21/AH/?fbclid=IwAR1kLh9krVp-MAOVqFLYRKz7sl3iCC5Va-GccocJmLvzqpj3WBqBjK4w9c> (accessed April 2023)



**MAP 1. PERCENTAGE OF FOLK HEALERS INTERVIEWED BASED ON BARANGAY CLASSIFICATION.**



**MAP 2. CLASSIFICATION OF FOLK HEALERS IN TABACO CITY.**

which is the reason for the other nine's choice to non-transference.

The folk healers were asked about the origin of their practice, that is, whether or not their practice was acquired through transmissions, learned through self-practice, or both. Acquired through transmissions registered 25 responses pertaining to religious or prayer covenant (4), supernatural

aid (4), dream manifestations (5), inherited from family members including spouse (9), apprenticeship from another folk healer (1), or a combination of inheritance and dream mediation (2). The agreement to join in the vocation is greatly influenced by preservation of the family heritage of healers and healing miracles that are personally encountered, thus becoming a healer is a form of debt of gratitude to the being they sought. The



Category	Variables	f	%
Years of Practice	≤10	8	20%
	11 - 20	5	12.5%
	21 - 30	3	7.5%
	31 - 40	9	22.5%
	≥41	6	15%
	Unidentified	9	22.5%

**TABLE 2. TYPES OF HEALING NATURE AND YEARS OF PRACTICE.**

13 who self-practiced encompasses training and seminars (6), learned through observations (4), out of curiosity (1), and accidental (1). One healer preferred not to disclose information despite conveying the practice as not transmitted. Then, FH16 was trained and persuaded by religious reasons, while FH20 was appealed by both supernatural and accidental occurrences, tallying two in both acquired through transmission and self-practice as an origin of practice. The seminars were sponsored by the local government unit (LGU) in their barangay, while training courses in reflexology and massage therapy are enrolled

Category	Variables	f	%
Origin of Practice	Acquired through transmission	25	62.5%
	Self-practice	13	32.5%
	Both	2	5%
	Sense of Fulfillment	17	42.5%
	Calling	8	20%
Purpose of Practice	Religious Reasons	3	7.5%
	First Aid	2	5%
	Unidentified	10	25%

**TABLE 3. ORIGIN OF PRACTICE.**

When asked about the non-monetary benefits they receive from healing, 17 (42.5%) say they gain a sense of fulfillment from helping others, eight get a sense of satisfaction from practicing it as their calling, and three practice for religious or spiritual reasons. Two healers say they understand how difficult it is to get a

hold of medical services, so they see themselves as first aid actors. The other ten did not cite specific benefits and said they practice simply because they know how.

Notable Herbs, Concoctions, and Practices. The folk healers in Tabaco City have comparable folkloric and spiritual applications, which make use of conventional ointments, organic herbs planted by them or found within their barangay, and identical concoctions for varying ailments. The medication they create and apply to their practices heavily relies upon the availability of their natural resources, and witnessed the efficacy of the leaves and extracts on certain maladies. Thus, provided in Table 3 are the prominent herbs and sacred tools used, which also reflect the resourcefulness, creativity, and withstanding tangible heritage the healers are equipped with.

Herbs (local term)	Applications (local term)
Coconut oil	Ointment for katakana
Banana leaves	Provides sign on which body part to massage and antiseptic
Artamesa	Extract used to mix with oil for colds and headache
Luyang dilaw (turmeric)	Extract used to mix with oil for lamig
Dahon ng Pili	Perfume against bad spirits
Dahon ng Tuba	Pilay, Gastritis
Dahon ng Matangkwang	Fever and pilay
Dahon ng cepres kagurang	Fever and pilay
Dahon ng Oregano	Colds
Kulong Kugon	Colds, Poultice
Taheebo	Colds, Coughs, LBM, highblood
Moringa	Colds, Coughs, Wounds, LBM, highblood
Bayabas	Coughs, Antibiotic, Diarrhea, LBM, Panulit
Upak ng anonang	Panulit, Binat

**TABLE 4. NOTABLE HERBS AND APPLICATIONS.**

In every healing rite, folk healers initiate and/or conclude with a prayer, as a way of seeking aid and praise to a higher being. There are 35 healers who incorporate herbs in their healing practices, while the significant tools highlighted are believed to greatly influence the vocation and coined as a material heritage possession, which acts as mediation from the source of healing power to the healer then to the patient. *Tambal* healers pray over objects and herbs that will be used as ointment or poultice to animal and insect bites. The rock that can heal when prayed over by the Apostles' Creed claimed by FH1 was bought from an Aeta due of curiosity, when tested upon their cousin who was stung by a bee, a black figment was extricated from the inflicted wound. The alleviation it brought to patients acted as first aid, similar to FH33 who uses *kahoy na sinukuan*, which is the mainstream poultice used by *tambal* healers. As well as FH26 which uses an ointment mixed with *baleteng-itim*, a substance said to be acquired from the deep part of the ocean. Meanwhile, herbolarios create concoctions and serve it as potable teas or juices that can alleviate the internal organs' swelling, spasms, and soreness. The herbs are planted in the healers' garden, bought from a supplier in the barangay, or received from the neighbors' generosity. Just like FH5 which is said to have sold thousands of Miracle Herbs all over the Philippines, with each box priced at 250 pesos and tea bags at 100 pesos each. The Miracle Herbs are said to have cured people suffering from diabetes, kidney stones, tuberculosis, arthritis, heart ailments, and even restored the strength of those who are bedridden. FH13 who studied reflexology is a mixed healer of *hilot* and herbolario that uses Taheebo and Moringa in her *pito-pito* brew, to heal those with high blood and suffering from loose bowel movement (LBM). *Pito-pito* is a herbolario concoction that utilizes seven herbs in order to achieve its healing efficacy, any less or more will not be able to produce beneficial results for the client.

Alongside with FH2's cotton, bought from sellers at the church's gates is priced at five pesos for two ballots, laid upon by *Amang Hinulid* of Naga portraying an image of the entombed Christ that their family interceded for good health. Their devotion was rooted in FH2's father who spent years offering and praying for

FH2 to walk as she was previously paralyzed. After she became able, she attended the LGU's massage training and seminar and practiced *hilot* by pinching or massaging different body parts to locate the body strains or sprains (*pilay*). This is the method done in *hilot* to revive the vein, the healer will assess the body parts first then track down the *pilay* depending on the patient's reaction. With the aid of the oil concoctions, the friction and pressing is less painful than anticipated; afterward, clients are advised to not bathe within 24 hours to let the body absorb the oils.

Materials (local term)	Applications (local term)
*Patinti	Guide candle for <i>hilot</i> and <i>santigwar</i>
*Kahoy na sinukuan	Animal and insect bites and bali
*Baleteng itim	Animal and insect bites
*Healing rock	Medium of healing for animal and insect bites
*Medallion	Anting-anting for healing power
*Cotton laid by Amang Hinulid	Medium of healing for <i>pilay</i>
*1963-issued 10 centavo coin	Medium of healing for jinxed and psychotic patients
*Miracle Herbs concoction: Sambong, serpentina, malunggay, kamyas, balingbing, santol, and avocado	For colds, coughs, fever, stomachache

TABLE 5. SACRED TOOLS.

Nevertheless, tools such as the healing rock and the cotton of *Amang Hinulid* are some of the objects borne from religious interventions because these are believed to constitute when interceded with prayers. Only the appointed healers can use these, or else the healing power will vanish when used by other people. Faith healers are also mediums between the human world and the religious or supernatural, the tangible materials they carry just assist them.



Just like Tabaco's most renowned healer, FH17 who uses a medallion as a source of her healing power since clients all over the country started visiting her, which soon made her restless. She then asked the mythical creatures for assistance, and they have provided her with a son, J. J is said to be a special kid because he is half human and half dwarf, as his twin brother resides within him. J's voice can change into a dwarf-like with proper focus and was even possessed by Sto. Niño. With that, the mother and son became a team in healing their clients, making them effective given J's gift being the mediator in the supernatural world.

With that, faith healers do not take their vocation lightly because they have rites needed to be followed such as the prominent group called *Lunduyan*. Clients are only accepted every Saturday, while every second Saturday of the month, they give praise. Every Holy Week, they visit a cave in the mountains to gather, praise, preach, and heal. The clients are also invited to listen and have a check-up. Their rites include three parts: *Pag-aayuno*, Bible Study, and Medium Apprenticeship. In *pag-aayuno*, for forty days and forty nights, they shall not eat any root crops and dedicate their time to praying. Then with bible study, it will be one's first step in opening one's heart and mind in the words of God by accepting Him. In a medium apprenticeship, one will learn how to receive and release the holy spirit into one's body. It is important to control oneself from accepting several spirits and also, learn how to differentiate the good from the bad spirit. The rites are performed from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. It will start with an opening prayer, bible reading, and *ebangelio* wherein faith healers take turns in sharing and preaching. Then after lunch, the rites will resume with an opening prayer, by then the healers will diagnose the clients and initiate the healing methods, which will end in a closing prayer.

In faith healing there are four methods for evaluating and relieving the patient from disturbed spirits' hex or jinx. First is by twisting each of the patient's fingers, when a finger pops it will direct the healer to the body part that has *played*, since every finger is believed to be

connected in certain body parts. Second, FH4 practices *santigwar* by placing a 10-centavo coin on top of a plate, when it rises after the pray over, the patient has positively disturbed a spirit and is the cause of one's body ailments or psychotic behavior; otherwise, the healer will proceed to *hilot*. Meanwhile, the difference in FH19's is that instead of plates, they use saucers and are believed to be more effective, then with FH36 they instead recite an oration in Latin. After the coin-plate method, the faith healers will recite a prayer or *oracion* while letting the melting wax from the patinti drip onto a bowl of water. The wax drips will form an image or figure of the creature disturbed, then the healer will pray over and mark a cross on the patient's forehead. Other than *santigwar*, some healers rely on the third method which is *pagpupulso*. It is done by checking the patient's pulse and if the pulse rhythm is faster than normal, the cause of the body aches and illness is from supernatural tendencies. Lastly, FH26 aligns the left and right pinky fingers of the patient ensuring the lines are connected; otherwise, the patient is hexxed. With that, the resolution done is by silently calling and communicating with them, some mythical creatures are said to obligate *tulod* or offerings in the forms of bread, eggs or whole chicken, as narrated by FH25. Once the instructions are relied on, the malady will be relieved after the offerings have been made.

Therefore, these notable concoctions, materials, and practices have personalized inclusions of the healers' personality, resources and experience that are controlled by the transmission of their practice, years of practice (along with the changes in mainstream herbs and medicines), and types of patients handled.

### Client Information

Based on the over-the-call interview, of 40, 17 of the folk healers receive clients within Tabaco City, while eight healers have clients even outside Albay. FH1 and FH31 prefer private or within relatives only and three received clients within the barangay; then, six healers have clients within Albay only, while the other four did not mention their clients' background.

The healers attend to clients from babies to elderly and of all genders, including pregnant mothers and women in and after parturition. Minor infections such as *kulibra* or wounds are tended with ointments and herbs such as *mansanilya* and *moringa*. Babies are also said to find relief from *hilot*, whenever they have *pilay* or cry from uneasiness due to factors that mothers cannot determine. First time mothers seek assessments and advice to healers, to take care of their babies better and understand the condition of their distress. Moreover, healers tend to pregnant women who need assistance with prenatal care to avoid breech birth, by administering *hilot* or massaging the mother's womb to change the baby's position. Some help mothers in parturition in place of the doctors, due to affordability or convenience. *Panulit*, on the other hand, is for mothers who would like to regain their strength after giving birth. They seek this type of *hilot* to have strength in taking care of their family. For the children, teenagers, adults, and elderly, they first assess by asking questions to locate which body part and healing application needed to perform.

In addition, folk healers are voluntarily paid and do not obligate payments. Although there are clients who insist on paying 10 to 20 pesos as tokens of gratitude. FH11 and FH12 require 20 to 100 pesos depending on the case. Even the capital of the healers from the herbs, concoctions, and materials bought or sowed are not enforced of any remittance, aside from the FH5; although, she admitted that if their clients cannot afford the *Miracle Herbs*, she will provide it for free. The profit is said to only cover her capital in sorting and packaging. Nevertheless, when wounds and illnesses are not alleviated by the healing practices, healers advise their clients to have them checked by a doctor. When asked why their clients seek their aid instead of the doctors, the claimed reasons are: affordability, convenience, positive feedback from previous experiences, herbal methodology, higher healing efficacy, was previously not been healed by a doctor, religious reasons, and (for this setting of the study) COVID-19 restrictions.

## DISCUSSION

The previous section has already laid out the results and isolated patterns that float out of the data. However, for this section, the findings will be subjected to various forms of analysis to enrich the discussion and make sense of the gathered information. This section asks how and why the patterns manifested as well as outline the different implications that come across these patterns.

### THROUGH DIALECTICS: TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN TABACO CITY, ALBAY

#### Traditional Medicine Against and Alongside Modern Medicine

Tabaco City's case is not spared from the threat of the times. Around 6 of the informants from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) professed that if there is a challenge in the practice, it would be a rapid change in the world. This reflects the first moment of dialectics showing how opposites clash to replace one another. This instability is also reflected by the aging sample of our informants with 95% of them registering an age of 40 years old and above. While most of the traditional practitioners are willing to pass on the legacy, the times and bad discourse will prove it hard for someone to carry it forward. In fact, it can be argued that the remaining portion of the informants not willing to pass on the practice can reflect the internal stereotype and discrimination of the practitioners itself which can atrophy moving forward. Aside from that, the urbanization of Tabaco City and horizontal expansion of human settlements will also greatly challenge the resources and the practice of Tabaco traditional healers.

But as dialectics had suggested, tradition can never completely die. Data from the research is suggestive of tradition's assimilation of mainstream medicine's resources. From the model of dialectics, we can claim that this mirrors the trajectory toward the state of stability and universality. A good 17 of the informants (1 answered no, 22 others gave

no response) consider their treatment as a substitute or preliminary care to mainstream medical treatments. For example, FH6, a *tambal* and masseuse, says her treatment only serves as first aid care as she always recommends for the patient to visit the doctor after the healing process. This is most especially the case if the disease is something that demands desperate attention. “My mother [the alternative healer] recommends for the patient to go to the hospital once she sees that the case is something she’s not capable of healing... yes, it’s basically just a first aid,” answered the daughter of FH6 on behalf of her mother.

The same folk healer also incorporates mainstream elements in her methodology as she recommends medical drugs such as *paracetamol* to patients having fever on top of the herbal options she offers. Thus, in this case, we see how beyond the preliminary hostile contradiction between traditional and modern medicine, traditional medicine has slowly integrated in its craft modern practices to become even more effective and to perhaps survive the tides of time. As FH6 provides treatment for the scale or ideological preference that Tabaco City’s health care system cannot touch or satisfy, she also borrows from modern medicine elements that she deems relevant to healing her patients. Moreover, the good proportion of the informants who acquired their skills from seminars and training offered by the local government unit and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) reinforces that the relationship between modern and traditional medicine is not that glaringly aggressive after all. It can even be argued that the adaptive nature of Tabaco City’s traditional healers paves the way for the survival and thriving status of traditional medicine in the city as it does not just accommodate cultural sensitivities but is also gently shifting toward universality to house modern preferences.

### Traditional Medicine and Christianity

The adoption of Christian elements is something common in traditional healing practices all throughout the archipelago, and this is manifested in Tabaco City’s case in quite varied ways. “I offered sacrifice to the Mayon Volcano; it’s hard to believe, but it’s true... I just prayed, and the

*Lord teaches me in dreams and dictates to me what to do and what herbs to use,”* recounted FH9 on how he acquired or learned of the practice. The healer further pointed out that the practice is not something he can voluntarily pass on as it is the Lord’s will to appoint the next healer. Aside from that, 21 of the informants also interpolate incantations or prayers as a treatment, 15 use religious or supernatural items, and a majority starts and ends the healing process with a prayer. Specifically, the religious elements in traditional healing include rosaries, Catholic-like ceremonies (i.e., reading the *evangelio*), and legitimizing the practice as something God-given and God-driven.

These well-integrated Christian elements in the sample of folk healers coincide with the fact that the Bicol region records the highest proportion of Catholic followers than any other region in the country (Gregorio 2023). And within the provincial scale, the province of Albay, where Tabaco City is located, records the highest percentage as well among other provinces.

Tradition is often criticized for being too caught up with preservation as the common strategy for tradition to save itself is to display modernity as the taint. But as we can see here, traditional healing is not a divisive practice that staunchly stands opposite to modern medicine and the *zeitgeist*. It is not anachronistic or impractical; it is instead an adaptive one. It is willing to concede and absorb elements that would be beneficial for the practice. And this basically is how it survives the test of time—by adapting, by synthesis. And maybe what can be learned from this is that preservation does not necessarily mean building more walls; it can mean looking into how traditional healing can be more in-tuned with the here-and-now, to see how it can learn from the present without necessarily losing itself.

### Traditional Medicine in Tabaco City: In and For its Own

The previous section has only painted traditional healing as something that needs changing in order to survive as if the burden of adaptation is on traditional healers. But in this

section, we balance the analysis by saying that mainstream medicine is not necessarily the ideal model of health care. As dialectics can suggest, mainstream medicine also needs amelioration. These two apparently contradicting modalities have to establish a point of compromise, and so we highlight in this section how traditional medicine supplements the lapses and holes in mainstream health care as well as how it stands independent as a practice, taking Tabaco City as a case.

Most of the healers interviewed do not require payment in the vocation. According to the matrix, 33 of the informants do not require payment; it is only out of the willingness of the client as well as their financial capacity. However, in cases that the healer requires payment (2 healers require payment, with 5 no response), the clients would only have to pay around Php 20 to Php 100. FH5, for example, only accepts whatever the client may give, saying, “*Bente-bente lang [only around twenty pesos] ... I’m just happy and content that I get to heal and help them,*” referring to whether she requires payment upon conducting the healing. In the practice, typically, there is no set price, and the client only offers payment voluntarily. But if they offer such payment, it is only affordable, if not depending on their financial capacity. This can be one of the reasons why some of the informants claim that patrons resort to them—because it is affordable. This claim can be further fortified when we see this affordability factor alongside Tabaco’s socioeconomic status.

However, more than the lesser economic cost incurred when getting treated by a Tabaco traditional healer, convenience can be considered as a strong factor as well. The use of herbs, with 37 out of 40 folk healers utilizing such resources, gives the practice an ideal image as the herbs used are usually collected and gathered from the informants’ backyards or from their neighbors. As much as these herbs are accessible to the healer, the herbal treatments can also be accessed by the patients themselves further demystifying the healing process. The informants also typically practice their vocation in a closely-knit service area with some healers offering service only to relatives or going so far as visiting the house of

the patient. In this way, Tabaco City patrons do not have to battle against the city’s inadequate transportation infrastructure and spend on pharmaceuticals when they can be treated without having to source money out of their pockets. Aside from that, the close relations of Tabaco City healers with their patients establish a personalized and intimate form of health care that is far-fetched from the seemingly cold and transactional nature of health care provision in mainstream health care modalities.

On the other hand, connected to the previous points raised, Tabaco’s traditional medicine welcomes the diversity of people’s attitudes and cultures toward health care and well-being. Though each of the informants has different client demographics, he or she ushers in everyone from all walks of life. An informant said:

“It’s affordable! Those who have the money to buy can buy just so my hard work gets paid off. But I accept any form of payment. Sometimes, I give it for free to those who really have nothing. My goal is to heal other people, not to get rich. On how God has helped me, I give to people in return.”

And the fact that Tabaco traditional healers operate in a hybrid form of healing ideology, they are also able to accommodate beliefs in the supernatural, the power of God, and the science of biomedicine. In fact, one traditional healer bought a sort of stone instrument from an Aeta who claimed that the rock has healing powers, and now, she has used it in the practice. This suggests a relative flexibility of Tabaco traditional practitioners not just integrating modern practice but even cultural elements from other ethnolinguistic groups. Aside from that, the selflessness and clean intention of the healers as well as the lesser focus on healing as a form of business tickle patrons’ Catholic consciousness.

But beyond the cultural elements and traditional medicine’s affordability and convenience forwarded by the informants, traditional medicine has also set the foundation

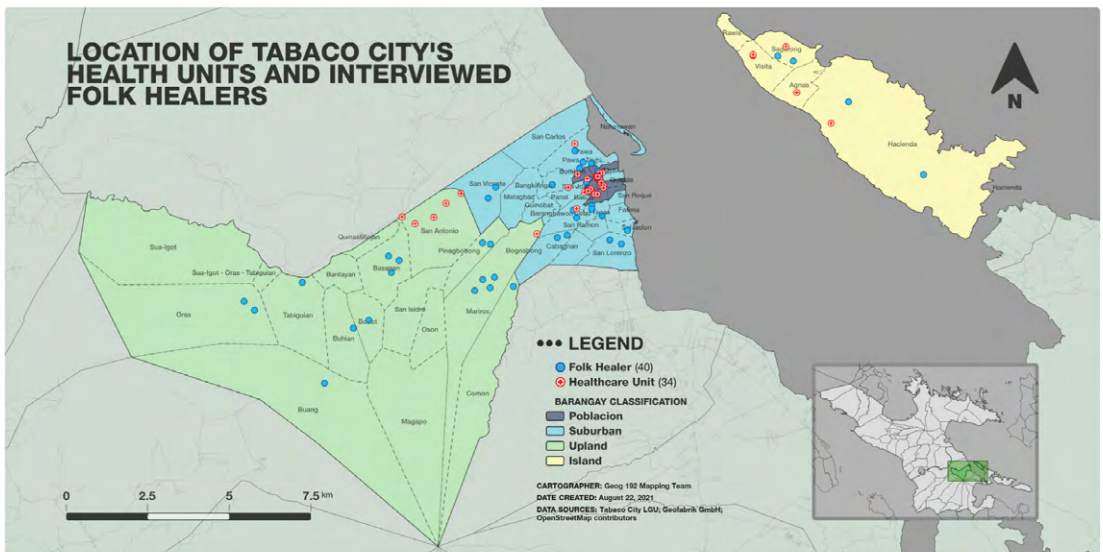
for modern medicine’s development. This is manifested by one of our informants, FH5, who was able to release in production an herbal medicine called Nature’s Gift which is composed of seven herbs as assisted by the Department of Trade and Industry. However, beyond this case, it is interesting to see the trajectory of folk healing research that could be lifted from the practices and medicinal plants used by Tabaco City traditional practitioners. The same form of research was undertaken by the University of the Philippines Manila and other institutional research groups and universities where they searched for medicinal plants that would provide affordable healthcare treatments (World Intellectual Property Organization 2015). The research involved surveying herbolarios on the herbal plants that they used and set the list as samples for further clinical studies.

**Spatialities and Geographies in Tabaco’s Traditional Healing**

We have already tackled the dialectical relationship between traditional medicine and mainstream medicine as well as traditional healing’s desirable characteristics. For this section, we will now discuss the spatial

component of traditional healing and ask where our traditional healers are located and why. As has been found in the matrix, the majority of our healers reside in the rural settings. Based on the ecological profile from Tabaco City, only 14 out of the 40 healers live in urban areas. The other healers are in upland areas, islands, and the suburbs—the rural for the purpose of discussion. As evident in the geospatial location of the informants vis-a-vis Tabaco City’s healthcare units, time indeed evinces in space, the urban representing modernity and the rural as traditional (Tuan 1977). Visual analysis of Map 3 suggests that healthcare units agglomerate in the lowland poblacion and slowly sparse out as topography increases toward the green upland in the map.

This geographical distribution reinforces the spatial affordability, convenience, and cultural acclimatization of Tabaco’s traditional modalities as they are available where mainstream health care cannot reach them. This also aligns with the World Health Organization’s report that in some areas, traditional medicine is sought not out of choice but because it is the only form of health care available. Even the home as the site of health care provisioning reinforces



**MAP 3. LOCATION OF TABACO CITY’S HEALTH UNITS AND INTERVIEWED FOLK HEALERS.**



On the other hand, the traditional-modern relationship and the dialectics between them also extend to the rural and the urban. The urban is the face of modernity and rural tradition. This reveals so much about how the rural became a cultivating environment and a haven for culture and tradition to survive without discrimination. And since traditional healing is very much cultural and, of course, traditional, nowhere can it find its home better than in the rural where it is accepted as part and parcel of life. We can see how this is as traditional medicine moors cures and causes of illnesses on the supernatural existing in nature. And between rural and urban, it is in rural areas that people have a close interconnection with the environment as almost all activities are highly dependent on nature and the land. It is in the rural that different herbal medicines exist, and it is also in this setting that the supernatural and specters are imagined. Therefore, the way rural people reimagine their space into a dual one and attach life to nature provided the most suitable ground for the seeds of traditional medicine to grow. In the case of Tabaco, bringing the interlinked nature of space, time, and phenomena, it can be reckoned that we will see a change in the face of traditional healing as urbanization, population increase, and land use change persist in the city of Tabaco.

And having said that, further unpacking the narratives of the informants, diseases for traditional medicine are much in a sense a poetic spatial politics. It is concerned with the power geometry existing between the other-worldly and the human world. This power geometry must be balanced, otherwise, it will result in illness. It is when the divide between the supernatural and the natural becomes less fine that diseases and bad luck befall humans. And to appease the spirits for crossing the line, sacrifices must be offered as a form of penance. Thus, in this sense, the environment is imagined in rural areas as well as in traditional medicine with a certain degree of haunting and spectrality. By explaining the root cause of diseases from the spirits of nature, sickness became a form of punishment that reimagines nature as a setting field with specters that demand respect. And these specters become the most sensical explanations for diseases that cannot be healed

or are undetected by hospitals. But how can we reach and speak to these supernatural unseen? Through traditional healers, of course. It is only the traditional healer, not even the medical doctor, who can manage to bridge the spiritual with the human and heal the sick that appeases the geography of the two worlds.

## SUGGESTIONS

The folkloric, spiritual, and societal value of these healing practices is unquestionable. As such, further steps must be taken to ensure that these traditions and healing practices live on. Here are the following actions suggested:

- ◇ Integrating knowledge regarding alternative healers in formal education.
- ◇ Seminars and training for the youth who are interested in the practice.
- ◇ Radio, television, and social media channels may be tapped to endorse alternative healing and help the public learn more about it.
- ◇ Ensure environmental protection for the herbs commonly used for these practices.
- ◇ Concerned agencies and organizations must actively aid in enacting ordinances, policies, and programs as well as engage the traditional healers themselves.
- ◇ Further documentation and research are necessary for alternative healing practices—not just in Tabaco City, but also in the entire country.
- ◇ Making health care services more affordable, convenient, personal, and intimate.

## CONCLUSION

The alternative healing practices and traditions in Tabaco City provide a wide array of topics and subtopics that are extremely significant and worth dissecting. This begins with the distribution of the healers. The demographics are dominated by faith healers and *hilots* (around 70%), with *herbolarios*, *tambals*, or mixture of those four making up the rest of the total. 95% of these healers are above the age of 40 and most of them have more than ten years of experience in the field. From this alone, it can be concluded that alternative healing is an aging practice. This is a worrying precedent for the preservation of the tradition, as the mean age of these healers keeps increasing every year and the passage of practices to the next generation seems slow. According to the data, 12 out of 21 healers have expressed intent to pass the tradition on to their next of kin. While this offers hope, this does not bode well in the long run, since the sample of folk healers is aging.

The analysis becomes more interesting once a spatial component is introduced. According to the data, only 14 out of the 40 healers are from barangays that are categorized as urbanized—the remaining 26 are scattered throughout suburban, upland, and island barangays. This further emphasizes the working notion of traditional and alternative medicine being more prevalent in far-flung areas. This may also relate to the abundance of medicinal plants and herbs available in these areas, as some *herbolarios* and *manghihilots* grow the plants they use in their own backyards.

Moreover, it can also be theorized that the predominance of these healers has a strong correlation to the accessibility of professional medical care and the economic status of the residents. The clients who usually avail of the services of alternative healers are those afflicted with common illnesses such as cough, fever, diarrhea, and muscle pains. This means there are lower risks and no need to travel to a hospital that is likely further away and more expensive. Furthermore, this correlation is also supported by the prevalence of affordable or voluntary forms of payment for alternative healing services. It is clearly an appealing option

for people who do not have the economic means and resources to avail of professional medical services. The practice of alternative healing is born out of a necessity for more accessible and affordable forms of healthcare.

In summary, the significance of the alternative healing processes and their consequent heritage in Tabaco City is indisputable for three key reasons. First is how it provides accessible alternative medical services for virtually every barangay within the city. They are perfect for common illnesses since they are within physical reach. Next, these alternative healers provide a more economic option to residents who may not be able to avail of professional medical services. Lastly, they are an integral part of the folkloric, spiritual, and societal identity of Tabaco. All these factors and contributions prove the indubitability of alternative healing practices within the city.



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# Mga Diwang Lagalag sa Nagniningas na Kakahuyan

Isang Pananaliksik Ukol sa Kulturang Umiiral sa Alternatibong Espasyong Seksuwal sa loob ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman

ALJOHN PUZON ESTRELLA

## ABSTRAK

**T**inutukoy sa pag-aaral na ito ang mga katangian ng alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman, demograpikong katangian ng respondente, tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad na karaniwang ginagawa sa loob ng unibersidad, at mga lugar na karaniwang pinagdadausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng unibersidad. Gamit ang trayanggulisadong paraan sa pananaliksik ay nagsagawa ng mga sarbey, panayam, at pagsasalarang (*fieldwork*) na dinalumat ang kulturang seksuwal sa naturang espasyo. Sa pag-aanalisa ng datos ay lumalabas na nakababata (karaniwang nasa edad na 18 to 24 taong gulang), lalaki, bayseksuwal, *cisgender*, *masculine*, walang ugnayan sa UP, pitong (7) buwan hanggang isang (1) taon nang nagtutungo sa unibersidad para sa seksuwal na aktibidad, at dalawa (2) hanggang lima (5) at anim (6) hanggang sampu (10) ang kadalasang bilang ng nakatalik sa loob ng unibersidad ang mga katangian ng mayorya ng mga indibidwal na kabahagi ng alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman. Karaniwan ding nasa porma ng *oral sex* ang tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad, at sa UP Lagoon at University Avenue ang karaniwang lugar na pinagdarausan nito.

## MGA SUSING SALITA

kulturang seksuwal

seksuwal na oryentasyon

alternatibong espasyong seksuwal

katauhang pangkasarian

pangkasariang ekspresyon

## PANIMULA

Bago pa man dumating ang mga kanluraning mananakop sa Pilipinas, umiiral na ang mga konserbatibong pananaw, gaya na lang ng Sultanato ng Sulu na may paniniwalang Islam sa katimugang bahagi ng ating bansa. Ngunit sa kalakhang bahagi ng lupain na sa ngayon ay kilala bilang Pilipinas, ay namamayani ang malayang paghahayag ng kasarian at seksuwalidad, na siyang mababatid sa mga erotikong rituwal na isinasagawa ng mga babaylan o pinunong ispirituwal ng katutubong paniniwala sa kabisayaan (Garcia 1996). Likas sa bawat kultura ang pagpapanibagong hubog na siyang nakadepende sa kalagayang danas ng mga indibidwal na kabahagi nito. Pagdating ng mga mananakop na Espanyol noong 1521, ay nagsimulang lumawak ang impluwensiya ng heteronormatibo at heteropatriyarkal na sistema sa ating lipunan, na nagbunga ng matinding limitasyon sa paghahayag ng seksuwalidad (Eviota 1994). Ito ay dulot ng tahasang pagsasademonyo o pagbabantad ng kasinungalingan sa mga katutubong paniniwala, na noon ay karaniwang kinikilala ang malawak at malayang ekspresyon ng seksuwalidad ng tao, na walang restriksiyon ng binaryong pag-uuri na mayroon tayo sa kasalukuyan. Kaya bunga ng stigmatikong pananaw ng karamihan ay pinipiling ikubli ng iilan ang tunay nilang seksuwal na kalikasan, upang umakma at makaiwas sa mata ng panghuhusga ng mga konserbatibo (Hartal 2017).

Bilang pagtakas sa restriksiyon ng panghuhusga ng ilang kasapi ng ating lipunan, ay lumikha ang pangkasariang minoritya ng mga alternatibong espasyong seksuwal na nagkukubli sa kadiliman ng gabi, tulad ng nakasaad sa pag-aaral ng UNDP, USAID (2014) na isang pananaliksik ukol sa pangkabuuang kalagayan ng *LGBTQIA+ community* sa bansang Pilipinas, na lumalabas na takot sa panghuhusga ang pangunahing dahilan kung bakit ang pangkasariang minoritya ay lumilikha ng alternatibong espasyo. Nakaugat ito sa stigmatikong representasyon sa kanila ng ilang panlipunang institusyon tulad ng midya at mga sektang panrelihiyon, kakulangan ng mga batas na lehitimong mangangalaga sa kanilang interes,

at kawalan ng kagustuhan ng estado na igawad sa kanila ang kanilang batayang karapatan na magkaroon ng proteksiyon mula sa mga kinauukulan laban sa diskriminasyong danas nila sa pang-araw-araw.

Ayon kay Magon at Kalra (2011), naglalabas ng mga nakakahalinang mga kemikal ang ating utak tulad ng dopamine at oxytocin sa tuwing tayo ay makikipagtalik, na siyang dahilan kung bakit tayo ay naeenganyong gawin ito nang paulit-ulit. Kaya maaaring ang pagsikil sa pangangailangang ito ng katawan, tulad ng nangyayari sa pangkasariang minoritya, ang siyang nagtutulak sa ilang tao na gumawa ng mga alternatibong paraan, upang tugunan ang kanilang kahingiang seksuwal (Brouwers at Herrmann 2020). Maaaring mula rito nakaugat ang pagsibol ng mga alternatibong espasyong seksuwal tulad ng mayroon sa mga lumang sinehan sa Kamaynilaan, mga haligi ng Intramuros, at madidilim na espasyo sa loob ng UP Diliman (Wilson 2014).

Ang Unibersidad ng Pilipinas ang kinikilalang pinakamahasay na pamantasan sa buong Pilipinas dahil sa napakalaking kontribusyon nito sa iba't ibang industriya at larangan. Mula sa mga Pambansang Alagad ng Sining at Agham, hanggang sa mga naging pangulo ng ating bansa na produkto ng UP ay makikita ang husay at galing ng unibersidad. Nakapagluwal din ang unibersidad ng mga progresibong kaisipang naglalayong palayain ang bawat batayang sektor sa ating lipunan, kabilang ang pangkasariang minoritya na patuloy na nakakaranas ng diskriminasyon at marhinalisasyon mula sa heteronormatibong paniniwala ng ilan. Kaya maaaring ang pagiging bukas ng estado ng UP Diliman sa sino mang nagnanais pumasok dito, at ang pagiging bukas-isip ng malaking bilang ng mga mag-aaral at dalubguro ng naturang pamantasan ang siyang nag-uudyok sa karamihan na dito galugarin ang iba't ibang aspekto ng kanilang seksuwal na pagkatao.

Naglalayon ang pag-aaral na ito na alamin kung ano nga ba ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman, tukuyin ang demograpikong katangian ng mga kabahagi ng

naturang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal, alamin ang mga tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad na kanilang ginagawa sa loob ng unibersidad, at alamin ang mga lugar na karaniwang pinagdarausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman.

## PAGLALAHAD NG SULIRANIN

Ang mga pangunahing layunin ng pag-aaral ay bigyang linaw ang pangkabuuang estruktura ng seksuwal na kulturang umiiral sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman sa pamamagitan ng pagsagot sa mga sumusunod na katanungan:

1. Ano ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman?
2. Ano ang demograpikong katangian ng mga respondente sa aspekto ng edad, seks, seksuwal na oryentasyon, katauhang pangkasarian, pangkasariang ekspresyon, at ugnayan sa UP Diliman?
3. Ano-anong tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad ang ginagawa ng mga respondente sa loob ng UP Diliman?
4. Ano-anong mga lugar ang karaniwang pinagdarausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman?

## TEYORETIKAL NA BALANGKAS

Ang naturang pananaliksik ay nakaangkla sa mga sumusunod na teorya:

### 1. Queen Theory (2004)

Ang queer theory ay isang kaisipang napapaloob sa kritikal na pagteteorya na sumibol sa unang bahagi ng dekada nobenta ('90s). Ito ay umusbong sa pamumukadkad ng queer studies at women studies sa iba't ibang bahagi ng daigdig, bilang porma ng panawagan laban sa heteropatriyarkal at heteronormatibong lipunan. Ang teoryang ito ay pinagtibay ang iba't ibang porma ng pagkilala sa sariling seksuwal na oryentasyon, katauhang pangkasarian, at pangkasariang ekspresyon na karaniwang nakatatanggap ng kritisismo mula sa binaryong pagtingin sa kasarian at

seksuwalidad ng ilang kasapi ng ating lipunan (Butler 2004). Sa paglipas ng panahon ay nailapat na ang nasabing teorya sa iba't ibang larang tulad ng agham, panitikan, pelikula, at maging sa makabagong espasyo ng internet (Haber 2019). Ito ay ginamit sa pag-aaral bilang pangunahing lente ng adbokasiyang bakahin ang diskriminasyong danas ng marhinalisadong sektor, na karaniwang nagkukubli at nakikipamuhay sa mga alternatibong espasyo tulad ng mayroon sa loob ng UP Diliman.

### 2. Third Space Theory (1996)

Nagsimulang sumibol ang teorya ng ikatlong espasyo mula sa sosyo-kultural na tradisyong pinanday sa larang ng sikolohiya, na nagpapakita na ang isipan ang lumilikha ng mga espasyong napagkasunduan ng lipunan na itinalaga sa bawat pangkat ng tao. Mula rito ay hiniram ito ng iba't ibang larang ng agham panlipunan, hanggang umabot ito sa kalinangang sosyo-kultural na tumatalakay sa daynamiko ng kapangyarihan sa mga espasyo ng mga modernisadong siyudad (Soja 1996), at mga lipunang may bakas ng kolonyal na nakaraan (Bhabha 2004). Binibigyang diin din ng naturang teorya na ang panlipunang minority ay lumilikha ng espasyo, kung saan nila hinahayag ang kanilang mga kahingian na siyang nililimitahan ng dominanteng kultura. Ito ay inilapat sa pananaliksik bilang pagbabalangkas ng mga alternatibong espasyo sa loob ng UP Diliman bilang ikatlong espasyong pinagkukublihan ng seksuwal na ekspresyon ng marhinalisadong sektor ng *LGBTQIA+ community* na dominante sa seksuwal na kultura ng unibersidad.

## LAYUNIN NG PAG-AARAL

Sa pangkabuuan, ang pangunahing layunin ng pag-aaral na ito ay sipatin, ilarawan, at dalumatin ang kulturang seksuwal na umiiral sa alternatibong seksuwal na espasyo sa UP Diliman, upang mabigyang linaw kung paano ito ginagamit bilang alternatibong espasyo para tugunan ang kanilang mga seksuwal na kahingian.

Gayundin, partikular na tinutugunan ng pananaliksik ang mga sumusunod na layunin:

1. Ilarawan ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman;
2. Ilarawan ang demograpikong katangian ng mga respondente;
3. Alamin ang mga tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad na ginagawa ng mga respondente sa loob ng UP Diliman;
4. Alamin ang mga lugar na karaniwang pinagdarausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman.

## SAKOP AT LIMITASYON

Ang pag-aaral ay nakatuon sa mga indibidwal na kabahagi ng alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman. Ginamit ang terminong alternatibong espasyong seksuwal, upang tukuyin ang mga espasyo sa loob ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman na ginagamit upang itawid ang kahingiang seksuwal ng mga nakikipamuhay dito.

Ang pag-aaral ay isinakatuparan noong Marso 2019 hanggang Mayo 2019, pagkaraang matapos ang preparasyon sa pagsasagawa ng saliksik. Sa panahong ito ay isinagawa ang lahat ng sarbey, panayam, at pagsasalarang bilang paraan ng pagkalap ng datos na kinailangan sa pananaliksik. Ang mananaliksik ay gumamit ng social justice design o transformative design, na isang uri ng mixed method research design na ang layunin ay maglapat ng isang pang-adbokasyang teorya, upang bigyang tugon ang isang nagaganap na panlipunang inekwalidad (Creswell 2015).

## KAHALAGAHAN NG PAG-AARAL

Ang pag-aaral na ito ay may pangunahing kakayahang kilalanin at unawain ang Alternatibong Espasyong Seksuwal sa loob ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman.

Maituturing na may kakulangan o kasalatan sa mga pananaliksik na dumadalumat sa kulturang seksuwal, dahil sa stigmatikong

pagtingin ng ilang tao sa pakikipagtalik (Eviota 1994). Kaya magsisilbing hamon sa naturang pananaliksik ang mag-ambag ng kaalaman sa malaking puwang ng mga pag-aaral ukol sa espasyong seksuwal sa konteksto ng lipunang Pilipino. Magagawang palayain ng mga ganitong tipo ng pananaliksik ang mga maling kaisipan ukol sa seksuwal na kalikasan ng tao (Hartal 2017), na siyang makabubuti upang mas malalim nating maunawaan ang ating kahingiang seksuwal, na siyang natural na bahagi ng biyolohikal na mekanismo ng ating katawan (Magon at Kalra 2011). Maaaring makapaglahad din ito ng bagong kaalaman at perspektiba tungkol sa mga paksang seksuwal at pangkasarian na makatutulong sa paghahabi ng mga kuwentong-pangkaranasan ng mga marhinalisadong sektor ng lipunan, tulad ng *LGBTQIA+ community*.

Magsisilbing pundasyon ang nasabing pananaliksik para sa mga susunod pang pag-aaral na ang paksa ay kulturang seksuwal na umiiral sa mga alternatibong espasyong seksuwal, na maaaring nakalap sa konteksto ng lipunang Pilipino.

## METODO

Ang pananaliksik ay pinaghalong kwantitatibo at kwalitatibong eksploratibong pag-aaral tungkol sa alternatibong espasyong seksuwal ng UP Diliman. Ang pag-aaral ay nasa porma ng social justice design o transformative design, na isang tipo ng pananaliksik na pinagsama ang kwantitatibo at kwalitatibong disenyo sa paggawa ng pag-aaral, at naglalayong lumikha ng panlipunang pagbabago na maaaring makatulong sa isang partikular na sektor (Creswell 2015). Maikakategorya ang pag-aaral bilang eksploratibong pananaliksik sapagkat, naglalahad ito ng mga panibagong kaalaman mula sa mga makabagong kaganapan na kailangan ng pagtuklas, at masusing pagsiyasat na siyang maaaring magbigay ng dagling paliwanag sa mga sagot na hinihingi ng pag-aaral, at magbunga ng makabagong kaalamang pakikinabangan ng sambayanan.

Ang mananaliksik ay nagsagawa ng mga sarbey o survey, panayam o interview, at pagsasalarang o fieldwork bilang instrumento ng pagkalap ng mga datos. Magkatulad na

nakabalangkas ang sarbey at panayam sa mga layunin ng pag-araal na tumutugon sa pagtatala ng mga katangian ng alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman, demograpikong katangian ng mga respondente (Kuper 2012, Jacobson at Joel 2018), tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad na ginagawa ng mga respondente sa loob ng UP Diliman, at mga lugar na karaniwang pinagdarausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman.

Mula sa hindi tiyak na buong bilang ng mga indibidwal na nagtutungo sa UP Diliman para magsagawa ng seksuwal na aktibidad ay sapalarang pumili ng limampung (50) respondente upang kumalap ng datos. Gamit ang snowball sampling technique at purposive sampling technique (Browne 2005) ay sapalarang pumili ng mga maisasarbey at makakapanayam habang binabagtas ang iba't ibang pasikot-sikot sa loob ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman. Samantalang ang balangkas ng katanungan para sa kwantitatibong pag-aaral ay nakabatay sa ilang layunin ng pag-aaral kasama ang demograpikong katangian ng mga respondente, tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad ng mga respondente, at mga lugar na karaniwang pinagdarausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad. Ang mga datos na nakalap mula sa sarbey ay inalis sa pamamagitan ng deskriptibo at inperensyal na estadistika gamit ang Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software.

Ang kwalitatibong datos ay nagmula sa pagsasalarang sa loob ng UP Diliman at panayam sa mga piling respondente na tiyak na malaki ang magiging bahagi sa pagbibigay linaw ukol sa seksuwal na kultura ng UP Diliman. Ang mga katanungan sa mga naturang pakikipanayam ay ibinalangkas sa ilang layunin ng pag-aaral na inayon sa kaugnayan ng kinapapanayam sa seksuwal na kulturang umiiral sa loob ng unibersidad. Bago pa man simulan ang panayam ay nilinaw gamit ang interview consent ang saklaw at limitasyon ng panayam bilang pangangalaga sa interes ng bawat indibidwal na naging kabahagi ng mga panayam.

## RESULTA AT DISKUSYON

### Propayl ng mga Respondenteng Kinapanayam

Ang mga sumusunod ay ang walong (8) indibidwal na siyang kinapanayam para sa kwalitatibong bahagi ng pananaliksik. Mainam na bago ilarawan ang espasyo at komunidad, ay maipakilala muna ang mga respondente ng panayam sa mga mambabasa. Upang maprotektahan ang kanilang pagkakakilanlan ay gumamit ang mananaliksik ng mga pseudonyms.

**BATHALA**, 21, isang mag-aaral ng UP Diliman na natuklasan ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal habang binabagtas ang kahabaan ng University Avenue sa kanyang paglalakad pauwi. Tulad ng iba ay hindi alam ng kanyang mismong pamilya ang kanyang tunay na seksuwalidad, kaya maingat niyang tinatago ang kanyang pagkakakilanlan. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender, at masculine.

**KANLAON**, 19, isang mag-aaral mula sa ibang unibersidad na naipakilala sa kanya ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman ng kanyang nakilala mula sa Grindr. Madaming beses na siyang nakaranas ng diskriminasyon sa loob ng espasyong seksuwal, dahil sa pagiging effeminate o halata na siyang marhinalisado sa naturang espasyo. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay homosexual, gender queer, at effeminate.

**PAMULAK MANOBO**, 24, isang manggagawa na walang paunang ugnayan sa UP Diliman bago ipakilala sa kanya ng kaibigan ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob nito. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender at androgynous.

**KABUNIAN**, 21, isang ring mag-aaral mula sa ibang unibersidad na natuklasan ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa kanyang mga kaibigan sa katabing barangay ng UP Diliman. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender at androgynous.

**MEBUYEN**, 48, isang empleado ng unibersidad na naglilingkod sa loob ng



dalawampung (20) taon. Matagal na panahon na siyang nakakita ng mga indibidwal na gumagawa ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender, at masculine.

**MAYARI**, 27, isang dating mag-aaral ng UP Diliman na nakatira malapit sa unibersidad na matagal nang kabahagi ng alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender, at masculine.

**DARAGANG MAGAYON**, 18, isang mag-aaral ng senior high school sa isang paaralan malapit sa UP na natuklasan ang naturang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal mula sa kanyang kaklaseng pawang bahagi rin ng *LGBTQIA+ community*. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender at effeminate.

**APOLAKI**, 22, isang mag-aaral ng UP Diliman na nagtutungo sa alternatibong espasyong seksuwal ng unibersidad para ibsan ang pagod at pagkalumbay na kanyang nadarama dahil sa mabigat na mga gawain sa kanyang programa. Ang kanyang SOGIE ay bayseksuwal, cisgender, at masculine.

### Ang Alternatibong Espasyong Seksuwal sa UP Diliman

Ang Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Diliman ay isang espasyong itinaguyod upang magbahagi at luminang ng kaalaman na mapapakinabangan ng sambayanan mula sa pinakamahuhusay na guro at mag-aaral sa Pilipinas. Ngunit sa pagkagat ng dilim ay may mga espasyo sa loob ng unibersidad na nagkakaroon ng alternatibong kagamitan sa porma ng paghahayag ng seksuwal na kahingian ng ilang indibidwal na siyang karaniwang hindi kinikilala ng ilang kasapi ng ating lipunan (Piamonte et al. 2019). Tumutugma ang ganitong mekanismo sa ideya ng ikatlong espasyo (Soja 1989), kung saan ay makikitang nagbabago ang pag-uugali (behavior) at pagkakakilanlan (identity) ng isang tao sa pagtawid niya sa ikatlong espasyo tulad ng espasyong seksuwal sa UP Diliman kung ihahambing ang pag-uugali at pagkakakilanlan ng mga ito sa ipinapakita nila sa kanilang mga tahanan bilang unang

espasyo, at lipunan bilang ikalawang espasyo. Ganito rin ang natunghayan ng mananaliksik sa dalawang buwan niyang pagsasalarang sa naturang ikatlong espasyo, na tila nagsisilbing ligtas na espasyo o safe space sa paghahayag ng seksuwal na kalikasan ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman para sa ilang indibidwal (San Mateo 2017). Malaya nilang naibabahagi ang kanilang mga saloobin at pagnanasa na hindi lubusang ikinokonsidera, kung ito ba ay maaaring makakaapekto sa kanilang pagkakakilanlan o pagtingin sa kanila ng ibang indibidwal sa harap ng realidad ng lipunan na kanilang pang araw-araw na ginagalawan. Ito ay pinagtitibay din ng pahayag nina Kanlaon, Pamulak Manobo, at Kabunian na mariing sinasabi na mas ninanais nilang pumunta sa UP Diliman upang ihayag ang kanilang totoong sarili.

“A place where you can express yourself without any prejudice coming from bigoted members of our society. Kahit puro tite hahaha, pero I consider this as my safe space.”

— **KANLAON**

“UP Diliman is a special place where we are free to express ourselves without thinking about our identities, because most of the individuals in this community are totally anonymous. Even ako I’m enjoying the anonymity dahil I am free to do what I want here.”

— **PAMULAK MANOBO**

“Diliman is a place who can freely express yourself, especially ‘yung mga sides na di nirecognize ng lipunan about you. I mean kung anong mga bagay na part ng personality mo na di pwedeng ipakita in the real world ay pwede mong imanifest dito.”

— **KABUNIAN**

Noong una, pawang pakikipagtalik lamang ang kanilang layunin sa pagpunta sa UP Diliman. Ngunit binago ito nang makatagpo sila ng mga taong nakakaunawa sa

kanilang mga danas bilang miyembro ng pangkasariang minorya.

“It’s like a community kasi kahit nakasex ko ‘yung iba dati ay nagiging friend ko sila eventually at nakakasama ko habang gumagala dito sa loob ng UP at naghahanap ng iba pang posibleng matikman.”

— **KANLAON**

“Para siyang group or tribe na kapag nagkikita along the area ay may certain level of familiarity na at may certain level of respect sa booking ng may booking hahaha.”

— **PAMULAK MANOBO**

“Sa tagal ko rito, grabe ‘yung evolution eh, para na talaga siyang maliit na pamayanan sa loob ng apat na sulok ng UP. Madami akong formerly kasex dito pero eventuall y nagiging close friend ko at nakakasama kahit sa labas ng UP.”

— **MEBUYEN**

Ipinapakita ng pahayag nina Kanlaon, Pamulak Manobo, at Mebuyen na tila isang maliit na pamayanan sa loob ng unibersidad ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal na kanilang kinabibilangan. Dahil tulad ng isang pamayanan ay nagkakaroon sila ng panlipunang ugnayan at samahan bukod sa seksuwal na aktibidad na pinakadiwa ng naturang ikatlong espasyo.

### Demograpikong Katangian ng mga Respondente

Ayon sa Talahanayan Blg. 1 ay mayroong kabuuang bilang ng limampung (50) respondente ang nasabing pag-aaral. Sa pagsusuri ng edad ng mga respondente ay makikita na may pinakamataas na bilang ang labingwalo (18) hanggang dalawampu’t apat (24) na taong gulang na may pangkabuuang bilang na dalawampung apat (24) o limampung’t walong (58) porsiyento. Pinakamababang bilang naman ang tatlungpu’t lima (35) hanggang tatlungpu’t siyam (39) na taong gulang na may bilang na isa (1) o dalawang (2) porsiyento. Maaaring maiugnay ito sa pag-aaral na isinagawa nina Boislard, et. al. (2016) na

lubhang aktibong seksuwal ang mga indibidwal sa kanilang pagbibinata’t pagdadalaga hanggang sa unang yugto ng kanilang pagiging matanda. May kaugnayan ito sa pagbabagong pisikal na kanilang nararanasan sa pagbugso ng mga hormones sa kanilang katawan na nagtutulak sa kanila na magsagawa ng mga seksuwal na aktibidad.

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Mababa sa 18 taong gulang	7	14%
18 hanggang 24 na taong gulang	24	48%
25 hanggang 29 na taong gulang	11	22%
30 hanggang 34 na taong gulang	3	6%
35 hanggang 39 na taong gulang	1	2%
Mahigit sa 40 taong gulang	4	8%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TALAHANAYAN BLG. 1:  
EDAD NG MGA RESPONDENTE.**

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Lalaki	48	96%
Babae	2	4%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TALAHANAYAN BLG. 2:  
SEKS NG MGA RESPONDENTE.**

Ayon sa Talahanayan Blg. 2 ay mula sa pangkabuuang bilang ng limampung (50) respondente ay mayroong apatnapu’t walong (48) lalaki na bumubuo ng siyamnapu’t anim (96) na porsiyento at dalawang (2) babae na bumubuo sa apat (4) na porsiyento na siyang ipinapakita sa ikalawang talahanayan. Maiugnay rito ang pananaliksik ni Sumter, S.R. (2017) na nagpapatunay na ang mga kalalakihan ay mas nagnanais ng panandaliang seksuwal na ugnayan kung ikukumpara sa tindi ng pagnanais ng mga kababaihan, at ang pag-aaral ni Baumeister R.F. (2000) na siyang tumatalakay na mariing idinidikta ng kulturang umiiral sa isang lipunan ang limitasyon ng kababaihan sa pagkilala sa kanyang seksuwal na kalikasan.

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Heteroseksuwal	3	6%
Homoseksuwal	7	14%
Bayseksuwal	39	78%
Panseksuwal	1	2%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	50	100%

**TALAHANAYAN BLG. 3: SEKSUWAL NA ORYENTASYON (SEXUAL ORIENTATION) NG MGA RESPONDENTE.**

Sa pagsusuri ng datos ukol sa dominanteng seksuwal na oryentasyon ay makikita na mayorya ng datos na nakalap ay mula sa mga kasapi ng LGBTQIA+ community na may pangkabuuang bilang na apatnapu't pito (47) o siyamnapu't apat (94) na porsiyento. Kabahagi nito ang mga bayseksuwal na may bilang na siyamnapu't siyam (39) o pitumpu't walong (78) porsiyento, mga homoseksuwal na may bilang na pito (7) o labing-apat (14) na porsiyento, at panseksuwal na may bilang na isa (1) o dalawang (2) porsiyento.

Pinagtitibay ito ng pahayag ni Mebuyen na nagsasalaysay na mula noong taong 2010 ay mas madami na siyang nakikitang nagsasagawa ng lalaki sa lalaking pagtatalik o MSM (*Men having sex with men*) na siyang pawang kasapi ng LGBTQIA+ community kaysa sa mga heteroseksuwal na siyang nagdodomina sa nasabing lugar bago ang taong 2010.

“Dati before 2010 ay mas madami pang straight na naglalampungan sa Lagoon pero pagpasok ng 2010 ay dominante na ang numbers ng mga LGBT na gumagala rito, pabor siyempre kasi LGBT rin ako at tila manipestasyon ito ng efforts ng community na igiit o ipaglaban ang rights and spaces na meron tayo.”

**— MEBUYEN**

Iniuugnay niya ang mga kaganapan na may kinalaman sa paglaban para sa karapatan at espasyo ng LGBTQIA+ community kasabay ang pag-usbong ng mga ito sa seksuwal na kultura ng Laguna ng UP Diliman.

Sapagsusuringkwantitatiboat kwalitatibong datos ukol sa seksuwal na oryentasyon ng mga respondente, ay magkatulad na pinakamataas ang bilang ng bayseksuwal. Tumutugma rin ito sa resulta ng mga nauna pang pag-aaral ukol sa pangkasariang minority (Groves et al. 2014). Ang mas mataas na bilang ng mga taong kinikilala ang kanilang sarili bilang bayseksuwal, ay nababatid ng ilang respondente bilang bunga ng maling pananaw ukol sa konsepto ng bayseksuwalidad.

“Madaming bisexual dito, pero di lahat oriented talaga kung ano talaga ang bisexual, madami nag-iisip na ang pagiging bisexual ay pagiging masculine na gay, which is not. Kaya good move po 'yung questions ninyo sa survey dahil malinaw po du'n kung ano ang SOGIE.” — **APOLAKI**

“Bata pa lang po, attracted na ako parehas sa guys and girls kaya malinaw po sa akin kung ano po ang bisexual. May mga tao kase dito na may misconception kung ano ang bi? There are people here na tend to think na masculine gays ang pagiging bi.”

**— DARAGANG MAGAYON**

May mga pagkakataon na inaakala ng ilan na ang pagiging bayseksuwal ay pagiging *masculine* na homoseksuwal, at ang paggamit ng terminong gay o homoseksuwal ay inaakala nilang pantukoy ng pagiging *effeminate*, malamya, o halata.

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Cisgender	48	96%
Gender Queer	2	4%
Kabuuan	50	100%

**TALAHANAYAN BLG. 4: KATAUHANG PANGKASARIAN (GENDER IDENTITY) NG MGA RESPONDENTE.**

Sa pagsusuri ng datos ukol sa dominanteng Katauhang Pangkasarian ay lumalabas na may bilang na apatnapu't walo (48) o siyamnapu't anim (96) na porsiyento ay Cisgender, samantalang may bilang na dalawa (2) o apat (4) na porsiyento lamang ang *Gender Queer*.

“Madalas dito ang heteronormatibong kapag straight passing ka ay mas mababa ang mga effeminate and mga gender queer or trans sayo. Ilang beses na ako actually nakatanggap ng panlalait dito dahil gender queer ako.”

— **KANLAON**

Lumalabas na ang heteronormatibong pananaw ng ilang *cisgender* o *straight* passing na indibidwal, ay nagagamit upang idiskrimina ang mga *gender queer* at *transgender* na siya namang hinahamon ang kumbensyunal na pagtingin sa kasarian ng tao (Baytan 2000).

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Masculine	27	54%
Effeminate	3	6%
Androgynous	15	30%
Non-Conforming	5	10%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

TALAHANAYAN BLG. 5:

PANGKASARIANG EKSPRESYON (GENDER EXPRESSION) NG MGA RESPONDENTE.

Sa pagsusuri ng datos ukol sa dominanteng Pangkasariang Ekspresyon ay lumalabas na may bilang na dalawampu't pito (27) o limampu't apat (54) na porsiyento ay masculine, tatlo (3) o anim (6) na porsiyento ang effeminate, labinlima (15) o tatlumpung (30) porsiyento ang androgynous, samantalang lima (5) o sampung (10) porsiyento lamang ang Non-conforming.

May kaugnayan ito sa pahayag ni Mayari na dahil sa mataas na preperensiya ng mga taong naglalagalag sa UP Diliman sa mga kalalakihang matikas na nais nilang makatalik ay pinipilit ng ibang baguhin ang kanilang kaanyuan, kilos at tindig upang mas madaling makatagpo ng makakapareha. Sinangkot din niya ang effeminate shaming at internal homophobia ng ilang indibidwal na kasalukuyang suliranin ng LGBTQIA+ community (Miller at Behm-Morawitz 2016).

“Nalulungkot ako minsan kapag naiisip ko na may ilan dito na kailangang magpanggap na masculine para lang makahanap ng magiging sexual partner, dahil madami dito ay mayroong internal homophobia.”

— **MAYARI**

Kaugnay nito ay mayroong pag-aaral na isinagawa sina Miller at Behm-Morawitz (2016) na pinamagatang “*Masculine Guys Only: The effects of femmepobic mobile dating application profiles on partner selection for men who have sex with men*” na tumatalakay ukol sa diskriminasyong ibinabantad ng ilang homoseksuwal sa kanilang kapwa homoseksuwal dahil lamang sa pagiging malambot ng kilos ng mga ito. Sa pag-aaral na ito ay napatunayan ang eksistensya ng mga internal homophobia at femmepobia sa hanay ng LGBTQIA+ community.

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Taga-UP	12	24%
Hindi Taga-UP	38	76%
Kabuuan	50	100%

TALAHANAYAN BLG. 6:

UGNAYAN SA UP DILIMAN.

Labindalawa (12) o dalawampu't apat (24) na porsiyento lamang mula sa pangkabuuang bilang na limampu (50) ang naging/kasalukuyang mag-aaral ng UP Diliman na siyang napakalaki ang agwat sa bilang na tatlumpu't walo (38) o pitumpu't anim (76) na porsiyento na di mag-aaral ng naturang unibersidad. Mailalapat ang datos na ito sa pahayag nina Bathala, Kanlaon, Pamulak Manobo, Kabunian, at Mayari na mas marami ang mga hindi taga-UP na nagtutungo sa UP Lagoon at University Avenue na dumadayo lamang para makahanap ng makakatalik.

“Dito sa Lagoon at University Avenue ay sobrang weird na kapag nalaman nilang taga-UP ka ay parang prestige food or main course meal ka.”

— **BATHALA**

“Kapag dito sa amin kapag taga-UP iba pagtingin namin, parang may plus factor, mas nakakalibog kasi alam mong matalino hahaha. Kaya ayun may ilan nga dito nagpapanggap na taga-UP para maisip na yummy.”

— **PAMULAK MANOBO**

Pinapakita ng pahayag nina Bathala at Pamulak Manobo na tila mas mataas ang tingin ng mga indibidwal sa naturang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa mga taga-UP, na siyang dahilan kung bakit may iilan sa naturang ikatlong espasyo na pinipiling magpanggap na taga-UP (Gavin 2009).

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
1 hanggang 3 buwan	2	4%
4 hanggang 6 buwan	3	6%
7 buwan hanggang 1 taon	18	36%
2 hanggang 3 taon	12	24%
4 hanggang 5 taon	9	18%
6 hanggang 10 taon	5	10%
Mahigit 10 taon	1	2%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TALAHANAYAN BLG. 7:**

**TAGAL NG PANAHON NANG NAGPUPUNTA SA UP DILIMAN.**

Ayun sa Talahanayan Blg. 7 ay lumalabas na karaniwang pitong (7) buwan hanggang isang (1) taon ang tagal ng panahon ng pagtutungo sa UP Diliman ng mga indibidwal na kasangkot sa seksuwal na kulturang umiiral dito sa bilang na labingwalo (18) o tatlumpu’t anim (36) na porsiyento.

Sa pag-aanalisa ng mga datos na nakalap ay 28 taon na ang pinakamatagal na namamalagi at nagtutungo sa UP Diliman para makahanap ng makakatalik na siyang nagpapatunay na matagal nang nagaganap ang naturang seksuwal na kaparaanan sa nasabing unibersidad. Pinapatunayan ito ng aking pakikipanayam kay Mebuyen na mahigit 20 taon nang nagsisilbi bilang empleado ng unibersidad.

“Kakapasok ko pa lang bilang empleado ng UP noon ay naririnig ko na ang mga kuwento about sa Lagoon at iba pang cruising spots dito sa UP. Sabi pa sa akin nung senior ko that time eh matagal na matagal na panahon na ‘yang nangyayari dito.”

— **MEBUYEN**

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
1 lamang	8	16%
2 hanggang 5	12	24%
6 hanggang 10	12	24%
11 hanggang 20	6	12%
21 hanggang 30	4	8%
31 hanggang 50	4	8%
50 hanggang 100	1	2%
Mahigit sa 100	3	6%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TALAHANAYAN BLG. 8:**

**PANGKABUUNANG BILANG NG MGA NAKATALIK SA LOOB NG UP DILIMAN.**

Ayun sa Talahanayan Blg. 8 ay dalawa (2) hanggang lima (5) at anim (6) hanggang sampu (10) ang kadalasang bilang ng nakakatalik ng isang indibidwal sa loob ng UP Diliman sa tala ng kanilang pagtungo sa nasabing lugar na may magkatulad na bilang na labindalawa (12) o tigdalawampu’t apat (24) na porsiyento. susuriin ang pangkabuuang datos ay lumalabas na apat na daan at limampung (450) kapareha ang pinakamataas na naitalang bilang ng nakatalik ng isang indibidwal sa UP Diliman. Ang naturang indibidwal ay ang pinakamatagal ding nanatili sa seksuwal na kultura ng UP Diliman sa loob ng mahigit dalawang dekada. Ang datos na ito ay kahalintulad ng mayorya ng mga respondente na nagpapakita na mas dumadami ang bilang ng nakakatalik kapag mas matagal nang nananatili sa nasabing lugar. Nasusukat dito ang mas mataas na probabilidad o tsansang makakuha ng katalik kapag mas maraming panahong ibinuho sa paglalagalog dito.

## Tipo ng Seksuwal na Aktibidad sa loob ng Unibersidad

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
Oral Sex	50	100%
Anal Sex	2	4%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	50	100%

### TALAHANAYAN BLG. 9:

#### SEKSUWAL NA AKTIBIDAD SA LOOB NG ESPASYONG SEKSUWAL SA UP DILIMAN

Sa pagtukoy ng hangganan ng seksuwal na aktibidad ay lumalabas na siyento porsiyento (100%) ng mga respondente ay nagawa nang makipag-*oral sex* sa loob ng UP Diliman na malayo sa bilang na dalawa (2) o apat (4) na porsiyento na nasubukang makipag-*anal sex* sa loob ng UP Diliman. Ang bilang ay maaaring naapektuhan ng takot sa panganib ng pagkakaroon ng mga lumalaganap na nakakahawang sakit buhat sa hindi ligtas na pakikipagtalik.

“Madami talaga rito hanggang kupiz (oral sex) lang kasi di ba nga tumataas ang kaso ng HIV ngayon, saka ayun baka pag may dumating na parak (University Police) eh baka mahirapan makatakbo kasi matagalan sa pagsusuo.” —

#### KANLAON

Maiuugnay rin ito sa pag-aaral na isinagawa ni Leichliter et al. (2007) sa pananaliksik na pinamagatang *Prevalence and Correlates of Heterosexual Anal and Oral Sex in Adolescents and Adults in the United States* na mas maraming nagnanais na hanggang *oral sex* lang ang hangganan ng kanilang seksuwal na aktibidad dahil sa paglaganap ng mga nakakahawang sakit tulad ng mga *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* (STDs).

## Mga Lugar na Pinagdarausan ng Seksuwal na Aktibidad sa Loob ng UP Diliman

Tagapahiwatig	f	%
UP Lagoon	50	100%
University Ave.	25	50%
AS Parking Lot	5	10%
Physics Parking	3	6%
Tennis Court	3	6%
Vargas Hall	5	10%
Archery	5	10%
Admin Bldg	3	6%
Quezon Hall	3	6%
Oble	3	6%
Palma Hall	3	6%
Oval	2	4%
Main Library	3	6%
Film Institute	3	6%
Anywhere in UP	1	2%
<b>Kabuuan</b>	50 (multiple responses)	

### TALAHANAYAN BLG. 10:

#### LUGAR NA KARANIWANG PINAGDARAUSAN NG SEKSUWAL NA AKTIBIDAD SA LOOB NG UP DILIMAN.

Mula sa datos na aking nakalap ukol sa iba pang mga lugar na pinagsasagawaan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman ay pinakamataas ang bilang ng sumagot na sila ay nakikipagtalik sa UP Lagoon na may limampu (50) o isandaang (100) porsiyento, sumunod dito ang kahabaan ng University Avenue na may bilang na dalawampu't lima (25) o limampung (50) porsiyento ng pangkabuuang bilang ng mga respondente.

Mapapansin din sa mga sagot na malaking bahagi ng UP Diliman ang natukoy na lugar kung saan nila ginagawa ang mga seksuwal na aktibidad. Bilang pag-uugnay sa pahayag nina Kanlaon, Pamulak Manob, o at Kabunian ay lumalawak sa pagkagat ng dilim ang nasasakupan ng espasyong seksuwal. Sa

pagpatak ng ala-sais (6:00 PM) ng gabi ay nagsisimula na ang mga seksuwal na aktibidad sa UP Lagoon at University Avenue at pagkagat ng alas-diyes (10:00 PM) ay lumalawak ito hanggang sa kabuuan ng kalye at mga gusali sa Academic Oval na siyang magwawakas kapag sumikat na ang araw ng ala-sais (6:00 AM) ng umaga.

“Ganito kasi sistema rito, mga 5pm pa lang nandito na kami nakatambay kasi kapag nagdilim na mga 6 siguro ay nagsisimula na maghanap ng ka-sex ang mga ’yan sa Lagoon at University Avenue. Tapos kapag mga 10 na ayan hanggang doon sa paikot (Academic Oval) na umaabot ’yung mga naghahanap kasi halos wala na mga estudyante n’yan at may ilan na nagjojogging na naghahanap din ng ka-sex. Tapos ayun aabutin kami ng 5 to 6am dito kasi sa gano’ng oras kapag may liwanag na ay wala ka nang makukuha.” — **KABUNIAN**

Mula sa pangkabuuang bilang na limampu (50) ay tatlumpu’t pito (37) o pitumpu’t apat (74) na porsiyento ang sumagot na aksidente nilang nalaman ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman. Ayon sa pahayag nina Bathala, Kanlaon, Pamulak Manobo, at Kabunian, kuryosidad ang nagtulak sa kanila kung bakit sila naipasok sa seksuwal na kulturang ito.

“Marami rin sa mga nakausap ko rito ay accidental lang din nalaman ’yung ganap dito. Ako noon I remember kakatapos lang ng class ko sa AS then naglalakad ako papuntang PhilCOA tapos ayun may nakita akong cute guy na ngumiti sa ’kin at sinundan ko, ayun na-lure ako sa lagoon at doon nangyari ang first experience ko dito.”

— **BATHALA**

Ilan sa kanila ay nagjojogging nang namataan nila na may mga kalalakihang nagsisipuntahan sa mga bahaging mapupuno at kinagulat nila ang kanilang mga nasaksihan nilang seksuwal na aktibidad.

## KONGKLUSYON

Mailalarawan ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman bilang espasyong nagbibigay laya sa paghahayag ng seksuwal na kalikasan ng mga indibidwal na nakikipamuhay rito na karaniwang iniimbalida ng ilang kasapi ng ating lipunan (Piamonte et al. 2019). Maituturing itong ikatlong espasyo (Soja 1989), kung saan ay mapapansing iba ang pag-uugali (behavior) at pagkakakilanlan (identity) ng isang tao sa ikatlong espasyo kung itatambis sa kanilang pag-uugali at pagkakakilanlan sa kanilang mga tahanan bilang unang espasyo, at lipunan bilang ikalawang espasyo. Sa ganitong mekanismo ay nagsisilbing ligtas na espasyo o safe space ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman, sapagkat nagbibigay ito ng kalayaan sa paghahayag ng kanilang pangkasariang katotohanan (San Mateo 2017). Dito ay malaya nilang naibabahagi ang kanilang mga saloobin at pagnanasa na hindi lubusang ikinokonsidera, kung ito ba ay maaaring makaapekto sa kanilang pagkakakilanlan o pagtingin sa kanila ng ibang indibidwal sa harap ng realidad ng lipunan na kanilang pang-araw-araw na ginagalawan.

Maituturing din na maliit na pamayanan sa loob ng unibersidad ang alternatibong espasyong seksuwal na ito, dahil tulad ng isang pamayanan ay nagkakaroon sila ng panlipunang ugnayan at samahan bukod sa seksuwal na aktibidad na karaniwan nilang ginagawa rito (Billund-Phibbs 2018).

Kung pagbabatayan ang interpretasyon ng datos na tumutumbok sa demograpikong katangian ng mga respondente, ay lumalabas na nakababata (karaniwang nasa edad na 18 to 24 taong gulang), lalaki, bayseksuwal, cisgender, masculine, walang ugnayan sa UP, pitong (7) buwan hanggang isang (1) taon nang nagtutungo sa unibersidad para sa seksuwal na aktibidad, at dalawa (2) hanggang lima (5) at anim (6) hanggang sampu (10) ang kadalasang bilang ng nakatalik sa loob ng unibersidad ang katangian ng mayorya ng mga indibidwal na naglalagalag sa alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa loob ng UP Diliman. Ang pagiging mas bata ng mga ito ay maaaring iugnay sa mga dati pang pag-aaral, na ipinapakita na



mas aktibong seksuwal ang tao sa kanilang adolescence o hanggang sa mga unang yugto ng kanilang pagtanda o pagiging adult (Boislard et al. 2016). Maaaring mas madaming lalaki sa espasyong seksuwal na ito dahil mas nagnanais ng panandaliang seksuwal na ugnayan ang mga lalaki, na siyang pinapatunayan ng ilang pag-aaral ukol sa hook-up culture (Baumeister 2000 at Sumter 2017). Magkakatulad na binabalangkas naman ng naratibo ng mga kinapanayam na bayseksuwal, cisgender, at masculine ang karaniwang SOGIE ng mga respondente, dahil ito ang kumbensiyunal o karaniwang katanggap-tanggap sa mata ng ilang kasapi ng ating lipunan. Samantalang, ang pagiging minoryang gender queer, transgender, at effeminate o halata ay maaaring magbunga ng marhinalisasyon o/at diskriminasyon, dahil tumataliwas ito sa namamayaning heteronormatibong paniniwala (Miller B. at Behm-Morawitz E. 2016).

Matagumpay ring natugunan ang mga katanungan ukol sa tipo ng seksuwal na aktibidad na ginagawa sa loob ng alternatibong espasyong seksuwal sa UP Diliman, na lumalabas na karaniwang nasa porma ng oral sex dahil higit na mas ligtas ito kumpara sa anal sex na higit na mas mataas ang probabilidad na panggalingan ng mga sexually transmitted diseases o STDs.

Makikita sa mga datos ukol sa mga lugar na karaniwang pinagdarausan ng seksuwal na aktibidad sa loob ng UP Diliman na pinakamataas ang bilang ng tumugon na sila ay nakikipagtalik sa UP Lagoon at University Avenue na siyang tumutugma rin sa mga datos na nakalap sa mga panayam at pagsasalarang. Lumalabas na sa pagpatak ng ala-sais (6:00 PM) ng gabi ay nagsisimula na ang mga seksuwal na aktibidad sa UP Lagoon at University Avenue at pagkagat ng alas-diyes (10:00 PM) ay lumalawak ito hanggang sa kabuuan ng kalye at mga gusali sa Academic Oval na siyang magwawakas kapag sumikat na ang araw ng ala-sais (6:00 AM) ng umaga. Mababatid na habang lumalalim ang gabi ay palawak nang palawak ang nasasakupan ng alternatibong seksuwal na espasyo sa loob ng unibersidad at unti-unti rin itong maglalaho

sa pagsikat ng araw (Ramello 2005). Lumalabas din sa pag-aaral na karamihan ay pawang aksidente lamang natuklasan ang seksuwal na kultura sa loob ng unibersidad na karaniwang natuklasan nila habang sila ay naglalakad o napadaan.

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# Association of Social Physique Anxiety and the Risk of Developing Eating Disorders among Collegiate Female Athletes

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## ABSTRACT

Social Physique Anxiety (SPA) is described as an individual's anxiety towards others evaluating their body. Studies have shown SPA being prevalent among collegiate female athletes, as well as being highly correlated to the onset of eating disorders. Due to the inconsistent findings in various research and with the existing gap of knowledge, this paper aims to examine the association of SPA and developing eating disorders among Filipino collegiate female athletes by particularly focusing on the type of uniforms worn by athletes. Four different questionnaires were distributed to collegiate female athletes from 15 women's variety teams from the University of the Philippines Diliman (n = 277). A total of 167 collegiate female athletes were divided by their sports uniforms, with 74 respondents being athletes with revealing uniforms and 93 being athletes with non-revealing uniforms. Most athletes with revealing uniforms focused on dance, whereas those with non-revealing uniforms focused on ball games. Data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression and Chi-Square Test of Association. Results showed that SPA was prevalent among Filipino collegiate female athletes, with 162 athletes having high SPA (n = 167). Self-Esteem and Body Image Dissatisfaction as predictors of SPA were recorded as significant. However, the involvement of sport uniforms showed no variance in SPA levels. On the other hand, the risk of developing eating disorders was recorded to be low, with only 31.74% of the participants being at-risk for developing eating disorders. Thus, high SPA does not indicate being at-risk for developing eating disorders.

## KEYWORDS

anorexia nervosa

body image

bulimia nervosa

eating disorder

disordered eating

subclinical eating disorders

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

- ◇ *Anorexia nervosa* - type of eating disorder that involves consuming extremely low calories due to the fear of gaining weight
- ◇ **Body Image** – an individual’s perception of their body’s attractiveness
- ◇ *Bulimia Nervosa* – type of eating disorder commonly described as a cycle of bingeing and purging (i.e., self-induced vomiting) due to the fear of gaining weight
- ◇ *Eating Disorder* – dysfunctional eating patterns and disturbances about body size and shape (e.g., Specified Eating Disorders: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified)
- ◇ *Disordered Eating* – observed to have the same patterns as eating disorders, but at a lower severity or lesser frequency
- ◇ *Subclinical Eating Disorders* – disordered eating behaviors that fall short between Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa (e.g., fasting, compulsive exercising, and extreme body dissatisfaction)

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Relevant concepts in this study are explored in this section to understand the relationship between SPA and the risk of developing eating disorders. Predicators of SPA—namely, self-esteem, perfectionism, body image, type of athletic uniforms, and cultural preferences—are first examined before the internal and external predicators of eating disorders.

### PREDICTORS OF SPA

**Self-Esteem.** Self-esteem is the psychological well-being of an individual. The

study on the predictors of SPA by Martin, Engels, Wirth and Smith (1997) defines self-esteem as an individual’s feelings of self-worth and is a major SPA predictor. Those who are recorded as having positive self-esteem are believed to be less likely affected by unrealistic societal ideals regarding attractiveness and will less likely experience negative emotions (e.g., anxiety and depression) (Petrie et al. 2009; Hagborg 1993). In a study by Krane, Waldron, Michalenok and Stiles-Shipley (2001), some athletes state their body as a source of pride, whereas other athletes are discouraged by their bodies. This discouragement stems from the conflicting perceptions of the athletic body and the socially prescribed ideal. Even the athletes who perceive their bodies positively still state having “problem areas” in their bodies. In the same studies, participants claim feeling better with having and maintaining a smaller body frame. Physical activity is viewed as a tool to having a more socially acceptable body. Some see exercise as something that grants the permission to eat, with the belief that exercise is a punishment for eating poorly. In a study by Koyuncu et al. (2010), self-esteem is found to be a significant predictor of SPA among elite female athletes. Moreover, athletes who recorded higher levels of SPA show low levels of self-esteem (Brunet et al. 2010).

**Perfectionism.** Perfectionism is an individual’s unrealistic set of standards, and this leads to being overly self-critical and comparing oneself with the so-called ideal beauty standards that are set by the society. This can lead an individual to resort to adopt excessive and pathogenic weight control behaviors (e.g., vomiting and fasting) to achieve the ideal body (Petrie et al. 2009). It has been recorded that athletes have higher levels of perfectionism compared to non-athletes. Athletes screened with perfectionism is observed to demand themselves a higher level of performance. This desire for improvement is said to be fueled by the fear of failure (Lim et al. 2011; Shafran et al. 2002). Moreover, athletes with high perfectionism are linked to an increased drive for thinness. The combination of striving for flawlessness and having excessively high standards increases an athlete’s susceptibility to high levels of body dissatisfaction and developing disordered eating (Lim et al. 2011). With the

pressure of unrealistic standards interacting with other environmental factors (e.g., athletic participation) their results conclude both negative and positive perfectionism are detrimental to an athlete's psychological well-being. According to Forsberg and Lock (2016), individuals with high perfectionism have increased risk of developing disordered eating, with high perfectionism appearing to be a casual factor (i.e., unintentional, or unplanned contributor). Among athletes experiencing SPA, those with high levels of negative perfectionism and social comparison have a higher tendency to develop disordered eating (Haase et al. 2002; Fitzsimmons-Craft).

**Body Image.** Males and females frequently attempt to change their body shape (Furnham and Baguma, 1994). Body image dissatisfaction is the largest independent predictor of dieting (Prnjak 2019). The preference for slimness is high among women (Hsu 1989). Moreover, women with high body-image dissatisfaction have greater risk for developing disordered eating than women with low body-image dissatisfaction (Bergstorm and Neighbors 2006). Additionally, women who are highly engaged in appearance-related behaviors are more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies and have higher levels of disordered eating (Petrie, Greenleaf, Reel and Carter 2009). Body image dissatisfaction may increase as SPA increases. Furthermore, females who prefer smaller body frames are shown to be more anxious about their bodies, and both SPA and body dissatisfaction are seen as predictors of body weight and shape concerns (Thompson and Chad, 2002). The influence of the ultra-thin ideal contributes to body image dissatisfaction, because physical attractiveness has shifted towards being extremely fit and being extremely thin. The pressure to sustain a certain body image is observable in both aesthetic athletes (e.g., gymnastics and ballet) and endurance athletes (e.g., track and field and swimming). Track and field athletes frequently have lower BMI values than other athletes in other sports; however, they have higher body image dissatisfaction as their sport environment promotes leanness. On the other hand, combat athletes are less likely to have body dissatisfaction (Swami, Steadman, and Tovée 2009). Despite the combat sports having weight classes, combat athletes

are more focused on their strength than their physique. Moreover, body image dissatisfaction is frequently observed among athletes who are required to wear revealing uniforms (e.g., cheerleading, swimming, volleyball, and track and field). These athletes may be susceptible to perceive their body as less than ideal, and this can increase their body shame even with the absence of an audience. Records of the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among female athletes are inconsistent due to the heterogeneity of studies. Other environmental factors (e.g., athletic participation) their results conclude both negative and positive perfectionism are detrimental to an athlete's psychological well-being. According to Forsberg and Lock (2016), individuals with high perfectionism have increased risk of developing disordered eating, with high perfectionism appearing to be a casual factor (i.e., unintentional, or unplanned contributor). Among athletes experiencing SPA, those with high levels of negative perfectionism and social comparison have a higher tendency to develop disordered eating (Haase et al. 2002; Fitzsimmons-Craft).

**Type of Athletic Uniforms.** An athlete's level of SPA depends on their sport (Van Raalte, Schmelzer, Smith, and Brewer, 1998). Athletes in "masculine" sports have lower levels of SPA than those in "feminine" sports. Furthermore, female athletes who participate in sports where their bodies are revealed have more negative views of themselves compared to those athletes that do not require revealing attire. In a study, athletes who focus on being lean have higher Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) total scores, and almost half have increased risks for developing clinical eating disorders (Kong and Harris, 2015). According to Haase (2009), form-fitting or physique-salient sport athletes may experience higher levels of SPA and higher risk of developing eating disorders than other athletes. In another study, clothing fit and body image are highly associated, and both negatively and positively influence an individual's body acceptance (Nemeth, Park, and Mendle 2020). Collegiate female basketball players were observed to be more confident in their loose-fitted uniforms, while cross country athletes felt intimidated the smaller and tighter their opponent's wear their tight-fitted uniforms.

Uniform styles are non-negotiable as they facilitate movement and activities required by the sport (Gillespie, 2017). Sports uniforms can be categorized into revealing (i.e., volleyball, track and field, swimming, cheerleading, etc.) and non-revealing (i.e., tennis, Bzadminton, Combat, Basketball, Football, etc.). Athletes with revealing uniforms often indicates the need for a leaner body as their ideal body image. Form-fitting and revealing athletic uniforms may be beneficial in some types of sports and cases, but it may also influence an athlete's weight pressure (Layde 2018), leading to the increase of their body image dissatisfaction and to their participation in negative body change behaviors. In a study involving the NCAA Division 1 Women's Volleyball Team, athletes claim skintight uniforms as beneficial these do not get in the way of their plays (Steinfeldt, 2013). However, a study shows swimmers developing eating disorders due to negative body image perception secondary to their tight swimwear (Melin, 2014). Another study shows athletes with tight and revealing uniforms are less comfortable than athletes who wear less revealing sportswear due to self-consciousness of their body shape (Cox et al. 2020).

**Cultural Preferences.** Another predictor of SPA are different cultural preferences. Dixon et al. (2007) examined the attractiveness of body figures among China's collegiate population in Northwest University and found a low waist-to-hip ratio to be attractive in women. In a similar study, Furnham and Baguma (1993) found cross-cultural differences in body shape preference among British and Ugandan students. Both participants claimed body shape perception as an example of cultural relativity. The British participants found smaller frames attractive, whereas the Ugandan participants preferred fuller figures. In comparison to the context of this study, Filipinos tend to favor small body frames, which may contribute to SPA. Macam (2020) recorded high rates of high SPA among collegiate Filipino females. In addition, Lynch (1962) explains, Filipinos were driven to achieve the approval of others. Being socially noticed intensified their body image desires and led to stressing on how visually pleasing they are to others. The cultural idea of the female body is a big influence set by the society to drive women to internalize these standards; hence, women

objectify themselves (Melbye, Tenenbaum, and Eklund 2007). This is believed to increase the occurrence of high SPA. The objectification theory claims women view their bodies as an object, and this intensifies their awareness of their bodies, thereby leading to increased negative emotions, anxiety, and body shame (Melbye et al. 2007). Furthermore, women are at risk of developing eating disorders when they objectify themselves (Muscat and Long 2008). image are highly associated, and both negatively and positively influence an individual's body acceptance (Nemeth, Park, and Mendle 2020). Collegiate female basketball players were observed to be more confident in their loose-fitted uniforms, while cross country athletes felt intimidated the smaller and tighter their opponent's wear their tight-fitted uniforms. Uniform styles are non-negotiable as they facilitate movement and activities required by the sport (Gillespie 2017). Sports uniforms can be categorized into revealing (i.e., volleyball, track and field, swimming, cheerleading, etc.) and non-revealing (i.e., tennis, Bzadminton, Combat, Basketball, Football, etc.). Athletes with revealing uniforms often indicates the need for a leaner body as their ideal body image. Form-fitting and revealing athletic uniforms may be beneficial in some types of sports and cases, but it may also influence an athlete's weight pressure (Layde 2018), leading to the increase of their body image dissatisfaction and to their participation in negative body change behaviors. In a study involving the NCAA Division 1 Women's Volleyball Team, athletes claim skintight uniforms as beneficial these do not get in the way of their plays (Steinfeldt 2013). However, a study shows swimmers developing eating disorders due to negative body image perception secondary to their tight swimwear (Melin 2014). Another study shows athletes with tight and revealing uniforms are less comfortable than athletes who wear less revealing sportswear due to self-consciousness of their body shape (Cox et al. 2020).

## RISK OF DEVELOPING EATING DISORDERS

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition (DSM-IV), Eating Disorders Not Otherwise Specified (EDNOS), namely, purging disorder



and binge eating disorder (BED), are the most common eating disorders. Other clinical eating disorders include Specified Eating Disorders (SED), which include Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimic Nervosa (Smink, van Hoeken and Hoek 2012; American Psychiatric Association 1994). In a study that included 587 female athletes, 118 (20.1%) were shown to have SED (Williams, Sargent, Valois, Drane, Parra-Medina, Durstine 2003). Compared to non-athletes, eating disorders are more common in female athletes due to the goal or attraction for thinness. In addition, Greenleaf, Petrie, Carter, and Reel (2009) note in their study that 54.4% of the population are dissatisfied with their body weight and 88.2% of this number see themselves as overweight. While DiPasquale and Petrie (2013) recorded 93.5% of the participating athletes showed to be asymptomatic. There are athletes who intentionally go on an energy deficit to reduce body weight or go through body re-composition to benefit athletic performance. However, some female athletes undereat with reasons unrelated to sports, and this stems from the lack of knowledge on nutrition, food availability issues, time constraints, food allowance, and other unconscious tendencies (Beals 2013, p. 190; Gibbs et al. 2013). Moreover, she and her colleagues also cite in their study the challenges in screening athletes who have disordered eating. Due to the demands of a sport regarding body image, the symptom for disordered eating tends to go unnoticed with the sport environment. Because of this, measuring the prevalence of eating disorders among athletes have been a constant struggle for researchers (Arthur-Cameselle and Quatromoni 2011).

## PREDICTORS OF EATING DISORDERS

**Internal Predictors.** Researchers have examined those athletes participating in sports focused on leanness and athletes in weight matched activities scored higher EAT-26 scores, being recorded at-risk of developing eating disorders. This observation is linked to sports-related intrinsic pressures. The demands of sports can be associated with aesthetically pleasing physiques or performance success. According to Arthur-Cameselle and

Quatromoni (2011), the internal factors that contribute to the onset of eating disorders are: (1) negative mood, (2) low self-esteem, (3) perfectionism, and (4) desire for control. Athletes with dysphoria and poor self-image and body concept often develop disordered eating behaviors (i.e., vomiting, fasting, and use of laxatives and diet pills to lose weight). Along with disordered eating, low self-esteem is a predictor of eating disorders (Johnson et al. 1999). Together, low self-esteem and a high level of negative perfectionism are potentially dangerous factors leading to the development of eating disorders (Polivy and Herman, 2002; Arthur-Cameselle and Quatromoni 2013). In a study by Vohs et al. (2001), women with low self-esteem and high scores on perfectionism and body dissatisfaction showed increased bulimic symptoms.

**External Predictors.** Arthur-Cameselle and Quatromoni (2011) cite external factors that contribute to the onset of eating disorders, namely, (1) negative influences on self-esteem, (2) hurtful relationships, (3) hurtful role models, and (4) sport performance. Direct negative comments from peers, coaches, and family members are the most common predictors that influence onset eating disorders. The influence from coaches is cited as a leading pressure (Reel and Gill 1996). In addition, sports environment would also show difference in the prevalence of external pressures. Female gymnasts, track and field athletes, and swimmers have been noted to express abnormal avoidance of indulgent foods compared to non-weight restricted sports, whereas combat athletes have been observed to adopt extreme weight control habits and focus more on their weight than their appearance (Stoutiesdyk and Jevne 1993). On the other hand, leanness-focused sports value a lower body fat percentage due to the belief that it enhances performance (Williams et al. 2003). Specifically, athletes competing in aesthetic sports (e.g., gymnastics, ballet, and diving), endurance sports (e.g., distance running, cycling, and triathlons), and weight-class/combat sports (e.g., weightlifting, judo, and taekwondo) are commonly recognized for intentionally

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

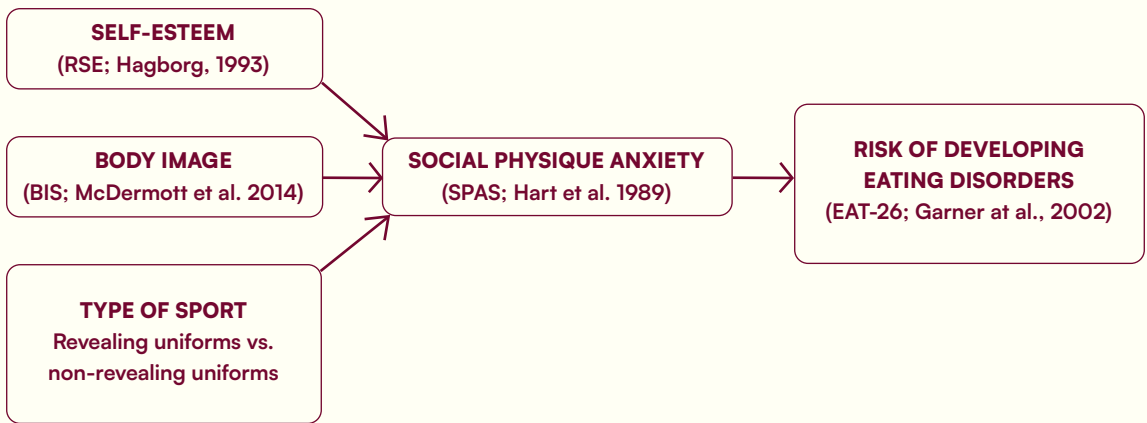


Figure 1 shows the independent variables: (1) self-esteem, (2) body image, and (3) type of sport uniforms, with SPA as the dependent variable. In a study done by Martin, Engels, Wirth and Smith (1997), self-esteem is cited as a predictor of SPA. Moreover, Prnjak, Jukic, and Tufano (2019) claim that body image dissatisfaction may result to increase SPA. According to Cox, Sabiston, Karlinsky, Manzone, Neyedli, and Welsh (2020), athletes with revealing uniforms are less comfortable than athletes with less revealing uniforms due to awareness of their body image. Furthermore, Figure 1 extends to SPA being an independent variable to the risk of developing eating disorders as the association of both variables are being observed. Female athletes who prefer to have smaller body frames and who have high levels of SPA were observed to be at-risk of developing eating disorders. Vohs et al. (2001) claim that women with low self-esteem and high body dissatisfaction have increased symptoms of bulimia.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design.** This study measured the association of the SPA with the risk of developing eating disorders among collegiate female athletes. In addition, predictors of SPA were measured to evaluate their influence on SPA. Self-esteem and body image dissatisfaction were measured through online surveys. The statistical relationship from the collected quantitative data were evaluated to describe the relationship of the variables with one another. The participants were divided according to the nature of their sports uniforms: (1) revealing uniforms (i.e., Filipiniana Dance Group, cheerleading, Street Dance Company, track and field, swimming, and volleyball) and (2) non-revealing uniforms (i.e., badminton, basketball, judo, taekwondo, lawn tennis, table tennis, fencing, football, and soft ball) to observe differences among sports environments that can be related to SPA (Gillespie 2017). Through these quantitative observations, the researcher wishes to find meaning in the relationship of SPA among the given events.

FIGURE 2. RESEARCH DESIGN



## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

### Validity of Instruments

**Social Physique Anxiety.** The 12-item questionnaire to measure SPA (see Appendix C) was constructed by Hart et al. (1989). It measures the degree of an individual's anxiety when their physique is being evaluated by others. A study by Maiano et al. (2010) states that Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS) represents an acceptable internal consistency, with a provided consistency of, and it also has moderate correlations with other measurements. The scale had predictive validity by recording higher numbers which meant higher levels of SPA or anxiety among the participants.

**Self-Esteem.** Along with SPA, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg 1965) was distributed to further observe its influence on SPA as a casual factor (see Appendix D). The RSES is one of the most widely used self-esteem measurement tools in social science research (Tinakon et al. 2012). The data collected from RSES scale was analyzed with the given reliability of . Predictive validity was measured by recording higher numbers as high self-esteem and lower numbers as low self-esteem.

**Body Image Dissatisfaction.** Along with SPA, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) was distributed to further observe its influence on SPA as a casual factor (see Appendix D). The RSES is one of the most widely used self-esteem measurement tools in social science research (Tinakon et al. 2012). The data collected from RSES scale was analyzed with the given reliability of . Predictive validity was measured by recording higher numbers as high self-esteem and lower numbers as low self-esteem.

**Susceptibility to Eating Disorder.** EAT-26 was used to examine athletes who were normal or at-risk of developing eating disorders (see Appendix F). The questionnaire has good specificity and moderate sensitivity in detecting eating disorders (Rivas et al. 2010). Furthermore, it has high accuracy, or a low false-positive rate, when used to

identify participants without symptoms of eating disorders. This instrument is therefore suitable for non-clinical settings. The scale had predictive validity by recording higher scores which meant being at-risk of developing eating disorders and lower scores which meant they were normal.

### PROCEDURE

The study was approved by the Varsity office director. A formal letter of request for data collection was submitted through email and was signed by the researcher's adviser. Research participant eligibility was confirmed through a list of members given by each team captain. The distribution of surveys began soon after each coach's approval of data collection. Due to the pandemic, the study was limited to using an online survey that was accessed through a link and was completed in about 15 to 20 minutes.

**Data Evaluation and Analysis.** The collected data were tabulated and generated using IBM SPSS Statistics. The level of significance was set at alpha 5%. Thus, if p-value was  $< 0.05$ , we rejected the Null Hypothesis; otherwise, fail to reject  $H_0$ .

Linear regression was observed to predict the value of a variable based on the value of another variable. SPA was observed using 2 casual factors: (1) Self-esteem and (2) Body Image. The dependent variable for both was SPA and self-esteem and body image were the independent or predictor variables. R determined the strength of the variables' relationship, and the value of  $R^2$  indicated the amount of variation among the variables.

A Chi-Square Test for Association or Pearson's Chi-Square Test of Association was used to determine the relationship of the occurrence SPA with (1) the risk of developing eating disorders and (2) the type of sport uniforms. A contingency table represented the distribution of the observed frequencies in each category. Afterwards, a stacked bar graph was generated and this graph presented the percentage of each observation and interaction between the categorical variables with SPA. Lastly, a risk estimate table was generated to further examine the relationships.

**Null Hypothesis**

H01: Body image dissatisfaction and self-esteem does not significantly influence the occurrence of SPA among collegiate female athletes.

H02: Level of SPA is not significantly associated with the type of uniform in female sports team.

H03: SPA is not significantly related to the risk of developing eating disorders among collegiate female athletes.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Data was obtained through an online survey with 5 different questionnaires. Out of 184 collegiate female athletes who completed the online survey, 167 qualified for the research. All 15 women’s varsity teams were represented and were categorized into: (1) Revealing Uniform with 6 varsity teams and (2) Non-revealing Uniform Sports with 9 varsity teams. The population age average was and have been playing their sports with an average of years. The average BMI of the participants were  $21.587 \pm 3.069$ .

Varsity Team Profile	f	%
Revealing Uniform Sports		
Filipiniana Dance Group	12	7.19
Pep Squad	19	11.38
Street Dance	9	5.39
Track and Field	10	5.99
Women's Varsity Swimming Team	10	5.99
Women's Volleyball Team	14	8.38
Non-revealing Uniform Sports		
Women's Badminton	4	2.40
Women's Basketball Team	9	5.39
Women's Fencing (Foil, Saber and Epee)	10	5.99
Women's Football Team	20	11.98
Women's Judo	16	9.58
Women's Lawn Tennis	10	5.99
Women's Table Tennis	6	3.59
Women's Taekwondo	10	5.99
Softball	8	4.79

**TABLE 1. VARSITY TEAMS CLASSIFIED BY TYPE OF SPORUNIFORMS (N = 167)**

**The Risk of Developing Eating Disorders**

Eating Attitudes Test is a standardized and reliable 26-item questionnaire (EAT-26) that measures the risk for developing eating disorders in non-clinical settings (Garner et al. 1982). Table 2 shows the summary of EAT-26 scores from the survey conducted. Table 2 shows that majority of the sample scored normal, with 68.26% of the participants scoring , whereas only 31.74% of the participants were At-Risk of developing eating disorders, with an average of scores.

Athletes may hesitate revealing symptoms of eating disorders (Garner et al., 1998). Moreover, the lack of concrete definitions of eating disorders can hinder athletes from being screened as being at risk for eating disorders, and pathogenic weight-control routines are secretive in nature. Furthermore, female athletes show higher prevalence in having eating disorders than male athletes and non-athletes (Bratland & Sundgot-Borgen, 2013). The prevalence of eating disorders among athletes has always been inconsistent, and findings in numerous studies remain uneven. Additionally, many weight-control methods are similar to eating disorder patterns (Sundgot-Borgen, 1993).

EAT-26								
	Normal ( $\leq 20$ )				At-Risk ( $>20$ )			
Varsity Team Profile	f	%	Mean	SD	f	%	Mean	SD
Revealing Uniform Sports	47	28.14	10.81	5.14	27	16.17	29.26	9.04
Filipiniana Dance Group	8	4.79	10.38	4.27	4	2.40	25.50	4.65
Pep Squad	10	5.99	11.70	5.50	9	5.39	27.11	7.29
Street Dance	6	3.59	12.83	5.27	3	1.80	28.67	6.66
Swimming	6	3.59	8.50	5.21	4	2.40	24.50	3.00
Track and Field	8	4.79	10.88	6.60	2	1.20	31.00	1.41
Volleyball	9	5.39	10.33	4.56	5	2.99	39.60	14.01
Non-revealing Uniform Sports	67	40.12	9.10	4.79	26	15.57	29.77	8.93
Badminton	4	2.40	5.25	1.50	-	-	-	-
Basketball	8	4.79	11.50	2.67	1	0.60	26.00	-
Fencing	7	4.19	8.71	5.28	3	1.80	30.67	12.22
Football	16	9.58	8.81	4.58	4	2.40	35.00	5.03
Judo	9	5.39	10.22	4.58	7	4.19	26.57	4.58
Lawn Tennis	7	4.19	7.57	5.22	3	1.80	36.33	18.77
Softball	6	3.59	10.00	6.32	2	1.20	27.50	9.19
Table Tennis	5	2.99	10.60	4.51	1	0.60	23.00	-
Taekwondo	5	2.99	7.40	6.99	5	2.99	28.60	8.88
Overall			9.81	4.98			29.51	9.90

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF EATING ATTITUDE TEST-26 SCORES (EAT-26)

### The Occurrence of Social Physique Anxiety

Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS; Hart et al. 1989) is a 12-item standardized questionnaire that measures the prevalence of SPA. Table 3 summarizes the overall SPAS scores of the participants organized into low- and high-level SPA. Table 3 shows majority of the participants scored high levels of SPA, with only 5 out of 167 collegiate female athletes having low-level SPA. Furthermore, those with low-level SPA showed a mean of , which is lower than the cutoff for high-level SPA. Athletes with high SPA increase exercise participation due to being highly unsatisfied with their body image (Robinson 2009). Furthermore, the most

evident motivation for exercise among Filipinos is weight management (Cagas, Torre and Manalastas 2014). Among Filipino females, BMI and body weight were the best predictors for increased exercise participation. Filipino culture is sensitive to body image (Macam 2020). The findings of her study showed Filipino collegiate females had high SPA, claiming Filipino culture to be a casual factor of SPA due to the construct of Philippine society favoring bodies with smaller frames. Women raised in a culture that objectifies the female body would most likely objectify themselves. The constant feeling of wondering how they appear would intensify negative emotions, such as anxiety and shame.

SPAS								
	Low (<30)				High (≥30)			
Varsity Team Profile	f	%	Mean	SD	f	%	Mean	SD
Revealing Uniform Sports	2	1.20	28.50	0.71	72	43.11	40.42	3.94
Filipiniana Dance Group					12	7.19	40.17	4.11
Pep Squad					19	11.38	40.95	4.35
Street Dance					9	5.39	40.67	4.66
Swimming	2	1.20	28.50	0.71	8	4.79	40.25	1.58
Track and Field					10	5.99	39.60	4.40
Volleyball					14	8.38	40.43	3.86
Non-revealing Uniform Sports	3	1.80	25.33	2.08	90	53.89	39.13	4.95
Badminton					4	2.40	35.25	3.10
Basketball					9	5.39	38.56	4.61
Fencing	1	0.60	27.00		9	5.39	39.33	5.59
Football					20	11.98	40.10	5.80
Judo	2	1.20	24.50	2.12	14	8.38	39.93	4.75
Lawn Tennis					10	5.99	41.00	5.23
Softball					8	4.79	40.38	4.24
Table Tennis					6	3.59	35.50	3.33
Taekwondo					10	5.99	37.30	3.65
Overall			26.40	2.30			39.70	4.56

TABLE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF SPAS SCORES

**Predictors of Social Physique Anxiety**

**Self-esteem.** Table 4 shows the overall summary of the linear regression model of RSES and SPAS, where they are both moderately correlated (. Additionally, the model accounts for 30.7% ( of the variance.

Figure 3 shows the scattered plot of RSES and SPAS, where it determines the interaction of the variable and shows a weak positive correlation. In a study done by Krane et al.

(2001) claimed athletes found their body as something they should be proud of, but still quickly found problem areas. Even with normal to high RSES scores, these results still predicted athletes being dissatisfied with their body image, influencing the level of SPA. A positive correlation would mean high self-esteem would still influence high SPA. This result contradicts findings claiming low self-esteem leads to increased SPA among athletes. This may predict that athletes with high self-esteem may take pride in areas other than their bodies.

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	p-value
Social Physique Anxiety Scale	0.554	0.307	< 0.001
Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale			

TABLE 4. MODEL SUMMARY OF RSES

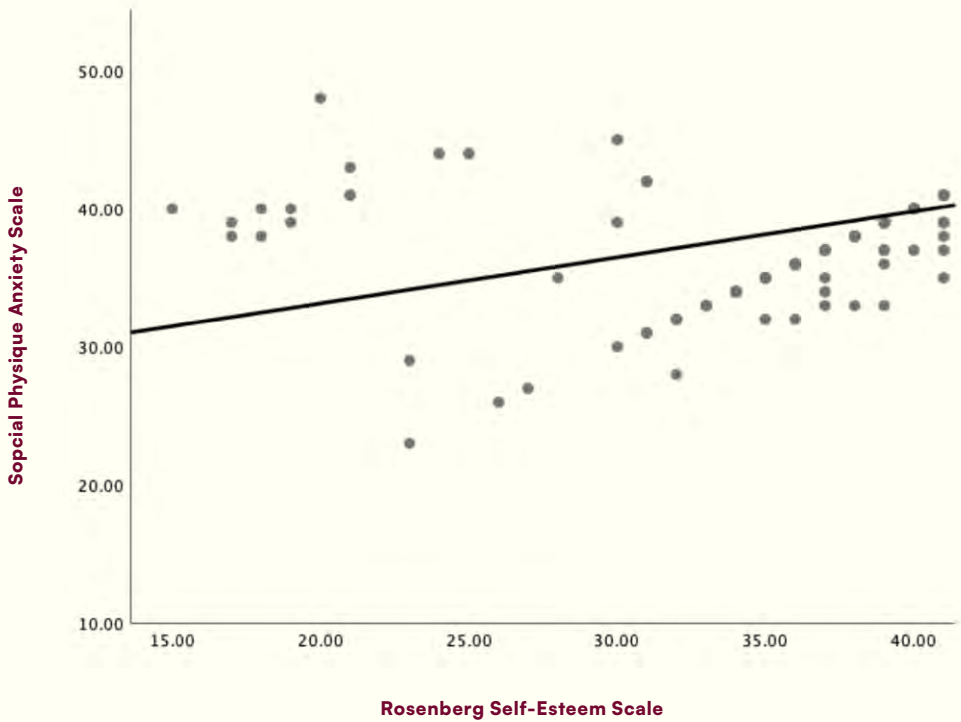


FIGURE 3. SCATTERED PLOT OF ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE AND SOCIAL PHYSIQUE ANXIETY SCALE

**Body Image Dissatisfaction**

Table 5 summarizes the overall linear regression model of BIS and SPA. It shows BIS is moderately correlated to SPA (  $r = 0.209$  ). The linear regression model accounts for 4.4% (  $R^2 = 0.044$  ) of the variance. Despite the low value of variance, it still shows positive body image dissatisfaction does influence the increase of SPAS scores. The scatter plot in Figure 4 shows a strong positive relationship in which BIS increases with SPA. Similarly, in the linear regression of RSE and SPA, regardless of the

BIS scores, SPA remains high. Female athletes struggle more than their male counterparts when it comes to body image (Prapavessis et al. 2004). Additionally, Lynch (1962) observed that to Filipinos favor the approval of others. It is important for them to be socially noticed and to be liked, thereby adding pressure to be visually pleasing to others. Subscribing to the Philippine society’s standards and having to live up to those expectations may increase SPA.

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	p-value
Social Physique Anxiety Scale	0.209	0.044	< 0.007
Body Image Scale			

TABLE 5. MODEL SUMMARY OF IMAGE SCALE (BIS)



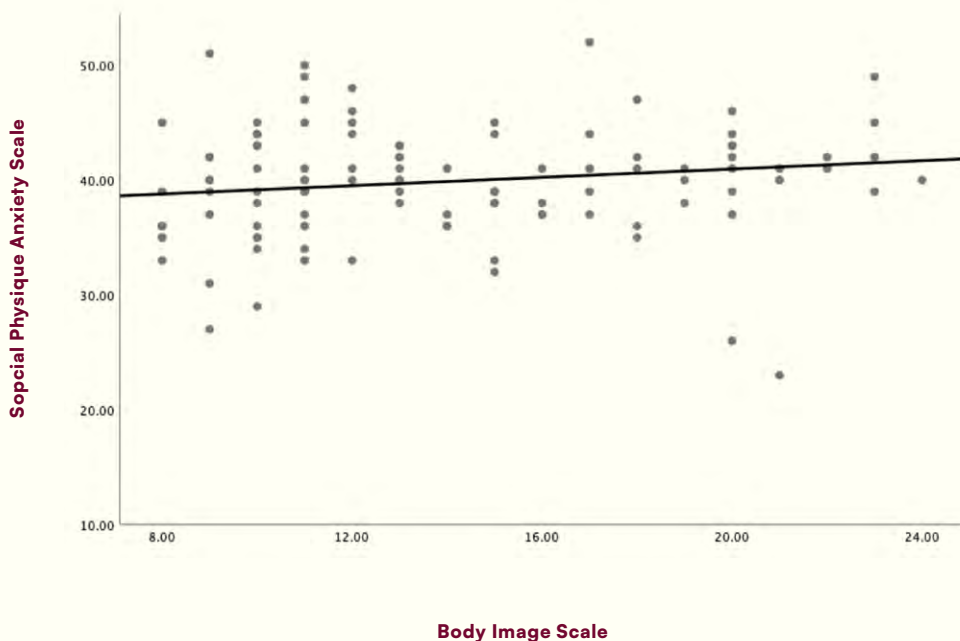


FIGURE 3. SCATTERED PLOT OF BODY IMAGE SCALE AND SOCIAL PHYSIQUE ANXIETY SCALE

### Type of Sport Uniforms

The contingency table below shows the overlapping of types of sports uniforms and SPAS scores. Majority of the participants have high SPA; only a total of 5 female athletes has low SPA. Table 8 shows minimal difference among each type of sport uniform. Chi-Square indicates little to no association regarding type of Sport Uniforms and SPA (Cramer’s  $V = 0.015$ ). The risk of high SPA is not influenced by the type of sport uniform.

Type of Sport Uniforms	Social Physique Anxiety		Total
	Low	High	
Non-revealing	3	90	93
Revealing <sup>1</sup>	2	72	74
	5	162	167

TABLE 6. CONTINGENCY TABLE OF SPAS AND THE TYPE OF SPORT UNIFORMS

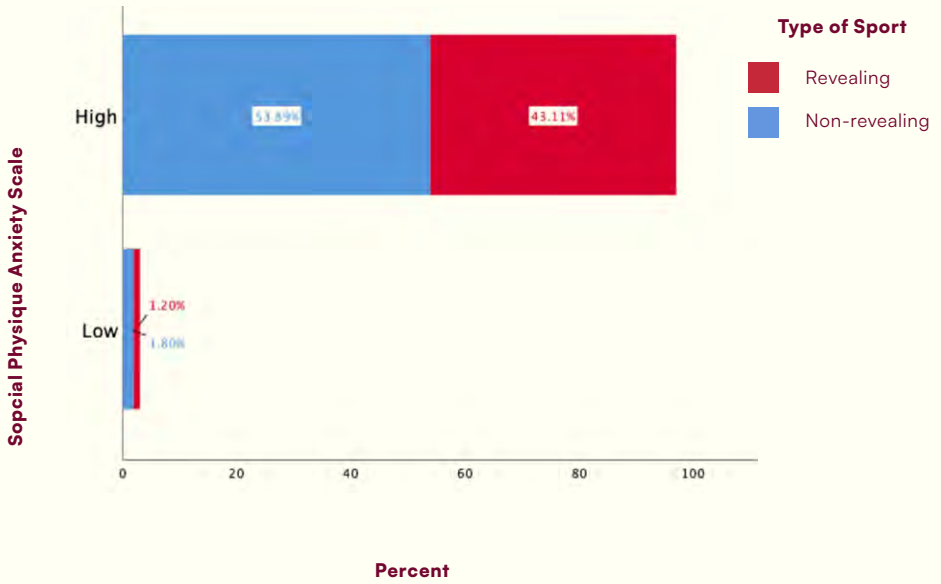


FIGURE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF SPAS WITH THE TYPE OF SPORT UNIFORMS

Risk Estimate	Value	95% CI
Odds Ratio for Social Physique Anxiety Scale (High / Low)	0.833	[0.136, 5.122]
Type of Sport: Non-revealing	0.926	[0.447, 1.919]
Type of Sport: Revealing	1.111	[0.375, 3.296]

TABLE 7. RISK ESTIMATES OF TYPE OF SPORT UNIFORMS WITH SPAS LEVELS

Cultural preferences have also been observed to be a predictor of SPA. Following this, Furnham and Nordling (1998) studied the cross-cultural evaluation of European countries regarding preferences of body shapes and found that Danish females wanted to lose weight, whereas Portuguese women were against weight loss. Specifically, hourglass bodies, defined by wide hips, medium bust, and a slim waist, were attractive to the Portuguese population. Additionally, Gitter, Lomranz, and Bar-Tal (1983) examined American and Israeli collegiate students regarding their female physique perceptions. The findings did not show significant differences in cross-cultural evaluations; however, both were examined to highly focus on body shape and focused on belly protrusions. Macam (2020)

explains Filipinos favors smaller body frames. Body image is evidently a predictor of high SPA; however, it is not due to the type of sport uniform. The 167 collegiate female athletes all belonged to a Filipino household. It can be said high SPA was prevalent due to the cultural preference.

**Association of SPA and the Risk of Developing**

**Eating Disorders.** The contingency table below shows the overlapping of EAT-26 and SPAS scores. Majority of the participants have high SPA; only 5 female athletes have low SPA. However, Table 6 shows higher frequency (67.07%) among Normal EAT-26 scores with high SPA, while less than half of the population

(29.94%) with high level SPA were at risk for developing eating disorders. Table 7 shows the risk estimates of the variables. Findings present the risk of developing eating disorders is 1.04 times lower when SPA is high. Therefore, the risk of developing eating disorders is higher with low SPA. However, the association of EAT-26 and SPA using Chi-Square indicates little to no association (Cramer's V = 0.107).

Social Physique Anxiety			
Eating Attitudes Test-26	Low	High	Total
Normal	2	112	114
At-Risk	3	50	53
Total	5	162	167

TABLE 8. CONTINGENCY TABLE OF EAT-26 AND SPAS

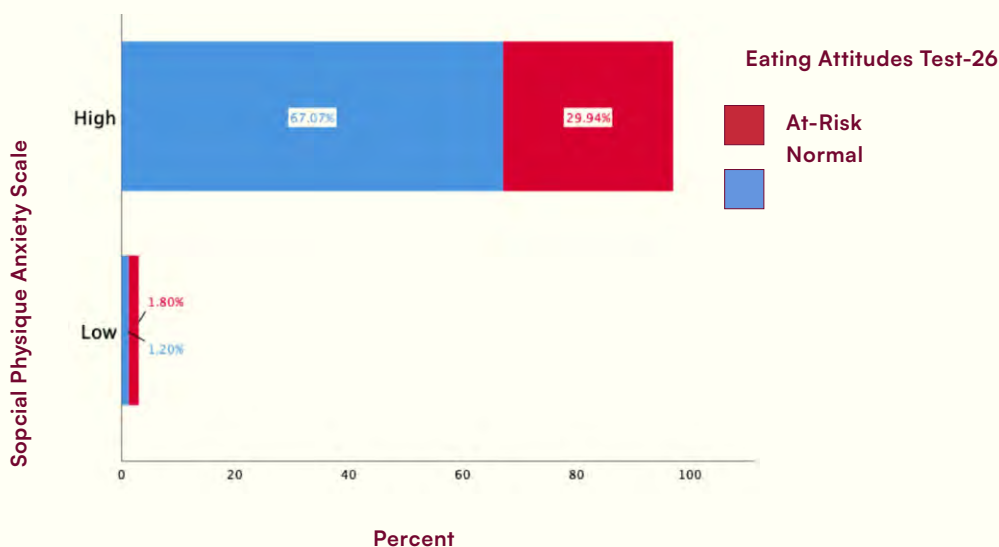


FIGURE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF EAT-26 SCORES AND SPAS

Risk Estimate	Value	95% CI
Odds Ratio for Eating Attitudes Test-26 (At-Risk / Normal)	0.298	[0.048, 1.837]
High Social Physique Anxiety Scale Score	0.960	[0.053, 1.800]
Low Social Physique Anxiety Scale Score	3.226	[0.971, 1.117]

TABLE 9. RISK ESTIMATE OF EAT-26 SCORES AND SPAS

According to Furnham and Baguma (1994), cross-cultural differences influence the risk of populations for developing eating disorders. Literature has recorded eating disorders in non-Caucasian populations to be lower compared to those in Caucasian populations. Additionally, the prevalence of eating disorders among athletes has been inconsistently high

and benign (Garner, Rosen, and Barry 1998). The interpretation of conflicting findings should consider the different settings. Training philosophies, level of competitiveness, peer pressure, coaches' attitudes about body weight, and exposure to sports nutrition could either protect or promote disordered eating. Reel and Gill (1996) studied the prevalence of eating

disorder among cheerleaders and found that the coach's influence to be a leading pressure to lose weight and change their body image. Byme and McLean (2001) claim that controlling the sample between athletes usually results in little to no detection of eating disorders due to the design weaknesses, such as sample sizes and inadequate statistical comparisons.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The unexpected results, in contradiction to prior research, imply that SPA is influenced by factors beyond self-esteem and body image. Cross-cultural differences emerge as a potential avenue for exploration, suggesting that understanding how various cultural elements shape SPA is crucial for a comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, the results suggest that body image-related factors alone may not be the sole determinants for the onset of eating disorders. Other internal and external motivations, not accounted for in this study, may contribute to the occurrence of both SPA and eating disorders.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the complexity of the relationships between SPA, self-esteem, body image, and the risk of developing eating disorders among Filipino collegiate female athletes. It emphasizes the need for future research to delve into cross-cultural differences and consider a broader spectrum of internal and external motivations influencing these psychological and behavioral outcomes. Understanding these multifaceted influences is crucial for the development of targeted interventions and support strategies tailored to the unique needs of collegiate female athletes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Consideration of Cultural Factors.

Future studies should take into account the influence of Filipino culture and societal views on athletes' perceptions of body image. Understanding how cultural beliefs shape individuals' ideals of body acceptance within the context of sports can provide a more comprehensive analysis.

#### Comprehensive Measurement of The Risk of Developing an Eating Disorder.

Despite having used standardized instruments for this study, researchers should address the potential gap of understanding among athletes regarding what constitutes disordered eating behaviors. It is recommended to provide thorough information, briefings, and discussions on both healthy and unhealthy eating behaviors to ensure accurate responses. Confidentiality assurance is also vital to encourage honest and open participation.

**Social Physique Anxiety.** Researchers should explore strategies to mitigate bias from participants' tendency to respond in socially acceptable ways, rather than expressing their genuine response and employ techniques to ensure confidentiality and emphasize the importance of an honest response in order to enhance data validity.

**Expanded Sample Size and Standardization.** This study examined a limited number of participants and relied on the use of an online survey due to the pandemic; future studies should aim for a more diverse and larger sample size. Standardizing variables such as the level of competition and weekly training hours among athletes can contribute to more robust and consistent findings. This approach will allow for a broader understanding of the relationship between athlete attire, social physique anxiety, and eating disorders.

#### Exploration of Additional Environmental Factors.

As this study recognizes the limitation of focusing solely on body image and self-esteem without considering other environmental factors, future research endeavors should incorporate a broader scope, considering various environmental influences, such as family dynamics, peer relationships, and coaching styles, to offer a more holistic understanding of the athlete's sports environment.

**Longitudinal Studies.** Future studies, lasting, should consider the implementation of longitudinal studies to track changes over

time in order to provide a deeper insight into the dynamic nature of the relationship between athlete attire, social physique anxiety, and eating disorders. This could unveil patterns and trends that may not be apparent in a cross-sectional study.

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# Kulimlim sa Katanghalian

Isang Saliksik sa mga Kuwentong Noir

EUSTAQUIO A. BARBIN III

## MGA SUSING SALITA

noir

crime stories / kuwentong krimen

iligal

panitikan

## ABSTRAK

Ang *noir* ay isang kategorya ng kuwento sa ilalim ng kuwentong krimen (crime fiction). Mula sa salitang Pranses na “itim” ang kahulugan sa literal na salin, naging sikat ang noir noong dekada 70. Nakaugnay ang noir sa tagpuang ginagalawan nito na kung saan madalas na nailalarawan ito sa madidilim na bahagi ng mga lungsod, at ang mabibigat na damdaming dala nito. Pag-aaralan ng artikulong ito ang mga lokal na kuwentong noir upang maging lunsaran ng mga nais magsaliksik tungkol sa paksang ito. Tatangkain din ng artikulo na tumukoy ng mga elementong maaaring gamitin sa pagsusuri ng mga kuwentong noir. Susuriin kung paanong ang istilong ito ay ginagamit, hindi lang para maging interesante ang pagkukuwento, kundi para maunawaan ng mambabasa ang mga karanasan, kaisipan, at mga damdaming madalas isinasantabi, ibinabasura, at ikinukubli sa dilim.

## ANO ANG NOIR?

Unang ginamit ang salitang noir para ilarawan ang mga sikolohikal na kuwentong krimen sa Amerika na nasa anyong pelikula noong unang hati ng ika-20 siglo. Mga bersiyon ito sa pelikula na halaw mula sa mga nobelang krimen na nagmula sa Europa.<sup>1</sup> Isang subgenre ang noir ng mga malikhaing akda gaya ng maikling kuwento, nobela, pelikula, at iba pa, na tumatalakay sa madilim na bahagi ng daigdig o isipan ng tao. Madalas na ginagalawan nito ang mga tema tulad ng gawaing ilisito at iligal. Madalas itong nakalunan sa kubling bahagi ng mga lungsod. Madalas rin na may nagaganap na pag-iimbestiga sa mga kuwentong noir—isang pagtuklas sa kadiliman at mga mukha nito sa lipunan.

Mailalarawan din ang noir sa pagtukoy sa apat na elementong makikita dito. Ito ang mga elemento ng desperadong tauhan; ng depektibong lunan; magaan o kakatwang salitaan; at ng resolusyong walang solusyon. Nasubaybayan ni Resil Mojares ang mga katangian na ito mula sa mga pangdaigdigang noir at inalingawngaw niya sa kanyang artikulong *Is There a Philippine Noir?*<sup>2</sup>

Sa ngayon, may malawak na paggamit sa salitang noir para ilarawan ang lahat ng mga kuwentong may elemento ng iligalidad. Kung minsan, nagiging kasingkahulugan nito ang *crime fiction*. May nagsasabi namang ang noir ay isang kategorya lang ng kuwentong krimen, gaya ng *gangster fiction*, kuwentong detektib, at iba pa.

Dito na nagsisimula ang unang kalituhan ukol sa noir na kailangan linawin. Kung madalas na gamitin bilang magkasingkahulugan ang dalawang termino (noir at *crime fiction*), paano mapaghiwalay ang dalawa? Para matugunan ito, gumawa ang awtor ng isang dayagram na magpapakita ng kanyang pag-unawa sa saklaw ng noir kaugnay ng iba pang mga nalalapat na genre. Gagamit

ng ilang kuwentong krimen sa lokal para ipaliwanag ito.

Sa dayagram, makikitang nakapaloob ang mga kategorya sa loob ng bilog ng Kuwentong Krimen. Ang elemento ng krimen at iligalidad ang katangian na nagpapaloob sa lahat ng kategorya sa masaklaw na kategorya ng kuwentong krimen. Makikita naman ang ugnayan ng noir sa iba pang kategorya. Mahihinuha sa dayagram kung paanong ang mga kategorya ay may bahaging saklaw din ng Noir. Ang mga bahaging ito ay kumakatawan sa mga akdang parehong maikakategorya halimbawa bilang noir at kuwentong detektib (A).

Ang mga akda ni F.H. Batacan na *Smaller and Smaller Circles* ay maipapaloob sa kuwentong detektib. Dahil mayroon din ito ng apat na katangian ng noir, maaari na itong ipaloob sa espasyong may titik (A).

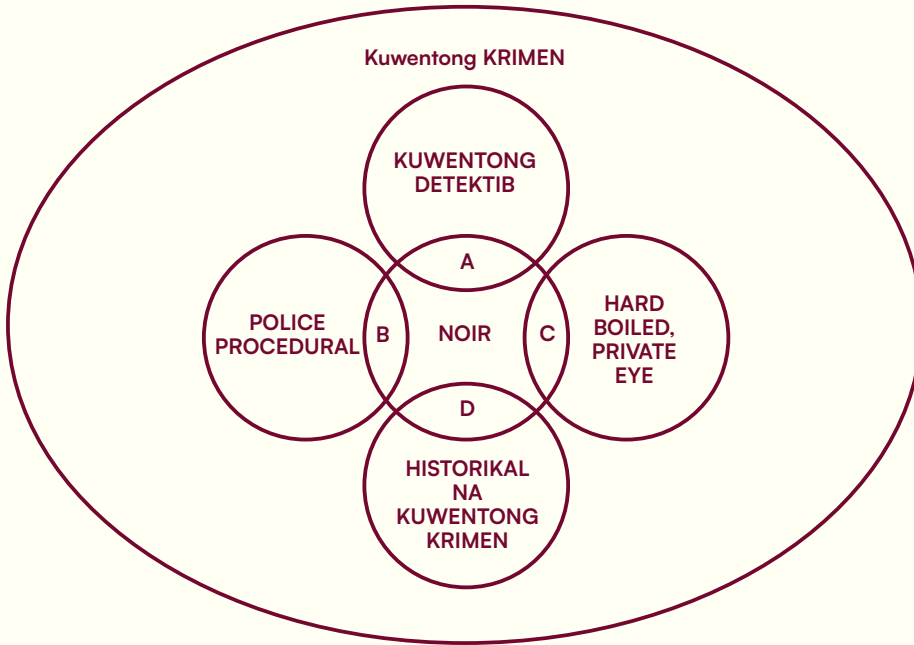
Ang nobelang *Mondo Manila* naman ni Norman Wilwayco ay nasa espasyo na nasasaklaw ng noir at *hard-boiled*, at minarkahan ng titik (C). Ito ay dahil naka-ukol ito sa sikolohiya at metodo ng paggawa ng krimen (na katangian ng kuwentong *hard-boiled*), habang malinaw na pinaiiral ang apat na katangian ng noir (depektibong tauhan, depektibong daigdig, kakatwa o magaan na dayalogo, at wakas na di nagpabago sa daigdig ng kuwento).

Ang dayagram ay nagpapaliwanag sa katangian ng noir kaugnay ng masaklaw na kuwentong krimen at iba pang kategorya. Hindi nito, halimbawa, ipinapakita ang ugnayan ng kuwentong detektib sa *police procedural* o sa kuwentong *hard-boiled*. Hindi rin isinama dito ang ilang kategorya na maaaring sumailalim sa mga kuwentong krimen, gaya ng *urban hero* at *thriller*. Pinapakita lang nito kung gaano kasalimuot ang pagkakategorya dahil sa mga indibidwal na katangian ng bawat kuwento na makikita din sa ibang kategorya.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Resil Mojares, "Is There a Philippine Noir," nasa *Interrogations*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2018), 113-127.





Sa pagsusuri ng katangian ng mga subgenre ng kuwentong krimen, lumilitaw ang kaibhan ng mga ito sa noir. Ang noir ay hindi kailangang magkaroon ng tauhang detektib o mala-detektib. Bagama't ang mga kuwentong detektib ay maaaring maging noir kung depektibo ang pangunahing tauhang nag-iimbestiga at ang lunan. Hindi rin karaniwang nalulutas ang kaso sa noir dahil sumusuway ito sa prinsipyo ng wakas na walang resolusyon. Kung malutas man ang kaso o misteryo, nagbunsod na ito ng pinsala na di na maitatama.<sup>3</sup>

### ANG NOIR SA LOKAL NA KONTEKSTO

Sa mga panitikang nasa wikang Filipino, iilan pa lang ang natitiosod ng awtor na batis ng pagtalakay sa paksang ito. Ito ay bagama't may karamihan ang mga malikhaing akda sa lokal na maaaring ihulog sa noir o mas malaking kategorya ng kuwentong krimen. Marami sa pagpapakahulugan at pagkakategorya

sa artikulong ito ay hiniram mula sa mga banyagang manunulat at mga institusyon. Gayunpaman sa bahaging ito, tatangkain na makapagpanukala ng mga elementong maaaring tingnan sa pagsusuri ng mga kuwento. Sa pamamagitan ito ng paglalarawan sa mga batayang elemento ng kuwento. Ito ay ang paksa, lunan, ang mga tauhan, at banghay.

Una, sa usapin ng paksa, iligalidad ang iniikutan ng mga kuwentong noir. Sa mga iligal na gawaing ito, ginagamit at gagamitin rito ang salitang "krimen" bilang panglarawan. Ito ay bagama't ang salitang krimen sa batas ng Pilipinas ay eksklusibong pumapatungkol lamang sa mga paglabag na nakaumang laban sa estado (against the state) at mga tao (against persons).<sup>4</sup>

Makikilala din umano ang noir sa pamamagitan ng *mood* o pakiramdam na naidudulot ng kuwento kaugnay ng paksa. Ayon kay Resil Mojares, "malalim na depresyon" (deep depression) ang maaaring iugnay sa kategoryang ito.<sup>5</sup> Kalungkutan at pagdurusa

<sup>3</sup> Resil Mojares, "Is There a Philippine Noir," nasa *Interrogations*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2018), 113-127.

<sup>4</sup> "Crimes Against the State" at "Crimes Against Persons" Title 2-3, nasa *Revised Penal Code of the Philippines* (2014), 8-27.

<sup>5</sup> Resil Mojares, "Is There a Philippine Noir," nasa *Interrogations*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2018), 113-127.

ang ipinadarama ng paksa, ng kaligiran, ng tauhan, o ng banghay.

Ang mga kuwentong ito ay tumutuon sa namamahay na kadiliman sa kalooban ng tauhan. Inilalarawang depektibo ang tauhan dahil hindi kumbensyunal ang nakikita niyang mga solusyon sa kanyang mga problema. Nakikita niya ang normalidad ng karahasan at kahirapan. Dahil bahagi ang tauhan ng daigidig na ito, di niya ito mahusgahan.<sup>6</sup>

Ang mambabasa pa ang mas makapapansin sa kahungkagan ng sitwasyon ng tauhan. Sa noir, may kagustuhan ang tauhan na kumawala, magwala, o gumawa ng krimen para matigil ang karahasan ng daigidig na personal niyang nararanasan. Pero walang paraan para tumakas mula sa sitwasyong kinapapalooban ng (mga) tauhan. Hindi mareresolba ang problema. May ilang magbabago pero ganoon pa din ang mundo sa huli. Hindi isang eksepyon ang krimen, bagkus ito ang bumubuo sa takbo ng buhay ng mga tauhan.<sup>7</sup>

Ang kawalang-pagbabagong ito ang lalong nagpapalamlam sa noir. Sa mga kuwentong ito, ang mga tauhan ay patuloy na humaharap sa mga nakapanlulumo o nakaka-depress na sitwasyon. Malaki ang kaugnayan ng pagkabalisa at pag-aalalang ito sa kanyang sikmura, sa kanyang estadong ekonomikal. Habang ang iba ay pinoproblema ang kahulugan ng buhay, ang mga tauhan sa noir ay madalas nangangamba kung mayroon pa silang buhay kinabukasan. Nagmumula ang pangambang ito sa nagbabantang karahasan, at sa nandidilat na kahirapan na maaaring tingnan din bilang malawakan at sistematikong karahasan.

Ang karahasan ay mararamdamang nasa paligid lang, nagbabadya o kaya'y nagbabanta. Sa maraming kuwentong noir, pinagagaan lang ito

sa pamamagitan ng kakatwang palitan ng mga salita, sa kabila ng nagbabadyang kaguluhan. Halimbawa nito ang mga tauhan sa *Satan Has Already Bought U* ni Lourde De Veyra. "Pandesal with eggs. Perfect," ang komentaryo ng isang tauhan matapos pag-usapan ang isang pinaslang na tinanggalan ng bayag at iniwan sa estante ng isang panaderya.<sup>8</sup> Di imposible na matawa o mangiti sa pagbabasa ng noir. Gayunpaman ang *humor* o esensya ng katatawanan ay naka-umang sa madilim na kahulugan. *Dark humor* kung tawagin sa Ingles.

Ikalawa, malalim ang papel ng **lunan** sa ganitong mga kuwento, na kahit ang mismong lugar ay may karakter. Kung depektibo ang tauhan, depektibo rin nga ang daigidig niya.<sup>9</sup> Hindi ito nakabatay sa kung pangmahirap o pangmayaman ba ang lugar. Maaaring magkaroon ng krimen sa alinmang lunan. Sa koleksiyong *Manila Noir*, ang bawat kuwento ay iniugnay sa iba't ibang lugar sa Maynila. Marami sa mga krimen ay naganap sa mayayamang komunidad gaya ng Forbes Park at New Manila.

Sa paglalarawan pa lang ng lunan sa noir, mapapansin na agad na may mali. Maaaring ilarawan ang tambak ng basura sa kalye o estero na hindi na hinahakot, o isang bahay na may mataas na pader at tarangkahan na madalas puntahan ng mga taong may magagarang sasakyan. Hindi kailangang maging literal ang pagiging "madilim" ng lunan. Maaaring makita ito sa tindi ng init ng araw sa lugar na iyon, katulad ng katangian ng *Mediterranean noir* ayon kay Mojares.<sup>10</sup> O maaari ding sa isang paskil sa Greenbelt mall na nagsasabing "POOR PEOPLE and OTHER DISTURBING REALITIES STRICTLY PROHIBITED," sa kuwentong "Aviary" ni Lysley Tenorio.<sup>11</sup>

Sa kuwentong *Lumpen* ni Federico Licsi Espino,<sup>12</sup> ang Avenida Rizal ang naging lunan.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Jessica Hagedorn, ed., *Manila Noir* (New York: Akashic Books, 2013), 48.

<sup>9</sup> Resil Mojares, "Is There a Philippine Noir," nasa *Interrogations*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2018), 113-127.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Lysley Tenorio, "Aviary," nasa *Manila Noir*, ed. Jessica Hagedorn (New York: Akashic Books, 2013), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Federico Licsi Espino, *Lumpen* (Metro Manila: Limbagang Araro, 1985).

Literal itong tagpuan ng mga nagbebenta ng aliw at mayayamang parokyano, mga tao mula sa iba't ibang antas o uri. Sa pagsusuri ng kuwentong ito, inilarawan ni J. Neil Garcia ang tema ng kuwento bilang perbersiyon. Maging ang Avenida ay isang perbersiyon ng kung ano ito dapat.

Ayon nga kay Mojares, ang mga tagpuan sa mga kuwentong noir ay mikrokosmo ng mas malaking lipunan. Ito rin ang umalingawngaw mula sa suri ni Garcia na naghahalintulad sa “nasyong Filipino” (Filipino nation) sa “isang mahabang abenida ng perbersiyon” (one long avenue of perversion) sa kontekstong post-kolonyal.<sup>13</sup>

Isa pa sa mga manunulat na malinaw na nag-ugnay ng lunan sa mga kuwentong madilim ay si Tony Perez, sa iba't iba niyang aklat sa serye ng *Cubao*. Bagama't malaking bahagi ng mga seryeng ito ay may mga supernatural na elemento, marami pa rin sa kanyang mga kuwento ang naka-angkla sa realidad ng krimen o iba pang ilisitong gawain. Ang mapúno at madilim na Cubao sa mga kuwento ni Perez ay pugad ng iba't-ibang mga di kaaya-ayang tauhan at kuwento na rin.<sup>14</sup> Sa mga kuwentong noir gaya ng mga nabanggit, ang lunan ng mga pangyayari ay may gusto nang sabihin. Pinupunto nito ang pag-iral ng mga lunang ito sa realidad. Mayroong mga lugar na ganito sa halos lahat ng lungsod sa daigdig. Hindi ito kathang-isip ng mga manunulat. Hindi man totoo ang lahat ng lugar na nababanggit sa mga kuwentong noir, malamang na inihalaw ito sa isang umiiral na sulok, kanto, kalsada, tambakan, warehouse, putahan, computer shop, imprentahan ng pekeng dokumento, pwestuhan ng droga, *gillage* (gilid ng village), o estero sa lungsod.

Iminumungkahi din ng usapin sa lunan na ang mga lungsod ay may dalawang mukha. Ang isa ay malinis at maliwanag. Samantalang

ang isa ay mabaho, madungis, at madilim. Sa ikalawang lugar kadalasang nakatira ang mga naglilinis at nagpapaganda sa mga kaaya-ayang lugar sa lungsod. Dito nananahan ang mga taong gumagawa ng mga trabahong ayaw gawin ng iba: ang pagtatapon ng basura, pagre-recycle, paglilinis ng kubeta, pagtitingi ng droga, pagpapatumba sa mga kaaway, at iba pa.

Kung sa kuwento ni Edgardo Reyes na *Lugmok na ang Nayon*<sup>15</sup> ay ipinapakita kung paanong tila hinihigop ng lungsod ang yaman ng nayon, sa mga kuwentong noir ipinapakita kung saan humihimpil ang mga yamang-tao mula sa mga lalawigan na hinatak ng mga pangako ng kalunsuran. Sa masisikip at madidilim na lugar na ito na minsan ay ilang dipa lang ang layo sa mga mall at *condo*, nananahan ang mga proletaryo at lumpen-proletaryo na sa hudyat ng makapangyarihan ay agad bumubuhay o kumikitil para may makain.

Esensyal man sa pag-inog ng lungsod ang madidilim na lugar na ito, itinuturing ang mga iyon bilang *iba* o *other*, na umiiral lang para sa pagiging ganap ng marangyang bahagi ng lungsod (ang *subject*). Samantala ang ginhawa at kaayusan ng lungsod ay hindi rito natatamasa. Sa mga lunang ito, iba ang batas. Hindi nang-o-opo ang mga pulis. Hindi kumakatok bagkus ay nanadyak na lang ng mga pinto. Dito, ang kasipagan ay hindi katumbas ng pag-unlad. Ang buhay dito ay hindi kasing halaga ng buhay ng mga nakatira sa mga de-pader at de-guardiyang mga komunidad at gusali.

Ikatlo, kaugnay ng nabanggit na katangian ng lunan, nagaganap ang pagmamapa sa mga saray ng lipunan sa pamamagitan ng tauhan sa mga kuwentong noir.<sup>16</sup> Maaaring ihanay, halimbawa, ang nanlilimos at sindikatong may hawak sa kanya; ang bayarang babae, ang mga bugaw, at ang mga kliyente; o kaya naman ang pulis at ang kanyang mga impormante, o

<sup>13</sup> J. Neil C. Garcia, “The postcolonial Perverse Hybridity, Desire, and the Filipino Nation in Federico Licsi Espino Jr.’s Lumpen,” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14 (2006), 18.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Perez, *Cubao Midnight Express: mga pusong nadiskaril sa mahabang riles ng pag-ibig* (Manila: Cacho, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Efen R. Abueg et. al, *Mga Agos sa Disyerto* (Manila: National Book Store, 1974).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

bataang nagre-recycle ng droga. Ang mga di pagkakapantay na ito ang tatambad sa nag-iimbestigang tauhan at sa mambabasa.

Kaugnay ng pagmamapang ito ang pagiging sistematiko at normal ng krimen sa daigdig na iyon. Makikita halimbawa sa mga kuwento na tila may kaayusan, na may tumatayang tila pamahalaan na nagsisiguro sa takbo ng mga ilegal na gawain, at nagpapanatili sa pagdurusa ng mga tauhan. Iba pa ito siyempre sa gobyernong mas kilala natin, bagama't parehong gumagamit ng dahas para mapanatiling mangmang at lugmok ang mga nasa ilalim.

Nabanggit nang sa mga kuwentong noir, tipikal ang pagkakaroon ng tauhang nag-iimbestiga. Sa mga ito, ang nag-iimbestiga ay kadalasang may nakaraang di niya maharap, ngunit kailangang harapin dahil sa kasong tinanggap na resolbahin. Maaaring personal o magiging personal para sa nag-iimbestiga ang paglutas sa kaso. May mga bakas din na madidiskubre na magtuturo sa iba pang sekreto. Sa katapusan, ang pagresolba sa misteryo ay di makasapat para masabing maligaya ang naging wakas para sa nag-iimbestiga o sa iba pang tauhan. Ipinapakita ang mga pinsalang naging epekto ng krimen at imbestigasyon.

Maaaring makita ang katangiang imbestigatibo na tinutukoy sa makatotohanang nobela na *The First Impulse* ni Laurel Fauntauzzo.<sup>17</sup> Ito ay tungkol sa pagpatay sa mag-asawang *film critic* na naging matunog noong 2009. Sa *non-fiction* na nobelang ito, ang mismong manunulat ang naging detektib. Ang simpatya niya ay nagmula sa pagiging *repatriated* o balikbayan niya, na siya ring estado ng isa sa mga biktima. Naging malay ang awtor sa moralidad ng pakikisangkot niya sa kaso, at sa ilang pagkakataon ay inihanlintulad ang sarili sa detektib sa pelikulang *Batang West Side* (2001) ni Lav Diaz, na paboritong pelikula ng biktima.

Panghuli, sa mga kuwentong noir, ang krimen o ang mga lihim sa likod nito, ang tinutungo ng **banghay**. Sa ilalim ng ganitong pagbabanghay ng kuwentong krimen, maaalala ang katagorya ng mga klasiko at modernong kuwentong detektib, *police procedurals*, at mga *hard-boiled* na kuwento.

Sa usapin ng banghay, maaari din namang inilalahad ang motibasyon sa isang krimen na sa simula pa lang ay nakahayag na ang mga detalye. At maaari din na sinusundan ang takbo ng isip ng tauhan na tutungo pa lang sa paggawa ng krimen, sikolohikal kumbaga.

Sa noir, hindi kailangang maging detektib o alagad ng batas ang nag-iimbestiga o sinusundang tauhan. Kung minsan nga, sa mga kuwentong *hard-boiled*, ang takbo ng isip ng kriminal ang sinusundan. Maaaring kaibigan ng biktima, kapitbahay, o mamamahayag, ang nag-iimbestiga. Ang mahalaga, mayroon siyang nakikitang personal na pangangailangan na malutas ang kaso.

Halimbawa dito ang tauhang si Father Saenz sa mga kuwento at nobela ni F.H. Batacan na *Comforter of the Afflicted*<sup>18</sup> at *Smaller and Smaller Circles*.<sup>19</sup> Pinepersonal niya ang mga kaso at maiging kinikilala ang mga may kaugnayan sa kaso. Sa mga akdang ito, hindi nauwi sa hustisya ang banghay. Sa kuwento, nakatakas ang Koreanong salarin. At sa nobela naman, namatay ang salarin na sinusubukang ilitgas rin ni Saenz.

Sa noir, naipag-uugnay ang mga pangyayari sa paligid (paksa at banghay), ang lugar (tagpuan), at dinamiks ng mga tao (tauhan). Samakatwid, ang mga elementong nabanggit ang tumitimpla sa mga detalye ng realidad para maging katanggap-tanggap sa panlasa ng mambabasa, dahil sa mga kuwentong ito, may paglalapat ang realidad sa katha, at ang katha sa realidad. At dahil dito, may nakikitang talaban sa pagitan ng dalawa na maaari sanang

<sup>17</sup> Laurel Fauntauzzo, *The First Impulse* (Pasig City: Anvil, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Jessica Hagedorn, "Comforter of the Afflicted," nasa *Manila Noir*, Jessica Hagedorn, ed., (New York: Akashic Books, 2013), 108-127.

<sup>19</sup> F. H. Batacan, *Smaller and Smaller Circles* (Quezon City: UP Press, 2007).

magbunsod ng pagbabago sa realidad kung mapagtatanto ng mambabasa.

Ngayon, ano ang katangian ng mga lokal na kuwentong noir na masasabing naghihiwalay nito mula sa noir ng ibang lugar? Ano'ng realidad ang ipinapakita ng Filipino noir? Sa totoo lang hindi ito madaling tukuyin dahil nga may kaiksian ang listahan ng mga kuwentong noir sa wikang Filipino na maaaring pagbatayan ng sagot. Isa pang dahilan ay ang pagiging unibersal ng kahirapan at karahasan bilang karanasan sa daigdig. Susubukang magbigay ng sagot ngunit maituturing na mababaw ito. Lalo't ang mga banta ng dilim ay hindi naman eksklusibo lang sa lokal.

Dahil natatangi din ang kasaysayan ng bawat lugar, masasabi din na magiging natatangi ang kuwentong nakatali sa lugar na iyon. Halimbawa, ang pagkakasailalim ng kapuluan natin sa ilang serye ng kolonisasyon ay may malalim na epekto sa sikolohiya at pagkakakilanlan ng mga tao. Sa mga kuwento ni Batacan, makikita ang isang bansang may malalim na ugnayan sa institusyon ng relihiyon, at ang tiwalang ipinapakita ng mga tauhan sa mga alagad ng simbahan.

Naaapektuhan din ng kasaysayan, kaugnay ng kolonisasyon at globalisasyon, ang mga aspirasyon o ninanais ng mga tao. Halimbawa, ang mall sa Makati na binanggit sa kuwentong *Aviary* ni Tenorio ay produkto mismo ng neo-liberal na sistemang umiiral. Ang *economic zones* at *subdivision* na itinatayo sa mga lungsod ay di lang nagbubunsod ng paghahati sa lokasyon kundi pati sa yaman, kaisipan, ninanais, at mga prinsipyo.

Makikita sa mga kuwento sa lokal, sa panghihiram ng ideya kay J. Neil Garcia, ang isang perbersong anyo ng *American dream*. Mayroon lamang tayong perbersiyon ng nasyon, ng demokrasya, at ng kalayaan at kaunlaran aniya.<sup>20</sup> Dahil ipinagbibili din sa kolonisador ang mga yaman ng kapuluan bilang bayad-

utang sa presyong sila ang nagtatalaga, ay patuloy ang kasalatang mararanasan ng mga tauhan sa ating mga kuwento. Parehas man ang hinaharap na pagsubok ng iba't ibang lahi, maituturing naman na matindi ang antas ng sa atin, lalo't kung ikokonsidera ang mga epekto ng globalisasyon at pagbabago sa klima. Kung ang lumpen ang latak ng lipunan, ang bansa natin ang latak sa liga ng mga nasyon. Tayo ang pinagkukunan, at tayo ang tinatapunan ng basura. Sila ang nakikinabang sa langis na may mataas na *carbon footprint* pero tayo ang tinatamaan ng mga bagyo.

Sa aklat na *Imagined Communities* ni Benedict Anderson, ipinaliwanag niya kung paanong ang mga panitikang may pambansang abot, gaya ng nobela at pahayagan, ang bumubuo sa imahinasyon kung ano ang bansa.<sup>21</sup> Sa panahon ngayon, maaaring ito ay ang mga balitang nasa telebisyon, radyo, at internet, o kaya ay ang mga pelikulang patok sa masa. Kaugnay nito, hindi makapapayag ang awtor na hindi maisama sa kamalayaan ng publiko ang mga kuwentong noir. Ito ay dahil sa mga nabanggit na rin sa itaas, dahil ang noir ang isa, kundi man ang pinakakumakatawan, sa karanasan ng mga tao sa bansa lalo sa panahon ng mga patayan sa ilalim ng administrasyong Duterte.

Ito ang potensiyal ng mga kuwentong noir. Sa pagsusulat at paglalathala ng ganitong mga kuwento, maaaring makita ang kalagayang kung minsan ay mas absurdo pa kaysa sa mga malikhaing katha. Di maitatangi ang kaugnayan ng mga kuwentong noir sa pagusbong ng mga lungsod, at laylayan nito. Mga lungsod ito na epitomiya ng sentrismo ng pamahalaan at ng nasyon. Sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuri sa mga naratibong nasa laylayan (at kadiliman) ng lungsod at bansa, masusuri din ang naging epekto sa mga tao ng sentrismong ito.

Makikita sa mga kuwentong babanggitin pa sa ibaba ang pagiging malawak ng krimen bilang paksa. Sa pagbabasa ng mga akdang ito,

<sup>20</sup> Garcia, J. Neil C. "The postcolonial Perverse Hybridity, Desire, and the Filipino Nation in Federico Licsi Espino Jr.'s Lumpen." *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*. Issue 14 (2006).

<sup>21</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Pasig: Anvil, 2017).

inaasam na magkaroon ng pagkilala kung anong klaseng bansa ang nabuo sa ilalim ng sentrismo ng kalunsuran, nasyon, at globalisasyon.

## MGA AKDA SA NOIR

Nagsimula ang artikulasyon ng proyektong ito dahil sa artikulo ni Mojares na *Is There a Philippine Noir?*<sup>22</sup> Inimbestigahan ni Mojares ang tila kakulangan ng pagkilala sa mga sulating noir sa lokal gayong may kasiglahan ang subgenre na ito sa ibang lugar. Ipinunto niya ang kakulangan ng mga pag-aaral tungkol dito. Tila tinitingnan ang noir sa lokal bilang sekundaryang uri ng panitikan. Tila hindi ito binibigyan ng kaukulang pagkilala maging sa akademya.

Naihalalintulad marahil ang noir sa mga *crime films* noong dekada 70 na tumuon sa kahindikan at kahalayan ng mga totoong krimen. Sa mga pelikulang ito na pumatok sa takilya, hindi naiugnay ang mga kuwentong krimen sa isang panlipunang konteksto. Ito naman ngayon ang inaasanta ng proyektong ito, ang pagtukoy sa kaugnayan ng mga kuwentong krimen sa mas malawak na kalagayang panlipunan.

Makatutulong rin nang malaki ang mga banyagang sangguniang sa pagpapakilala ng noir. Gayunpaman, hindi sapat na pag-aralan lang ang mga banyagang panitikan dahil hindi nito sinasalamain ang mga naratibo sa lokal na maaaring talakayin sa anyo ng noir.

Kaugnay ng ideya ng pagsangguni sa sariling batis ng panitikan, maaaring sangguniin ang di-gradwadong tesis ni Lemuel Magaling na *Nghhngngng Siglo at Iba pang Buntong-hininga*.<sup>23</sup> Makatutulong ang tesis na ito para artikulahin ang pinapaksang mga tauhan, kung magsusulat ng kuwentong noir. Lumpen ang terminong ginamit ni

Magaling na mas politisadong terminolohiya. Ang pagtukoy nito sa lugar ng lumpen sa larangan ng panitikan ay nagpapalinaw sa mga puwersang nagbubunsod sa kakaibang katangian ng uring ito. Lumunsad man ang depinisyon ng lumpen bilang latak o basahan ng lipunan mula sa maikling paglalarawan ni Karl Marx,<sup>24</sup> iginiit ni Magaling ang lipunan bilang “criminogenic” o “nagbibigay ng kondisyon sa paglawak ng kriminalidad,” at samakatuwid ng pagiging lumpen.<sup>25</sup>

Isa pang manunulat na tumalakay sa kalagayan ng mga lumpen ay si Garcia.<sup>26</sup> Sa kanyang artikulo, sinuri ni Garcia ang lipunan noong dekada 70 sa akda ni Federico Licsi Espino na *Lumpen*. Inilarawan nina Garcia at Espino ang bansa bilang tagpuan ng iba’t ibang lahi, uri, at kasarian, at ang bansang Pilipinas bilang perbersong bersiyon ng isang nasyon. Mula sa usapin na ito ng nasyon, mainam na hukayin pa ang kasaysayan para matukoy ang kinahinatnan ng lipunang may naiangat na sentro at naisantabing laylayan.

Mahalagang matukoy ang kasaysayan ng pagkakaroon ng laylayan. Dito maaaring gawing sanggunian muli ang *Imagined Communities*<sup>27</sup> ni Benedict Anderson. Sa pagsusuring ito sa pinagmulan ng ideya ng bansa, napalilitaw ang mga puwersang nagbunsod sa paglago ng mga sentro at pag-usbong ng laylayan. Ang pagtalakay din sa kasaysayan ng paglilimbag sa itinayong bansa ay naglilina sa pag-usbong ng canon at ng hindi, ng mababasa at di mababasa batay sa sensurang itinalaga ng estado. Ang aklat na ito ni Anderson ay naghahain ng mga sariwang sipat ukol sa mga usaping ito.

Ang pangingibabaw ng nasyon ay nagbunsod din sa pag-usbong ng mga lungsod.

<sup>22</sup> Resil Mojares, “Is There a Philippine Noir,” nasa *Interrogations*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2018), 113-127.

<sup>23</sup> Lemuel Magaling, “*Nghhngngng Siglo at Iba pang Buntong-hininga*” (Di-gradwadong Tesis, Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Karl Marx, *Manifesto ng Partido Komunista*, salin ni Zeus Salazar (Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2000), 37.

<sup>25</sup> Lemuel Magaling, “*Nghhngngng Siglo at Iba pang Buntong-hininga*” (Di-gradwadong Tesis, Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, 2017), 7.

<sup>26</sup> J. Neil C. Garcia, “The postcolonial Perverse Hybridity, Desire, and the Filipino Nation in Federico Licsi Espino Jr.’s *Lumpen*,” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14 (2006).

<sup>27</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Pasig: Anvil, 2017).

Ang pag-usbong ng lungsod ay naghati sa kapuluan sa sentro at laylayan. Ngunit kahit sa loob ng lungsod ay may paghahati pa rin. Makakatulong ang isang pagsipat sa lipunan na iba sa lente ng estado at iba pang institusyon. Sa librong *Weapons of the Weak* ni James Scott, nagbitaw siya ng pahayag na maaaring maging gabay sa mga nagsusulat at sumusuri ng kuwentong noir:

**“Mula sa ibang sipat, ang tangka rito ay ang ipakita kung gaano kahalaga, kayaman, kakomplikado ang mga lokal na ugnayan, at kung ano-ano ang maaari nating matutuhan sa mga pagsusuri na hindi nakatuon sa estado, sa mga organisasyong pormal, sa mga hayag na protesta, at mga pambansang isyu.”<sup>28</sup>**

Sa daigdig naman ng panitikan, ang mga sumusunod ay maaaring maging inspirasyon at gabay ng mga awtor ng noir. Marami sa mga manunulat sa ibaba ay hindi eksklusibong nagsulat ng noir, ngunit nagsulat ng mga akdang may parehong bigat.

Isa sa mga pinakakilalang nobela na tumalakay sa kawalan ng pagkakapantay-pantay na matatagpuan sa mga lungsod ang *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag*<sup>29</sup> ni Edgardo Reyes. Uminog ang kuwento sa inhustisya sa lungsod at nagtapos sa pagkakapahamak ng pangunahing tauhang si Julio Madiaga na naghahanap kay Ligaya. Isa ito sa mga unang kuwentong naglarawan sa lungsod bilang marimarim na lugar. Inihahalintulad nito ang mga gusali sa mga puntod na nalalagakan ng mga kalansay. Isa rin ito sa mga akdang unang tumalakay sa prostitusyon bilang komoditi ng lungsod.

Sa akdang ito, malinaw ang pagkakasalabab ng lugar na ginagalawan, at ng

estado sa buhay. Makikita rin ang halimbawa ng pagkakaroon ng karakter ng isang lugar. Isang bagay na mahalaga rin sa mga kuwentong noir. Inihahalintulad nito halimbawa ang mga gusali sa mga puntod.

Maikukumpara ang akdang ito sa dalawang nobela ni Rizal, na ayon kay Mojares ay umiikot rin sa krimen bilang “generating event” o tagapagbunsod ng mga sumunod na pangyayari.<sup>30</sup> Umiinog din kasi ang mga nobela ni Rizal sa paghahanap ng hustisya para sa magulang na pinatay, at babaeng minamahal ng protagonista na biniktima ng pangangalunya ng isang pari.

Isa pang koleksiyong mahusay na naglarawan sa lungsod ang *Cubao Midnight Express: Mga Pusong Nadiskaril sa Mahabang Riles ng Pag-ibig*<sup>31</sup> ni Tony Perez, na kabilang sa koleksiyong *Cubao Series*. Nakapanghihilakbot ang husay na ipinakita ni Perez sa koleksiyong ito. Bagama’t nakapanahon 30-40 taon na ang nakalipas, mababasa na rito ang nakakapangambang mga naratibo na umusbong sa dati nang sentro ngunit masukal at madilim pang *Cubao*. Hindi maaaring ilunan sa ibang lugar ang mga kuwento rito dahil ang mismong lunan ay kabilang sa nagpapausad sa banghay. Gaya ng nobela ni Reyes, ang mga kuwento ni Perez ay isang mahusay na gabay sa pagtatahi ng kuwento sa isang partikular na lunan. Kabanggit-banggit din ang *Cubao: Pagkagat ng Dilim*,<sup>32</sup> kung saan itinutulad ni Perez ang mga kuwentong kababalaghan sa isang subconscious na tinataglay ngunit tinatago ng lungsod, isang paglalarawang mailalapat din sa noir.

May ilang kuwento din si Ave Perez Jacob sa librong *Ang Pagdating ni Elias Plaridel*<sup>33</sup> na mainam ikonsidera. Ilan sa mga kuwento dito ay tumalakay sa patayan halimbawa sa Tondo,

<sup>28</sup> Salin ng awtor. James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. (USA: Yale University, 1995), xix.

<sup>29</sup> Edgardo M. Reyes, *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Resil Mojares, “Is There a Philippine Noir,” nasa *Interrogations*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2018), 113-127.

<sup>31</sup> Tony Perez, *Cubao Midnight Express: Mga Pusong Nadiskaril sa Mahabang Riles ng Pag-ibig* (Manila: Cacho, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> Tony Perez, *Cubao: Pagkagat ng Dilim* (Manila: Cacho, 1993).

<sup>33</sup> Ave Perez Jacob, *Ang Pagdating ni Elias Plaridel* (Pateros: R.O. Santos Enterprises, 2002).



at sa lagay ng mga binansagang kriminal sa loob ng mga bilangguan. Gayunpaman maaaring pagdebatehan ang pagiging noir nito dahil mapapansin na may ideya ang may-akda ng isang mesiyas sa katauhan ni Elias Plaridel, na isang organisadong rebelde.

Ang nobelang isinapelikula na *Smaller and Smaller Circles*<sup>34</sup> ni F.H. Batacan naman ay mahusay na halimbawa ng mga kuwentong krimen na imbestigatibo. Ang maingat na pagbibitaw ng mga detalye ay kaugnay ng dahan-dahang pag-usad ng kuwento at ng mga kaakibat nitong usapin at damdamin. Gayunpaman, hindi ito nagsusubo ng mga didaktikong aral bagkus ay nagpapahiwatig. Sa kuwentong ito, bihasa si Father Saenz sa Forensic Anthropology, dahilan para mas maging mahusay nga siya sa mga pulis na nag-iimbestiga. Inalis nito ang kapulisan bilang pangunahing imbestigador sa mga krimen. Bagay na angkop lang dahil hindi pinagkakatiwalaan ang mga pulis sa realidad at maging sa kuwento dahil sa kakulangan ng husay o/at sinseridad.

Nasa Manila Noir naman ang kuwento ni F.H. Batacan na “Comforter of the Afflicted na isang imbestigasyon sa pagkamatay ng isang babaeng tumutulong sa mga inaabusong kapwa babae. Ang paring imbestigador dito na si Father Saenz ang siya ring pangunahing tauhan sa nobelang *Smaller and Smaller Circles*. Sa lahat ng nabanggit na manunulat sa bahaging ito, si Batacan ang may pinakamalinaw na eksekusyon ng kuwentong detektib at noir.

Samantala, nasa Manila Noir din ang kuwentong *A Human Right* ni Rosario Cruz Lucero. Isa itong kuwento ng paghihiganti ng isang tauhan sa isang kasapi ng Davao Death Squad na naghahasik ng lagim sa Davao City. Sa kuwentong ito, napalitaw ang ilang pagkakapareho ng Maynila at Davao. Bukod rito, may ilang pang kuwentong naisulat si Cruz

Lucero na umiikot sa krimen at iligalidad gaya ng *Demonyo at Good Husbands, Obedient Wives*.

Ang kuwentong *Sidhi*<sup>35</sup> ni Yvette Tan sa wikang Ingles naman ay nagpapakita na kahit sa mundo ng mga kakaibang nilalang gaya ng mga tikbalang at maligno, nagkakaroon pa rin ng puwang ang iligalidad. Ispekulatibo man ang kuwentong ito, nailalarawan pa rin nito ang isang daigdig na hindi malayo sa katotohan. Kumpleto ito sa mga kalokohan, kalungkutan, pamahiin, hiwaga, at kasabugan sa droga. Dito ipinakita kung paanong ang drogang ito, gaya ng ibang uri ng droga, ay ginagamit bilang pampalimot sa mga nangyayari sa lipunan. Maitatanong tuloy kung alin ba ang may problema, ang droga o ang lipunan?

Maganda ring maisama sa listahang ito ang mga akda sa librong *Pektus* ng grupong Sulat-Kamay, partikular ang mga akda nina Giselle Espino, Ricky Ornopia, Kiko Rafols, at Taks Barbin. Samantala, nariyan din ang koleksiyon ng mga kuwentong inilabas ng Ungaz Press. Ito ay mga grupong pawang umusbong mula sa Politeknikong Unibersidad ng Pilipinas.

Isa sa mga pinakabagong akda naman na tumatalakay sa organisadong krimen ang nobelang *Aklat ng mga Naiwan*<sup>36</sup> ni Arlo Mendoza. May elemento ang nobelang ito ng pag-iimbestiga na isinagawa ng iba't ibang tauhan. Sa huling bahagi, naging tila gabay ang libro sa paggawa ng mga sistematikong krimen, na nagbigay sa akda ng metatekstwal na katangian. Sa nobelang ito, tila sinasabi na ang mga pamahalaan ang may monopolyo sa organisadong krimen. Isa itong obserbasyon na laganap sa buong daigdig ngunit may sariling mukha sa Pilipinas.

Sa mga naunang bahagi ng proyekto, nabanggit na maselan ang pagkukuwento tungkol sa krimen lalo't kung totoo itong nangyari. Bagama't may kalayaan ang may-

<sup>34</sup> F. H. Batacan, *Smaller and Smaller Circles* (Quezon City: UP Press, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Yvette Tan, “Sidhi” nasa *Best of Philippine Speculative Fiction 2005-2010*, ed. Nikki at Dean Francis Alfar, (UP Press, 2013), 278-295.

<sup>36</sup> Amado Anthony Mendoza III, *Aklat ng mga Naiwan* (Quezon City: Balangiga, 2018).

akda na lumikha ng sariling daigdig at kuwento, ang paghalaw sa realidad ay may kaakibat na etikal na responsibilidad. Maaaring maging gabay para rito ang aklat na *The First Impulse*<sup>37</sup> ni Laurel Fauntauzzo na nabanggit na sa itaas. Malaking ambag ng akdang ito sa proyekto ang etikal na mga tanong ng manunulat sa sarili habang iniimbestigahan ang kaso, kaugnay ng kanyang pakikisangkot bilang isang tagalabas.

Isa naman sa mga kilalang nagsusulat at tumutuon sa iligalidad sa lente ng mga gumagawa nito si Norman Wilwayco. Ang nobelang *Mondo Manila*<sup>38</sup> at ang koleksiyon niya ng mga maikling kuwento sa *Responde*<sup>39</sup> ang ilan sa mga premyado niyang akda. Isa si Wilwayco sa tumalakay sa “looban” bilang lunan ng mga kuwento. Ang bawat kuwento ay maaksyon. Simple pero kakatwa ang wikang ginagamit. Naipakita niya ang isang bahagi ng lipunang umiinog sa krimen.

Naipasok din niya sa kanyang mga kuwento ang teknolohiya ng internet bilang elemento ng krimen. Bukod pa ito sa pagtalakay sa adiksiyon, at brutalidad ng mga pulis na ipinakitang may sariling interes.

Sa pagtisdod sa mga akdang ito ni Wilwayco, makikita agad ang pagkakatulad ng mundo ni Wilwayco sa mundong ginagalawan. Sinumang makatitisdod sa kanyang mga kuwento ay mapapabasa ng ilang mga pahina hanggang makarami, nagbabasa man sila ng noir o hindi, mahilig man silang magbasa o hindi. Dahil dito maaaring gawing pamantayan si Wilwayco sa pagsuri ng ibang akda sa parehong kategorya.

Isa din sa mga pinakabagong nagsusulat ng noir ay si Ronaldo Vivo Jr. Sa kanyang maiksing nobela na *Ang Kapangyarihang Higit sa Ating Lahat*,<sup>40</sup> malinaw ang tindig ng manunulat na sumisimpatya sa mga lumpen

sa naratibo. Lumilitaw ring antagonistang kapulisan. Kinakatawan ng nobelang ito ang tatlo sa apat na katangian ng noir na nabanggit sa taas: ang pagkakaroon ng desperadong tauhan; ng magulong daigdig o lunan; at ilang kakatwang mga batuhan ng diyalogo. Maaari namang pagtalunan kung nagkaroon ba ng masayang wakas ang kuwento sa pagkakatakas ng tauhan mula sa presinto sa huling bahagi.

Maaalala sa nobelang ito ang libro naman ni Bob Ong na *Macarthur*<sup>41</sup> na may tema ng muling paglitaw matapos ang mga tangka ng pagbabaon sa naratibo ng tauhang lumpen. Ang pamagat ay paglalaro sa mga salita ni Douglas MacArthur na “I shall return”, na iniugnay sa pakiramdam ng tauhan na inilalarawan bilang taeng muling bumabalik kahit ilang beses buhusan.

Bukod sa nobelang nabanggit, ilan pa sa mga nailathala ni Vivo ang *Domestik Rat* noong 2018 at *Ang Bangin sa Ilalim ng ating mga Paa* noong 2021. Inaasahang madaragdagn pa ito sa taong 2024.

Sa mga nabanggit na mga manunulat sa artikulong ito, tila sina Wilwayco at Vivo lamang ang dedikadong nagsusulat ng mga kuwento na istriktong matatawag na noir.

## KONGKLUSYONG WALANG RESOLUSYON

<sup>37</sup> Mapalad na naging kaibigan ko ang may-akda ng libro habang sinusulat niya ito. Pasasalamat kay Fauntauzzo sa pagbuo ng librong ito sa kabila ng mga agam-agam at batikos sa kanyang pakikisangkot. Laurel Fauntauzzo, *The First Impulse* (Pasig City: Anvil, 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Norman Wilwayco, *Mondo Manila* (Manila: Automatic Writings, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Norman Wilwayco, *Responde* (Manila: PinoyXpress, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Ronaldo Vivo Jr., *Ang Kapangyarihang Higit sa Ating Lahat* (Manila: Ungaz Pres, 2015).

<sup>41</sup> Bob Ong, *Macarthur* (Manila: Visprint, 2007).

Ang noir bilang genre ng panitikan ang pinakatotoo sa lahat.<sup>42</sup> Matalas ang pahayag na ito, pero kung tatanungin ang awtor kung aling uri ng panitikan ang pinakanakahalukay sa mga itinatago ng mga lungsod at sibilisasyon, ang nagiging pinakatapat sa pagkukuwento ng mga paksang kadalasan ay taboo, ito na marahil ang noir o mga kuwentong krimen sa kabuuan. Lalo kung ang mga terminong ito ay sasaklaw din sa mga domestikong krimen, at mga historikal na kuwentong krimen.

Ang lipunan ay hindi lang kung ano ang nakikita at pinag-uusapan. Ang mga di-pinag-uusapan ay nariyan, nararamdaman natin. Nakakatakot man ang mga bagay na di natin alam, nakakatakot man ang dilim, sa dilim lang makakapa ang mga bagay na sa liwanag ay di natin pinapansi. Sa mundong ginagalawan, mata ang madalas nating gamitin sa pagkilala ng mga tao at sitwasyon. Sa pakikipagkaibigan sa dilim, nalalaman nating may iba pa palang paraan para maunawan ang daigdig.

Tama ang nobelistang si Raymond Chandler sa pagsasabing, “Hindi mahalimuyak ang mundong ito, ngunit ito ang daigdig kung

saan ka nabubuhay” (It is not a fragrant world, but it is the world you live in).<sup>43</sup> Ang pagtuon sa realidad ng krimen ay pagtuon sa realidad. Hindi man ito kaaya-aya, ang pagpansin sa mga naratibong ito ay maaaring magbunsod sa paglutas sa mga kubling problema ng lipunan.

At dahil sa malakas na talaban ng mga kuwentong noir at ng realidad, maaaring tingnan bilang responsibilidad ang paggigiit ng mga naratibong gaya sa mga kuwentong noir. Isang paraan pa ng pagpapatuloy sa tradisyong ito ng noir ang pag-aambag sa malikhaing batis nito (na nais ding gawin ng awtor). Kasabay ng pagdiriwang sa husay ng mga nabanggit na kuwento at artikulo, inaasam din na madagdagan pa ang mga akdang noir na tumatalakay sa mga paksang taboo, at mga bahay-lathala na naglilimbag ng noir. Mabibilang pa sa daliri ang mga bahay-lathalang ito gaya ng *PinoyXpress* at *Balanginga*. Kung nais natin ng katotohanan, di natin dapat na katakutan ang dilim, dahil dito maraming kubli at hayag na nagaganap.

<sup>42</sup> James Sallis, “Foreword,” nasa *American Noir*, a Pocket Essential Guide to US Crime Fiction, Film and TV, ed. Forshaw Barry. (UK: Old Castle: 2017).

<sup>43</sup> Catherin Ross Nickerson, *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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## PASASALAMAT KINA

Dr. Galileo Zafra at Dr. Romulo Baquiran Jr.

# A Habermasian Critique of Student Representation in the University of the Philippines

KAIRA MILLEN B. CATA CUTAN

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This research is a manifestation and a statement on the unexamined and subpar state of student politics in the University of the Philippines Diliman (UP Diliman). Student politics, overhauled by student political parties, belongs in the Habermasian concept of the System. Student political parties are composed of students and alliance student organizations, which subscribe to a specific set of principles and ideologies when concerning nationalism, tackling social ills, and student governance. This paper explains how the conspicuous, unregulated politicking subverts student democracy—the core foundation of the student council as an institution.

The main argument of this paper is that the current system of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP) Student Council, or CSSPSC, struggles to adhere to genuine democratic principles through the failure of communicative action. To substantiate the main argument, Jürgen Habermas' concept of the Colonization of the Lifeworld and the Theory of Communicative Action need to be appropriated to the context of the CSSPSC. The state of student-led institutions needs to be examined and reexamined as it facilitates the insights and

## KEYWORDS

Araling Pilipino

indihenisasyon

dayalektikal na karunungan

pagtatalaban

materyalismo

concerns from students themselves. Moreover, upholding democratic freedom to protect the students' collective interests in this political climate also preserves their autonomy. If these institutions fail to do so, then it is time to reconceive the notion of student leadership and representation to that which enables uncorrupted participation.

Given my main argument, this paper will be grounded on the following objectives:

- i. To substantiate the need for communicative action in student representation;
- ii. To illustrate the subsystem of politics in the student council colonizing the lifeworld during the election of officers, in-council deliberations, and the council composition; and,
- iii. To propose an alternative structure that encourages communicative action and regulates the Habermasian concept of "colonization by the system."

These objectives will be the backbone of each section in this paper. In the first section, the CSSPSC and its nature of student representation shall be undertaken. The second section will examine three political aspects of the student council system: the elections, methods of the student council in establishing rapport with students, and council composition to examine the way the institution functions as a political system permeating the lifeworld of the student body. Lastly, this research will suggest how student leaders can be representatives of students' interests following the ideal speech setting for communicative action.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will examine the CSSPSC in UP Diliman in terms of its adherence to the Habermasian communicative action. In particular, the batch of officers and the

deliberative mechanisms from 2018 to 2022 shall be considered in the analysis. This timeframe had the most available documentation online by the CSSP Student Press, SINAG; CSSP Office of Student Affairs (CSSP-OSA); and the CSSPSC itself. Since politics is crucial in evaluating the presence of communicative action, the study acknowledges that the CSSPSC officers belong to two different political parties. In CSSP, these political parties exist to form a network of organizations and students, and each party abides by an ideology that is shown through the party's projects. The critique shall recognize the involvement of two CSSP political parties during the timeframe set: SALIGAN sa CSSP and BUKLOD CSSP. By acknowledging the influence of these political parties on the CSSPSC, the competition during the CSSPSC elections season and the discussions during the council assemblies shall be highlighted.

### METHODOLOGY

Critique of the student representation was objectively approached from the perspective of a CSSPSC constituent. Albeit the author was directly involved with the CSSPSC for two academic years, objective distancing was accomplished. Furthermore, the author did not and does not belong to any of the political parties. The author obtained information from the official and publicly accessible Facebook pages of the institutions relevant to the study, archival data, such as the minutes of the General Assemblies, and recorded media of the events. At the time of writing, access to physical copies of documentations, if available, was limited due to health restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the minutes of the meetings were provided by the CSSPSC.

### The CSSPSC and Student Representation

Students in UP Diliman are welcomed with the notion that their university is the microcosm of the Philippines society.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes

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<sup>1</sup> Small Enterprises Research and Development Foundation. "UP President, UP Diliman Chancellor Address SERDEF General Assembly – Small Enterprises Research and Development Foundation."



of this thesis, this parallelism draws from the population's cultural and social diversity, as well as the political similarities of the university and nation in terms of elected government structure. This microcosmic nature is evident in the student political arena. Students are primarily represented in administrative matters through elected student leaders. The university and college student councils employ a structure akin to the national government. The general student council consists of the standard bearers (chairperson, vice chairperson, and representative to the University Student Council), who act as the executive arm of the council; the councilors who are focused on managing specific socio-academic areas (i.e., student's rights and welfare), functioning like the Presidential cabinet; and the representatives from each department working under councilor-led committees that function akin to district representatives in Congress. All these considered, analyzing the capability of the student council system to practice democracy matters. In this case, practicing democracy implies having authentic student representation, beginning from the electoral process until the elected officials start their terms.

In the case of UP Diliman, the organized body is the student council. In the interest of providing examples appropriated to Habermasian concepts, this paper uses CSSPSC as the case study. According to the recent CSSPSC constitution, the CSSPSC has the power to "[r]epresent the CSSP studentry in all major policy-making bodies of the College when so provided by laws, rules and regulations of the CSSP Administration..." (College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, "CSSP SC Constitution," 4). With this, the CSSPSC will be taken as the embodiment of student representation in the college. Moreover, the council is composed of elected student leaders who undergo an electoral process organized by the outgoing batch of student council and the CSSP-OSA. In Habermas' terms, the CSSPSC is a subsystem. While it does not primarily involve economics, the other Habermasian subsystem,

it is a form of government to which power and influence are attached and reproduced. Moreover, it involves numerous bureaucratic processes, beginning from the candidates' electoral process until the time that elected candidates formally enter office. Having this kind of subsystem permits a more efficient way to reach a "deep consensus;" communicative action is "relaxed" when strategic action takes place (Bohman and Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas.") Instead of having the CSSP community meet and coordinate administrative affairs, or formulate projects concerning CSSP students, the CSSPSC serves as the student's mouthpiece and spearheads initiatives that are in their interest. The political institution of the student council is built on the strategic actions that aim to, supposedly, sustain the lifeworld, which provides the context and tools, thereby enabling communicative action.

### Politics' Systemic Integration

The system of student politics integrates itself into the lifeworld and is continually being strengthened by the institution of the student council. Since there is an established need for an official, administration-recognized student representation, having the structure of student council is definite and accepted as it is. Restructuring is never considered and is non-negotiable. Even though it may leave its purpose unfulfilled, the existence of the structure remains unquestioned. In Jendrik Hilgerloh Nuske's lecture<sup>2</sup>, he gave two manifestations of systemic integration:

**Reputation.** An individual's perception of a speaker's status can greatly affect how they interact with the speaker. When one has a good reputation, they are not prone to being questioned and are respected; whereas, if one has otherwise, they are more predisposed to scrutiny. A person's reputation is not subject to discussion or a consensus simply because it is a preconceived notion of a person to another person because of a circumstantial bias. This bias, a by-product of how one

<sup>2</sup> Hilgerloh-Nuske, "IAPSS Political Theory SRC Webinar," September 11, 2020.

performs in a systemic integration, comes from a certain occurrence that allows the perceiving individuals to form an idea about that occurrence. Yet, this should not be taken lightly as it could affect a person's disposition. A case in point would be the issue arising from Candidate X's record of negligence. In this example, Candidate X's reputation might affect their standing in the race for councilor, given that their reputation comes from their experiences as a student in the university.

This issue is documented in the Facebook page of Pasabog, a digital platform organized by the UP Political Society where student voters can address questions to the candidates for the CSSPSC elections. One post alleges that Candidate X misplaced an expensive device, emphasizing their lack of accountability.<sup>3</sup> Before this, Candidate X can be considered to possess a good reputation, founded on her involvement and contributions with the CSSP FST Council. This issue started conversations amongst student voters, and Candidate X failed to attain the required number of votes and eventually did not make the cut. On the other hand, candidates in Candidate X's slate who ran for the same position won the seats. In this example, the issue brought a negative perception of Candidate X, thereby affecting their reputation and consequently their status in the political race.

This instance demonstrates that manifestations of systemic integration in the Habermasian concept of the System do not employ verbal communication; hence, the lack of discourse about the issue. Strategic action was manifested as the voters used this issue to mark their criteria in voting for a candidate. Candidate X's reputation was not discussed further, but the fact remained and spoke for itself.

### **Possessing Political Authority.**

Political authority is tied with political power, which then entails protection and connection, depending on how people perceive authority. Nonetheless, having authority or lack of it

can potentially lead to a divide. Candidates who hold executive positions in student organization are deemed political authorities. This situation entails a certain perception that they might be capable of holding office in the CSSPSC because they are politically powerful enough to do so in their respective affiliations. The notion of possessing political authority may influence the voter's insight on candidates.

### **The Elections and the Rationalization of the System**

Rationalization is the justification of the system's purpose and relevance to society. The CSSP student body, due to its need for student representation, depends on the existence of CSSPSC. It could be argued that the society focuses on strategic action for the sake of the efficiency of the process, resulting in inherent advantages of some members in society (e.g., those who belong in political dynasties possess long-term political power because they are expected to continue their projects). However, as seen in ongoing civil wars and discriminatory policies in modern societies, the rationalization of the system "only results to rise of standard of living but lives are not enriched" (Gaspar, "Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action," 408.) This entails that modernization has seeped into traditional customs and values and improved certain aspects of life, but caused other problems to emerge. Nevertheless, society cannot remove the system altogether because of its material contributions to the lifeworld.

### **Debate and the Lack of Cooperative Behavior**

One of the events annually organized by the CSSP-OSA as part of the elections period is the Miting de Avance.<sup>4</sup> It is an avenue where the traditional political antics of mudslinging and gatekeeping ensue. During Miting de Avance, political aspirants exchange norm-oriented speech acts that dictate how specific situations should go and what is right for society. For example, a motion in the debate may involve

<sup>3</sup> Pasabog: The CSSP Elections Debate, "Pasabog: The CSSP Elections Debate - Posts | Facebook," April 8, 2019. CSSP Office of the Student Affairs, "CSSP Miting de Avance."

<sup>4</sup> CSSP Office of the Student Affairs, "CSSP Miting de Avance."

an issue, the perceived root of the problem, and its repercussions to the student body as a whole. The candidate's stance and their mode of expressing it counts as a norm-oriented action. Norm-oriented actions are acts that are informed by norms and conventions and are generally acceptable. In fact, norm-oriented actions are also mediated by practical discourses.<sup>5</sup> Practical discourses are done for the sake of efficiency and immediate solution to the problem, often disregarding the depth of understanding for each speech actor. In one segment, students can openly ask questions to candidate/s of their choice and have a minute to respond.<sup>6</sup> In turn, the asker has the option to ask a follow-up question to clarify and extend the discussion. This format does not allow the candidates and the student body to engage meaningfully, given the time constraints and the limit to the number of questions. Moreso, the space is open for misleading questions or answers that may or may not further clarify the candidates' principles and platforms. These systematic bureaucratic limitations compromise the mutual understanding of the speech actors by only hearing what was heavily influenced by rhetoric. Thus, not only are candidates under time pressure to speak, they are prone to declare whatever they think will sway the audience in their favor. Furthermore, the "one question, one answer" method does not ascertain the candidates' consistent actions towards their beliefs and their sense of accountability. In Pasabog's CSSP Elections Debate 2021, one of the questions was about the concrete steps taken by each party regarding the red-tagging of CSSP students. With an issue as pressing as this, the incumbent student council is expected to

respond to the allegations and threats urgently and proactively. During the interpellation, a candidate from Political Party Y asked the opposition "what concrete steps did the current Political Party X-led SC and Political Party X do to address these and do you think these actions taken were sufficient and effective..."<sup>7</sup> A student-leader, who was red-tagged and threatened by the police, commented on the livestream's post and contradicted the claim, saying that the incumbent party-led SC did not reach out to them. Two arguments can be drawn from this example: 1) immediate verification of the speaker's claims does not occur in a political event where strategic action instead of communicative action is practiced, and 2) the subsystem of politics allows its manifestation, the party system, to create an environment conducive to the obstruction of communicative action via affiliation to reputation. Hence, it can be established that the affiliated candidates are the targets of mudslinging during onsite or online fora. Mudslinging happens when one party throws or supports unwarranted claims and insults to another party. One example<sup>8</sup> above demonstrates mudslinging when the candidate from Political Party X redirected the debate into them claiming about Political Party Y's ostracization ploy even though it was unfounded. This tactic was done to damage the reputation of the accused political party. Instead of asking meaningful questions directly concerning student affairs, the candidate resorted to mudslinging, which mudslinging undermined the cooperative behavior needed in communicative action. There is no reason to believe that the insulting speaker is aiming for mutual

<sup>5</sup> Hilgerloh-Nuske, "IAPSS Political Theory SRC Webinar," September 11, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> CSSP Office of the Student Affairs, "CSSP Miting de Avance."<sup>6</sup> Brunkhorst, Kreide, and Lafont, *The Habermas Handbook: New Directions in Critical Theory*, 502.

<sup>7</sup> PASABOG: The CSSP Elections Debate, "PASABOG: The CSSP Elections Debate 2021," l. 56:03-58:07.

<sup>8</sup> A candidate for the chairperson position under Political Party X claimed that a candidate from Political Party Y tends to "ostracize students who do not subscribe from [their] political ideologies" (PASABOG: The CSSP Elections Debate, 2021, l. 2:22:53-2:23:04). The supporters of the opposing parties seem to have taken offense to this claim resulting in a comment thread. Incumbent SC officer under Political Party X manifested that the comment section revealed the ostracization described by the chairperson candidate. A Facebook user passively responded, "ay weh?", while another supporter of Political Party Y defended the party by claiming that the commenters had justifications for their comments. Moreover, the said supporter insisted that the Political Party Y-affiliated students did not mean to ostracize just because they possessed a different ideology; in reality, it was the opposite party who judged their ideology.

<sup>9</sup> Brunkhorst, Kreide, and Lafont, *The Habermas Handbook: New Directions in Critical Theory*, 502.

understanding and “consensus of any kind”.<sup>9</sup> Whenever a candidate does not abide by an ideology (of a political party), supporters of a certain ideology/party react unnecessarily negatively to a candidate’s stance. There is a lack of discourse and an open mind when it comes to these debates or fast talks. Cooperative behavior is needed to align with the defined ideal structure of a student representative that fairly represents the students. Cooperative behavior requires synergy between the speech actors in determining which actions to take towards mutually determined and valuable goals.<sup>10</sup>

### General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is a weekly assembly of the CSSPSC for council members to forward a subject matter for voting. Before the votation, presenting arguments or “manifestations” take place. When this argumentation continues long enough to reach the speech actors’ goal of mutual understanding, and this act of trying to attain a rational agreement is called “discourse.”<sup>11</sup> The GA is considered a political deliberation because of the occurrences of debate, discussion, and voting. The open-door nature of the meeting is an extension of the democratic space to the students who elected the council. To maintain order, the GA follows a set of agreed-upon actions that uphold etiquette and meeting flow. However, this approach of communication during the GA poses limitations, especially for those who are non-members of the CSSPSC.<sup>12</sup> In one GA, SINAG staffers requested to be included in the deliberations, but because the press were not elected council members, they had no voting nor direct speaking power during the GA. According to the CSSPSC House Rules,<sup>13</sup>

special attendees are considered “observers”. The GA 14 Narratives minutes showed they had difficulty adapting to the conduct of the GA. The minutes stated: “Due to complications with the observers’ practice of Robert’s Rules...”<sup>14</sup> The special attendees were only acknowledged through their department representatives in the council and were only allowed to deliver a privilege speech. Thereafter, the department representative, in their own words, told the body what the observer said. Through this method, the essence and intensity of the observer’s words were prone to be misconstrued, thereby risking a failure of communicative action. Furthermore, the set-up did not satisfy the Habermasian conditions of an ideal speech setting. The speakers (i.e., the observers) were not free to deliver their piece consistently and risked misinterpretation. If the rules are to be modified after all, they should be modified towards the promotion of free discourse. Rationalizing having student authority figures that can decide on CSSP Student Body’s stance on certain issues can undermine the power of individual students who do not have such authority. Therefore, formalization limits the speaker and corrupts the ideal speech setting in the GA, especially involving non-CSSPSC attendees.

Within the council, validity claims are said and tested every time during the GA. For a successful communication, the three (3) universal validity claims of “truth, rightness, and sincerity” of the interlocutor is accepted by the hearer.<sup>15</sup> These validity claims are proven during discourses. Voting ensues to decide on a motion raised. A decision is considered to be “an act of the council.”<sup>16</sup> The example mentioned above entails an absence of clarity on the part of the speaker, the observer, due to

<sup>10</sup> Bohman and Rehg, “Jürgen Habermas.”

<sup>11</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*.<sup>9</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution,” 10.

<sup>12</sup> Giana Larrauri, “Konsensiya Ng Bayan:Frail Cognizance on CRSRS.”

<sup>13</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP House Rules 2021A.”

<sup>14</sup> CSSP Student Council Secretary-General, “GA 14 Narratives.”

<sup>15</sup> Bohman and Rehg, “Jürgen Habermas,” 7.

<sup>16</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution,” 10.

the other party's intervention as a mediator.

### **Deliberations and Validity Claims**

Having claims that are capable of being validated and are thereafter validated is important for the involved speakers in a speech act. This gives each other assurance that mutual understanding will be reached and that both sides are cooperating in the pursuit of understanding.

Each officer during the GA receives one vote each. The council settles on a decision by a majority vote during a regular, special, or an emergency.<sup>17</sup> According to the CSSPSC Constitution, this decision is considered to be "an act of the council" 10.. Clarity is an essential criterion to acknowledge a validity claim, which precedes rational action.

Regarding the attempt to achieve the three universal validity claims of "truth, rightness, and sincerity," when the hearer does not agree with the truth and rightness claims of the speaker, argumentation, which is taken as discourse in Habermasian terms, ensues. It is through discourse that the truth validity claim—the empirical statements that are made by the speaker—and the rightness validity claims based on normative social relations, can be validated (Brunkhorst, Kreide, and Lafont, *The Habermas Handbook: New Directions in Critical Theory*, 300.) Thus, the audience, with their knowledge on the subject and own insight, can confirm through different means what the speaker is saying. If the hearer decides the speech act is truthful and right, then the hearer is justified in partly accepting the speech act. However, claims about sincerity cannot be validated by discourse. The other listener just needs to accept the speaker as they are, without being coerced or subjected to opportunity or power imbalance, to attain a redemption of sincerity. With these concepts, validity claims can be said to involve interpersonal relations and are not restricted to the logical and

empirical aspects of the conversation.

### **Tyranny of the Majority**

According to the House Rules "CSSP House Rules 2021A," to pass a motion or settle an issue, a simple majority vote is needed. The practice of communicative action allows every party involved to reach a mutual understanding unanimously. The notion of having a majority vote as the deciding factor in settling discourses is contrary to communicative action. The votes are symbols generated in the subsystem of politics to generalize the attempts to communicative action by the conversations. Plutocracy undermines the individual's speech acts because it simplifies the collective preferences into one that may not be unanimously agreed upon; hence, there is no understanding, only a vague, consensus. Because of the dominance of this symbol and the instrumental nature of passing a motion and declaring an act of the council, it can be stated that what is observed in the council is strategic action rather than communicative action. The strategic action allows the majority to dictate what is, thus overshadowing the minority. The act of voting does not permit speech acts to be understood. A speech act is said to be understood when all the context and rationale given by the speaker are acknowledged as valid and when the hearer accepts this rationale, thus, requiring "social cooperation" (Bohman and Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas") There is a threat of impartiality when most of the elected candidates belong in the same political affiliation. These affiliated elected officers tend to gravitate towards fulfilling their parties' interests, in accordance with their parties' principles and ideologies. This tendency distorts the process of consensus-making during assemblies. Without the leading influence of the political parties and the implications to the party that proceed from acting based on the parties' interests, Habermas' vision of practicing communicative

<sup>17</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, "CSSP SC Constitution."

action and achieving mutual understanding can be realized. When the system does not colonize the lifeworld and affect even the deliberations within the council, a consensus through reasonable compromise can be attained.

Due to the nature of the positions, candidates are expected to manifest the three basic validity claims. Sometimes, this justifiability is clouded by the officer's political leaning. Indeed, the officer-elect cannot be separated from their political party. Even this was observed by the student body, as reflected in an anonymized post from a voter. Pasabog, aside from the annual elections debate, also conducted an online "freedom wall" on Facebook, where students asked relevant questions to the candidates. Questions were submitted via an online form and were filtered for relevance. An entry submitted on their Facebook page interrogated an independent candidate that ran with a political party-dominated elections. The inquirer asked, "How will you find your voice in a [Political Party X]-dominated council? Considering that you are a freshie, how can you assert your position and voice out the concerns of your constituents..."<sup>18</sup> Observe the words "find your voice," "assert," and the use of the political party's name. This question indicated an assumption of the inevitable attachment of the incumbent officers to their party. The attachment extended to the elected officer's plans for the committee and political strategy within the council. Another question read, "How will you forward the concerns of your constituents when it goes against the principles/stand of your councilmates?"<sup>19</sup> This last question, together with the aforementioned, carried an understanding that whoever achieved the most seats in the council also received the most votes (assuming they were loyal to their political party) during political deliberations once they were seated. This "dominant party as council" branding of the student council also risked overshadowing the non-dominant party

members' participation.

This branding was also shown by the kind of policies the council proposed. Even the public noticed this trend, as seen on Twitter, where one user jokingly asked who else would propose a certain amendment to the General Assembly of Student Councils (GASC) when the former dominant party is not dominant anymore.<sup>20</sup> Since during the GA, the majority vote wins and when the majority consists of political party-loyal council members, it can be assumed that the winning vote reflects that of the dominant political party's stand.

### The Composition of Student Council

The student council officers can be categorized into four: standard bearers, councilors, department representatives of all the CSSP departments, and the representative/s from the CSSP Volunteer Corps (CSSPVC). The officers per category are voted into the position by a determined range of the student population. A larger voter population means a more influential candidate within the council. This is due to the exclusivity of roles that the "higher positions" will eventually handle when elected, and these roles entail the scope of their jurisdiction and power. The hierarchy makes tipping the scale towards authority and majority.

The Chairperson heads the Executive Coordinating Council (ECC), which is the "highest executive and implementing arm of the CSSPSC" and the "highest policy-making body when the GA is not in session" (College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, 2021a, 8.) Hence, it is possible for information to be exclusively shared within the ECC. The councilors serve as chairpersons of the standing committees of the council. When the candidates for councilors run during the elections, they immediately fit themselves to the committee of their preference. For example, Candidate X publicly introduced himself as having the ideal attributes of an

<sup>18</sup> The CSSP Elections Debate, "Pasabog: The CSSP Elections Debate - Posts | Facebook," 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Pasabog: The CSSP Elections Debate 2019).

<sup>20</sup> Pete #LeniKiko2022, "May asawa't anak na yung councilmates ko sa CSSPSC push pa din sa CRSRS amendments. Wala na bang ibang strategy? Who's dogmatic? #GASC2016."



Education, Training, and Popular Struggles Committee Chairperson when campaigning,<sup>21</sup> albeit there was no provision in the CSSPSC constitution that required this.<sup>22</sup> The act of assuming a certain position within the council during the elections promotes intolerance and competition. When the candidates from opposing parties vying for the same seat win the elections, unnecessary tension might arise. If more candidates from Political Party X win, Candidate X might get the seat. The candidates for each committee chairperson are at the mercy of the voting ruling party. In one instance, Councilor Z from Political Party X did not win the seat they were vying for.<sup>23</sup> As deliberations progressed, a motion was raised to allow Councilor Z to have a co-headship in another committee. Tension began when the body seemingly agreed with the motion but another councilor from Political Party Y disagreed.<sup>24</sup> The ECC, as mentioned in the earlier section, amasses an exclusive power to implement council-binding decisions. Councilor Z expressed, “...agree din ba sa co-headship pero ‘yung point lang ba ay ‘wag ako maka-upo sa ECC meeting?”<sup>25</sup> Repercussions arise from not being on the “winning side of things.” Nonetheless, no evident objections come from the public when candidates assume what their roles would be in the council, however imposing that act may be. It may be that the voting population is unaware of what takes place during chairpersonship delegations. With this, the general student body’s political participation begins and ends with the elections. What goes on after is left as an afterthought and council officers benefit from it.

The other vital part of the council is the group of the department representatives, who coordinate with their department faculty, students, and organizations in crafting and implementing projects catering to their needs. Traditionally, department representatives also

spearhead their department’s core groups. In CSSP, these departmental core groups are composed of volunteer students who act as the implementing arm of the department representative’s plans and projects. The department representatives concern themselves with matters relevant to the students’ welfare. In this sense, they experience firsthand the on-ground situation of the CSSP as a college. The department representatives are mandated to be aware of the issues facing their department and the capacities of their constituents for growth and improvement. Here, the successful practice of communicative action spells the difference between having responsive projects and having projects that are implemented just for the sake of achieving something. The department representatives are free to determine their conditions for speech setting because the department is within their jurisdiction and outside of the CSSPSC. Hence, when “in the department,” the department representatives can opt to be untouched by the system of politics surrounding the council. In this case, the department representatives, even those linked to political parties, possess the choice to belong in a lifeworld fully uncolonized by the system. While belonging in the student lifeworld of the CSSP community, they also belong to their department’s lifeworld. Thus, they understand and relate to concepts, ideas, and norms exclusive to their department that cannot be comprehended by the council members outside their department. This unique position enables the department representatives to control or mitigate the semblance of the systems, i.e., subsystem of politics borne from the student council politicking within their department. Aside from their immediate and thorough involvement with their department, they concern themselves with matters relevant to the whole college by being members of the CSSPSC’s standing committees. The CSSPSC Constitution only provides that members of each standing committee are recruited by the

<sup>21</sup> Pasabog, The CSSP Elections Debate.

<sup>22</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution.”

<sup>23</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “SC2021 Transcript GA 01.”

<sup>24</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council.

<sup>25</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, 50.

<sup>26</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution.”



committee chairpersons.<sup>26</sup> The department representatives initially have no constitutional obligation to become a member of standing committees. They are exposed to the lifeworld of both their departments and the college. Still, this position is considered less powerful and influential within the council, as evidenced by the composition of the ECC, which can basically decide for the council. This hierarchy can disrupt communicative action, and speech acts may instead turn to strategic action. Council members that are motivated by political agenda and leveraged (or disadvantaged by their position in the council), will use communication styles and communication modes that will allow them to achieve what they want. This kind of thinking disregards the goal of consensus building and functioning in accordance with mutual understanding. In Habermasian standards, the structure of the council, infiltrated by the system of student politics, hampers communicative action, thereby also deterring the chance of student representation within the council, and similarly, outside their departments.

### Politics, the Driver of Colonization

Given all the examples mentioned in this chapter, it can be concluded that the CSSPSC employs strategic action rather than communicative action in their communicative undertakings, particularly during elections debates and the GA.

In Habermas' Democratic Theory, politics is identified as an avenue for collaborative deliberation for the members of the society.<sup>27</sup> However, while the discourse engaged in this kind of political arena upholds communicative action, the same cannot be said with the mechanisms influencing the actors involved in student council. This politicization lead some students to be apathetic about student politics, as there is a lack of willing student leaders to join in leading the student body, drawing

from the numerous posts about the extension of deadlines and call for applications of the CSSP-OSA. For instance, in the 2019 CSSP elections, most of the posts were only vied for by one candidate, except for the position of councilor, wherein 6 seats were allocated.<sup>28</sup> The CSSP is the third most populated college in UP Diliman, yet candidates are few. On the average, only two students from opposing parties, vie for each seat.<sup>29</sup> These parties nominate or encourage their members to strategically run for student council positions. This major method of candidate selection poses exclusivity amongst the students. Those who actively engage in student politics are only the party members and their affiliates, the candidates themselves, and the student press. On the other hand, there are independent candidates, or those who do not affiliate themselves under a certain party. Running under a political party implies having security in terms of social support in campaigning. Thus, to an extent, students are seen as a vote count. Whether intended by the candidates or not, because the students vote, and voting is a non-linguistic medium for communication, the student voters are treated as commodities. Commodifying interpersonal connections is a consequence of having an institutionalized mechanism, which produces an agreement without having to communicate. This is brought about by the subsystem of politics.

Moreover, the candidates themselves may also be commodified. More winning candidates means a more powerful party inside the council's chambers. This perception of possessing power in numbers is accepted by the political parties and the public. Students tend to affiliate a certain set of elected student council officers to whichever political party has the majority number. This type of association occurs in feedbacks with regard to council-organized initiatives. Automatic association prevents further dialogue because the association itself speaks for the trait the party

<sup>27</sup> Olson, "Deliberative Democracy."

<sup>28</sup> CSSP Office of Student Affairs, "CSSP Office of Student Affairs - [BUMOTO KAPP 2019] Here Is the Final Official List of Candidates for the CSSP Student Council Election 2019. | Facebook."

<sup>29</sup> CSSP Office of the Student Affairs, "CSSP CONNECT | CSSP Student Council Election 2021 | Facebook."

supposedly possesses. Moreover, reputation as a manifestation of politics as a subsystem is exhibited. The appeal of one's reputation forms an association to certain qualities, and from this association arises the absence of communicative action.

Political power drives the speech acts amongst the CSSPSC to solely be a means to an end. The individual belonging under a party is commodified, and every elected candidate is a unit of power for the political machinery within the council. Invoking the implication of Gaspar's explanation of the means-end principle, "Everything can be seen as instruments that can be manipulated, especially in terms of earning a profit" (Gaspar, "Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action," 409.) For every aspirant of the political parties who get elected and earn a spot in the council, one voting individual exists for the interest of the political party. Although it can be said that the aspirants are into public service, the fact that they are affiliated with a political party and choose to bring the party's principles and projects into the council entails a hold of the party to their member. In this set-up, every transaction is utilitarian in nature; thus, that coordination of actions, mutual understanding, and genuine communicative action may not be actualized because the speech actors are focused on ideal consequences. Strategic action is the type of action evidenced by the set-up due to its being goal-oriented. The implications of employing strategic action do not fit the framework that "serve[s] as an effective forum for the expression of student ideas and sentiments"—one of the objectives of the CSSPSC, due to the violation of the ideal speech setting and the overshadowing of communicative action (College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, "CSSP SC Constitution," 3.) Thus, affirming the strong teleological claim that the CSSPSC fails to communicate in a way that best fits a democratic institution. It does not serve its purpose because of the

dominance of the subsystem of politics and the undermining of communicative action.

### The Theory of Communicative Action and Student Representation

What, then, is the ideal student representation under the Habermasian lens of communicative action?

The concept of rationality paves the way towards understanding communicative rationality or communicative action. Communicative action is grounded in the fact that the participants of the speech act (utterances involving linguistic means) are rational primarily because of the way they "acquire and use knowledge."<sup>30</sup> Rationality is presumed in communicative action. When speech interlocutors linguistically express what they currently and consequently know from what is said while following the ideal speech conditions, there is communicative rationality.<sup>31</sup> A speaker is rational when they are conscious and knowledgeable of what they are saying and can evaluate themselves while reaching a mutual understanding with the listener. H.P. Grice's formulation of non-natural meaningful statements—those observed in communication and are founded on conventions and the speaker's intentions—supports Habermas' conception of rationality and the attainment of mutual understanding. For Grice, to produce a non-natural meaningful utterance, the speaker must intend for the audience to pick up their intention, recognize it, and afterwards, form a belief based on the speaker's utterance.<sup>32</sup> These conditions are sufficient to form a rational conversation and necessary to achieve mutual understanding, the goal of communicative action. Another supplementary concept is Robert Nozick's notion of rational belief. It forwards that one of the goals of having rational belief is to suppose the truth and prevent ascribing to falsehoods.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Nozick<sup>34</sup> posits that the belief must be responsive to reason that has undergone a reliable procedure that results to

<sup>30</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*.

<sup>31</sup> Habermas.

<sup>32</sup> Grice, "Meaning."

<sup>33</sup> Nozick, *The Nature of Reality*.

<sup>34</sup> Nozick.

true beliefs. Moreover, rational beliefs must be tolerant to revisions and modifications.<sup>35</sup> These procedures consist of the opportunities for deliberations within the electoral process, such as the *Miting de Avance*, and within the council's chambers, such as the GA.

Aside from the assessing the rationality of the belief itself, Habermas adds the capability of humans to be rational. One is rational when they are open to being corrected and correcting themselves upon gaining helpful perceptions on their stand, and these lead to sensible outcomes.<sup>36</sup> When a statement is challenged, the speaker should be able to defend it while the listener cooperates for them to reach an understanding. During in-chamber discussions in CSSPSC, when argumentation takes place, rationality is expected when the involved persons are trying to pursue communicative action. This is shown when a council member must prove what they are offering for other's further understanding and acceptance.

Communicative rationality is possible because of the lifeworld. These are sustained by coordinated "consensual modes of action," e.g., resources and dimensions of social actions (i.e., suffrage and mass protests).<sup>37</sup> The validity claims and values present in a lifeworld also prevail across generations.<sup>38</sup> In that way, the lifeworld always exists, if there is communication. The lifeworld uses language to communicate, whereas the system employs non-linguistic media to communicate, e.g., political power and money. These are two distinct approaches to communicate and they can co-exist in practice. The system affects the interactions with the lifeworld in a way that it becomes decentered. For example, instead of having a discussion on certain issues

concerning a political figure, the political figure's position of power can communicate for them by threatening or bribing to eliminate criticism. Hence, the system can inhibit communicative action when it overpowers the communication in the lifeworld.

The Theory of Communicative Action is both a "micro-theory of rationality based on communicative coordination" and a "macro-theory of systemic integration of modern societies."<sup>39</sup> This theory underscores the value of personal interactions and conversations to reach an inclusive social realm. Three facets characterize communicative action: language as medium of communication, coordination of action by the participants in speech, and the goal of mutual understanding. Coordination of action implies being open and accepting to be in the same page. To successfully practice communicative action, all parties concerned must be able to attain mutual understanding. In doing so, the speakers "manifest their inner human realities"<sup>40</sup> while having a "practical stance" on the issue at hand as enabled by the lifeworld.<sup>41</sup> As mutual understanding is achieved, the speakers can express their personality, their ideas, and their context as represented by the perspective they communicate. Habermas<sup>42</sup> puts prime in this as he sees mutual understanding as the "inherent telos" or purpose of humanity's ability to communicate. Communication is defeated when one cannot mutually understand others and they cannot be understood by another. Mutual understanding is the goal of communicative action; thus, communicative action can be posited to lead to common knowledge and consensus building through coordination. When the facets of communicative action are observed in communication, a rational society

<sup>35</sup> Nozick.

<sup>36</sup> Brunkhorst, Kreide, and Lafont, *The Habermas Handbook: New Directions in Critical Theory*.

<sup>37</sup> Bohman and Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas."

<sup>38</sup> Hilgerloh-Nuske, "IAPSS Political Theory SRC Webinar," September 11, 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Bohman and Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas."

<sup>40</sup> Gaspar, "Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action."

<sup>41</sup> Bohman and Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas."

<sup>42</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

can be achieved.

Communicative action is necessary in student representation. This notion of democracy can be appropriated in the CSSPSC as an institution because it is founded on the principle of democracy. The preamble of the CSSPSC states the nature of the council and their values. According to it, the CSSPSC is “united in the desire to establish a Student Council representative of the democratic interests of the CSSP studentry”<sup>43</sup> Article 1 of the CSSPSC constitution also states that the CSSPSC upholds democracy as their guiding principle.<sup>44</sup> The democratic nature of the council necessitates communicative action and is sustained when the collective interests of the CSSP are being listened to and pursued by the student representatives. Considering the provisions above, student representation is governed by democracy. Democracy and communicative action both respect the value of cooperation and linguistic communication. These two concepts are intertwined such that democracy can be achieved through communicative action. Hence, for the purposes of this paper, it is maintained that communicative action should be upheld in student representation. A democratic process is initiated through a series of dialogues that grounds itself in self-understanding and justice, wherein rational results are drawn, given that the discussion is properly conducted and rooted in pertinent information. In this, practical reason is found in proper discourse, wherein the validity of an action is ingrained in reaching understanding. Democracy, then, is grounded in communicative action.

Habermas determined the prerequisites for a successful communicative action to take place in the lifeworld, and these conditions comprise the ideal speech setting.

The ideal speech setting is based on speech integrity, absence of bias, active engagement of parties, and empowered actors. Integrity (consequently, rationality) is upheld when one acts consistently with their personal belief. The actors should also be deemed by the other as a person with integrity.<sup>45</sup> If their reputation is marred, the other’s understanding of the actor’s beliefs will be affected. Next, setting aside any prejudice or bias against the personality or ideology of the others involved in the communicative action is vital as this would impact the speakers’ reasoning.<sup>46</sup> The procedure or setting of the conversation should not be favorable to any party. Moreover, all parties must actively engage in communicative action.<sup>47</sup> This means that all speakers are willing to consider the concerns of others and traverse their personal interests in pursuit of a rational discourse and mutual understanding. Finally, actors must be capable of unhindered speech and action. Speech actors must not be coerced to act towards or against a matter.<sup>48</sup> Their speaking environment must empower them geographically, socially, and emotionally to deliver their own claims.

In other words, these are the conditions to be satisfied by the CSSPSC to fulfill their mandate of pursuing the democratic interests of their constituents. When the ideal speech setting is unmet, communicative action cannot occur; thus, genuine student representation is not maintained. It is important to note that all possible hindrances to having an ideal speech setting should be settled before the communication.<sup>49</sup> While there are critics who argue that Habermas undermines the impact of other social institutions to communication,<sup>50</sup> as well as the undermining of other ideologies, i.e., patriarchy and capitalism, this is not highly relevant in the study due to the alignments of relevant principles and the nature of involved

<sup>43</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution,” 1.

<sup>44</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution.”

<sup>45</sup> Gaspar, “Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action.”

<sup>46</sup> Gaspar.

<sup>47</sup> Gaspar.

<sup>48</sup> Hilgerloh-Nuske, “IAPSS Political Theory SRC Webinar,” September 11, 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Gaspar, “Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action.”

<sup>50</sup> Bohman and Rehg, “Jürgen Habermas.”

actors (political parties, CSSP offices, and the student body).

### CONCLUSION

Genuine democracy cannot be achieved when external and internal institutions tolerate the dominance of strategic action throughout the process of selecting, electing, and operation of the CSSPSC officers. The subsystem of politics and its institutional manifestation, the student political parties, allow the colonization of the lifeworld. Hence, the effect of the student political parties should be mitigated and their current form should be modified, if not abolished.

Filipino Philosopher Ricardo Pascual envisioned a Philippine society operating under a partyless democracy. According to a lecture by Roberto Tangco, Pascual states that the competitiveness amongst the parties results to values and attitudes of “selfish individuality” and “group struggle.”<sup>51</sup> In a partyless democracy, these individualistic attitudes are expected to be transformed into democratic and unifying ones—attitudes of “cooperation, organization, and mutual help.” These values are exactly what defines communicative action, which relies on the premise that all speech actors have a common goal, can communicate freely, and trust and help each other reach this goal. Pascual identifies that political parties only encourage factionalism and division amongst individuals and groups.<sup>52</sup> Without political parties, as Pascual suggests, healthy political discourse towards a mutually defined good can thrive.<sup>53</sup> The sense of exclusivity prevents absolute cooperation—that which is without self-serving political motives. Moreover, these self-serving motives enable competition. It is the nature of competition to promote strategic action instead of communicative action governed by communicative rationality. Doing away with the notion that these student political parties drive the current of student politics will

transform the public and the democratic space to ultimately give the students what they are due.

To improve the systemic affairs in the student lifeworld and to regulate the subsystem of politics, modifying the current form of student representation is necessary. This change can come from within the institution. One of the powers of the CSSPSC, as stated in their 2021 Constitution, is to: “specify the rules and regulations of the general elections of the CSSPSC” and “[a]dopt its own internal rules of government and organizational structure subject to the provisions of this Constitution.”<sup>54</sup> The first modification is the conceptual reinvention of what student representatives should be. A student representative should be focused on rallying the community in attaining a mutual understanding and coordinating to provide for those in need. The second modification consists of the structural alterations of the student council. Student representatives can be volunteer students who are willing and may be deemed qualified by the CSSP-OSA. The model that most closely resembles this structure is that of the volunteer core groups of each department, whose members join because they simply want to serve their respective departments.

A partyless system of student representation and a renewed image of student councils will possibly entice students to participate in political discourses concerning the college. Moreover, the representatives can be qualified volunteer students selected by the CSSP-OSA, the office advising the CSSPSC. The CSSPSC can be a group of volunteer students who function like a volunteer core group representing each department, center, or institution of the CSSP, and catering to the welfare of their respective constituents as a unit. In this notion of student representation, the so-called “political arena,” where aspirants and elected officers compete, will be transformed into a public sphere where healthy, rich, and understanding-oriented

<sup>51</sup> Tangco, “Partyless Democracy: Ricardo Pascual and the Theory of Democracy.”

<sup>52</sup> Pascual, “Causes, Ideal, and Frustration of Party System.”

<sup>53</sup> Tangco, “Partyless Democracy: Ricardo Pascual and the Theory of Democracy.”

<sup>54</sup> College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Student Council, “CSSP SC Constitution,” 4.

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# Usability of the Department of Health Website Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Philippines

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## INTRODUCTION

Following the rise of COVID-19, both facts and misinformation spread rapidly online, making it difficult for the public to distinguish one from the other. Consequently, this resulted in anxiety, confusion, and wrong actions taken (Department of Global Communications 2021). Due to the prevalence of misinformation, there arose a need for a centralized source of accurate information that could be easily accessed online—a role to be fulfilled by the Department of Health (DOH), as the Philippines' authority on health. Crisis communication is essential for public reassurance and order (Mohamad and Azlan 2020), and people are more likely to trust local health authorities than international bodies, due to the latter having language and cultural barriers (Mohamad et al. 2020).

For a government website, such as that of DOH, to be effective in providing easy access to information and services to the public, it needs to be credible and a trustworthy source for the public (Huang and Benyoucef 2014; Tan et al. 2008; Teo et al. 2008), and this can be achieved by ensuring website usability. E-government websites with high levels of usability are seen as more credible (Huang

and Benyoucef 2014). Similarly, trust in an e-government website is significantly associated with perceived website quality (Teo et al. 2008). Moreover, unusable websites reduce the effectiveness of communication between users and the organizations (Asiimwe and Lim 2010).

Unfortunately, many Philippine government websites are difficult for citizens to use due to lack of usability (Clemmensen and Katre 2012), leading users to turn to other less credible sources of information, thereby placing them at risk of various health concerns due to acting on misinformation. Through this study, we evaluate the usability of the DOH website with respect to relevant COVID-19 information, identify key issues and strong points in the website's current design and content, and recommend design improvements. It should be noted that although the term e-government puts emphasis on the services that a government offers using electronic media (Almarabeh and AbuAli 2010), the terms government website, e-government website, and e-government will be used interchangeably in this study, particularly to refer to websites that provide information and services to the public (Huang and Benyoucef 2014).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Usability.** According to the International Standard Organization (ISO), usability is defined as an outcome, or “the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specific goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use”. Web design is an area of application that is most concerned with usability. As the importance of websites rise as a communication and information dissemination tool, many studies have been conducted to evaluate the usability of varying types of websites, such as Library websites (Jeng 2005; Manzari and Trinidad-Christensen 2006), School and E-learning websites (Basher et al. 2014; Harrati et al. 2016), and e-commerce websites (Hasan et al. 2012; Shehzad et al. 2017).

High usability offers multiple benefits to users and website owners. Noted usability engineering specialist Jakob Nielsen emphasizes

that engineering usability principles should apply to web design to increase functionality (Nielsen, 2020). Another prominent benefit of high usability is the ease of finding information. Spool, et al. (1997) found that usability issues often lead to the failure to find information. Thus, Nielsen et al. (2001) formulated the 10 Main Usability Principles, which is a set of heuristics that can be used to evaluate the usability of a website or system.

### Usability of Government Websites.

Despite the importance of usability in government websites to be perceived as credible and trustworthy, several studies (Ornager and Verma, 2005; Siar, 2005; Asiimwe and Lim, 2010; Clemmensen and Katre 2012); Urbina and Abe 2017) suggest that a large proportion of government portals, web sites, and software systems are difficult for citizens to use due to complicated systems and unusable interfaces. As a result, e-government websites are often criticized for paying more attention to the technology itself rather than the users' needs and expectations (Verdegem and Verleye 2009), and the Philippines is no exception. Siar (2005) expands upon the Philippine government's usability failures, which mainly included lack of information and difficulty to navigate the website. Common usability issues when it comes to government websites include: lack of breadcrumb trails, lack of search capability (Youngblood and Mackiewicz 2012), broken links (Asiimwe and Lim, 2010; Huang et al. 2009; Urbina and Abe 2017), overloaded information presentation, inconsistent colors (Huang et al. 2009), and generally poor navigation capabilities (Huang et al. 2009; Huang and Benyoucef 2014; Asiimwe and Lim 2010; Youngblood and Mackiewicz 2012).

Developing countries face challenges of e-government development, with most problems relating to the adoption of new technologies and the unwillingness of bureaucrats to accept innovations (Bojang 2019). For example, these nations often have poor information technology infrastructures (Dada 2006; Pangaribuan 2019); and those with existing infrastructure still may face challenges with equal internet access and the digital divide (Nkohlkwo and Islam 2013). Aside from deficits in administrative, financial,

and technological terms, most people lack interest and awareness about e-government facilities (Siddiquee 2016). Moreover, problems concerning e-government staffing, stemming from lacking financial resources, pose a challenge because local governments may find it hard to compete with the private sector for skilled information technology staff (Coursey and Norris, 2008). Bojang (2019) also mentions how corruption, a problem that is most common in developing nations, especially the Philippines, is among serious contextual constraints that challenge e-government implementation.

**User Testing.** Different usability evaluation techniques have been developed and incorporated into website design and development. Liljegren (2006) investigated four common methods, namely, hierarchical task analysis, cognitive walkthrough, heuristic evaluation, and user testing, based on their thoroughness, validity, reliability, cost effectiveness, and clarity. Findings show that user testing is recommended as the primary method in usability evaluations, as they fulfill the criteria and address the 'difficulty to make errors' aspect of overall usability.

Being an international body that specializes in establishing global standards, ISO 9241-11:1998 explains that to measure usability, decomposing efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction into sub-components with measurable and verifiable attributes is necessary. Furthermore, ISO 9241 indicates quantitative and qualitative metrics that measure efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction that are in line with their respective definitions, shown below:

- ◇ **Efficiency** refers to the resources expended in relation to the accuracy and completeness of goals achieved. ISO suggests task time or the total time the user takes to complete a particular task as a reliable measure for efficiency.
- ◇ **Effectiveness** is defined as the accuracy and completeness with which specified users can achieve specific goals in particular environments. As such, effectiveness is measured through Completion Rate, which is computed

using the formula (1), wherein NTCS is the Number of Tasks Completed Successfully and TNTU is the total number of tasks undertaken.

$$\text{Completion Rate} = (\text{NTCS} / \text{TNTU}) \times 100\% \text{ (1)}$$

- ◇ **Satisfaction** refers to the comfort and acceptability of the work system. The System Usability Scale (SUS) is a well-researched and widely used questionnaire for assessing the usability and user satisfaction with respect to web applications. This tool asks users to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the 10 statements about the software under review (Harrati et al. 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed methods design that involved experimental and qualitative methods to accommodate the quantitative and qualitative metrics that measure efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction, as seen in the framework suggested by ISO 9241.

An experimental design involving user testing was used for the quantitative aspect of the study. This aligned with the study of Liljegren (2006), which found that user testing was the most promising among three other usability evaluation techniques based on thoroughness, validity, reliability, cost effectiveness, and clarity. A convenience sample of 12 participants was selected among college students and young professionals between the ages of 18-24. All participants had adequate exposure to technology and the internet but did not have prior experience of using the DOH website and prior web evaluation experiences, as required by the user testing method. The experiment involved the participants performing tasks with the objective of locating certain COVID-related information, which were based on general information that the public should know according to the websites of two specialized agencies focused on health, namely, the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The qualitative aspect of the study was used to determine which factors affected perceived usability when using the DOH website and, consequently, the areas for improvement of the website. Throughout the experiment, participants were encouraged to actively voice out their thoughts through Thinking Aloud, a highly valuable usability engineering method (Halzinger 2005). Through this, the researchers understood how the users viewed the system, and facilitated the identification of misconceptions and possible difficulties in navigation. After completing the performance task, participants were given a 10-question Likert scale survey based on subjective evaluation, followed by a semi-structured interview to document the users' experience with the tasks, likes and dislikes regarding the website, and suggestions for improvement.

Completion rate of each research participant was computed using the formula defined by ISO 9241. These values and their overall average were compared against a benchmark value of 78%, which was consistent with those in other usability studies (Basher et al. 2014, Shehzad et al. 2017). To further understand which tasks were relatively difficult and light for the participants, completion rates per task were computed and compared to the established benchmark. To know the extent of the effect of each question on the computed overall average completion rate, failures were counted per question and were used as a basis in arranging them from greatest to least. Afterwards, their cumulative percentages were computed.

Researchers recorded in seconds the duration each participant took to complete each task to obtain the Task Duration value. The maximum acceptable task time was computed for each task and the number of participants (N) whose task times fell within the specified benchmark. The maximum acceptable task time was computed using the method by Sauro and Kindlund (2005).

SUS survey scores of all participants were calculated and averaged. The average score was compared to the standard of 68, which was used by Thomas (2015).

The primary sources of information for the qualitative research aspect of this study were the Think Aloud comments and the insights gathered from the post-test interview. Transcripts were analyzed to derive common themes, wherein the most recurring ones were identified as factors in affecting the perceived usability of the DOH website.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

**Effectiveness.** Figure 1 shows that throughout user testing, only three out of 12 participants completed enough tasks to meet the benchmark of 78%. This implies that at least 75% of the participants had difficulty completing tasks, or in this case, finding the information in the DOH website.

Table 1 shows the overall average Completion Rate across participants. As shown, the overall average task completion is at least 10 points below the benchmark, implying that the system overall is below average in effectiveness. Note that this average is the same for participant completion rate and task completion rate.

Task Completion (%)	Benchmark (%)
Overall Average Task Completion	78

TABLE 1. OVERALL TASK COMPLETION RATE (N=12)

To further understand what led to the below average rating, the completion rates per task were computed. Figure 2 shows that only seven out of 16 questions (i.e., tasks A1, A5, B1, B2, B6, B7, and B8) are above 78%. Thus, more than half failed to meet the standard. Moreover, the case of task B4 warrants attention because it has a 0% completion rate, indicating that all participants failed to retrieve the information required for the question: What should you do if you find out that you have COVID-19?

FIGURE 1. COMPLETION RATE PER PARTICIPANT

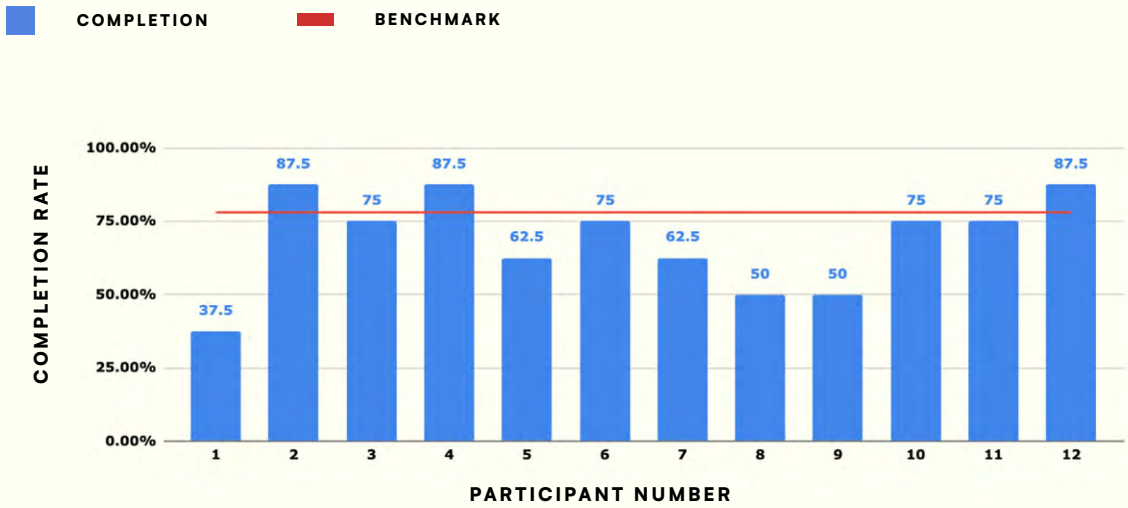
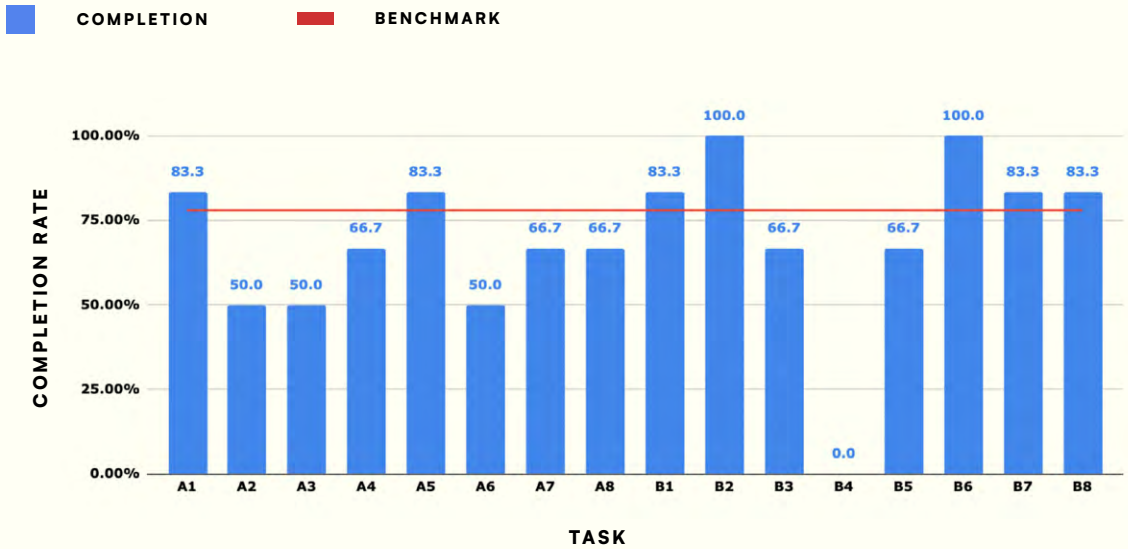


FIGURE 2. TASK COMPLETION RATE PER TASK



Task	Failures	Cumulative %
B4	6	20.00%
A2	3	30.00%
A3	3	40.00%
A6	3	50.00%
A4	2	56.67%
A7	2	63.33%
A8	2	70.00%
B3	2	76.67%
B5	2	83.33%
A1	1	86.67%
A5	1	90.00%
B1	1	93.33%
B7	1	96.67%
B8	1	100.00%
B2	0	100.00%
B6	0	100.00%

TABLE 2. CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS

More than half of the tasks fell below 78%; thus, the task that contributed the most to the overall average completion rate needed to be ascertained. Table 2 shows the accumulated effect of failures counted from each task. As shown in the table, 50% of the failures come from only four tasks, namely, B4, A2, A3, and A6, out of the 16 tasks.

Data showed that the completion rate of the participants fell below the given benchmark, thereby indicating that the system inhibits accurately accomplishing tasks. Furthermore, tasks B4, A2, A3, and A6 were found to contribute to at least 50% of the total failures, thereby indicating that among the 16 tasks, B4, A2, A3, and A6 were relatively the most challenging for the

To reiterate, the information used in the performance tasks was taken from the WHO and CDC public advisories that were also reflected on their websites, implying that the information was highly relevant to people during the pandemic. Therefore, results suggest that participants had difficulty finding the information most relevant to them.

Task Duration (s)		
Task	# of Participants who completed within the benchmark time	Benchmark (s)
A1	4	77.40
A2	4	126.84
A3	5	329.81
A4	5	147.25
A5	4	154.94
A6	3	188.80
A7	4	104.40
A8	5	83.42
B1	5	108.16
B2	5	97.76
B3	5	311.36
B4	-	-
B5	4	78.17
B6	5	725.17
B7	5	39.57
B8	5	103.28

TABLE 3. TALLY OF TASK TIMES

**Efficiency.** Table 3 shows the computed benchmark and number of participants who met the said benchmark per task. No task was accomplished by all six participants within the computed benchmark, but nine, namely, A3, A4, A8, B1, B2, B3, B6, B7, and B8, out of 16 tasks were successfully accomplished within the maximum acceptable task time by at least five out of six participants. Five tasks, namely, A1, A2, A5, A7, and B5, were finished by at least four participants with task durations within the computed benchmark. Furthermore, task A6 was finished within the benchmark by at least three out of six participants.

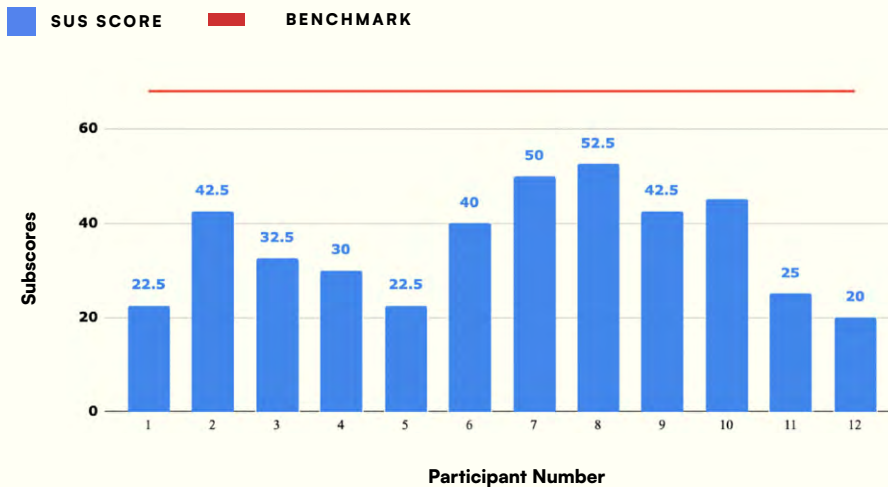
All failed attempts must be included when computing for the maximum accepted task time. Thus, the maximum accepted task time for task B4 was not computed because no participant successfully accomplished the task.

The task duration results were favorable in denoting the system's efficiency, because at

least half of the participants accomplished the tasks within the computed benchmark. However, the favorable numbers for efficiency only considered success cases because failed tasks were excluded in computing for the maximum acceptable task time. What this means is that efficiency and effectiveness of a system are related: users complete tasks accurately while not needing to expend too much of their resources.

**Satisfaction.** Figure 3 describes the participants' satisfaction in using the DOH website. All 12 participants scored the website below the established benchmark of 68, with the highest being 52.5 and lowest being 20.

FIGURE 3. SUS SCORES PER PARTICIPANT



Overall Average SUS Score	Benchmark
35.42	68

TABLE 4. OVERALL AVERAGE SUS SCORE AND INDUSTRY BENCHMARK

Table 4 shows the overall average SUS of participants in using the DOH website in comparison with the industry standard. An SUS of almost half the established benchmark indicates the participants' dissatisfaction with the system.

The below average overall SUS can be expected given the below average completion rate. This is consistent with the findings of Sauro and Dumas (2009), where the task completion rate and error correlate with satisfaction. This implies, therefore, that making the necessary improvements so users can complete tasks faster and commit fewer errors will increase satisfaction with the system. Furthermore, another factor that may have contributed to

the unfavorable SUS scores was that all research participants were first-time users of the system. This was consistent with the studies of Sauro (2011) and of Mclellan and Muddimer (2012), which stated that more experienced users of websites tended to provide higher and more favorable SUS scores over a first-time user group.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Prior to the study, participants did not have high expectations on the quality of the DOH website, as Philippine government websites are known for delivering low quality services. The general sentiment taken from the Think Aloud methodology and semi-structured interview was that the DOH website already contained all the necessary data for COVID-19 concerns, and the information only needed to be arranged and presented in a user-friendly way.



Many participants remarked that they had difficulty looking for pertinent information and that the site would be even more inaccessible for people who are not as familiar with using technology. Some responses regarding this include:

“The website was complete and very informative mahahanap mo naman 'yung [answer to] whatever concern you have with regards to COVID ... I just don't think it's the most accessible. Most especially if you need information [immediately].”\*

“I don't feel like much thought was given to the usability ... Like, intuitively I would assume some information would be in places where it did not end up being and it felt like ... I could find [the information] eventually, it's just that [the design was] adding additional friction to me finding information. So, it was not as user friendly as what I would have wanted it to be.”

\*Responses from participants have been lightly edited for the sake of clarity and readability.

During the task completion period and the semi-structured interview, several main factors that influenced perceived usability of the DOH website were brought up by the different participants. These were (1) disorganization of information, (2) non-intuitive navigation, and (3) visual design.

**Disorganization of information.** In response to the question “Was information organized in a logical manner?”, all participants except one answered “No”; the only participant who said “Yes” was referring to the organization of information in the FAQ page being logical. The main explanations for the disorganized presentation of information, as well as examples cited by the participants, are summarized in Table 5 below.

In a separate interview question that asked participants what they disliked about the website, they reiterated that information was highly spread out, different pages had duplicate information, and the divisions were not sensible. Thus, the website came across as if “different people added different things [and] no one had the task of managing everything to make it [cohesive],”; the disorganization was “adding additional barriers to ... finding [information] when it should be really easy.”

TABLE 5. PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK ON THE DISORGANIZED PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION

Reason	Examples
Information about similar topics or concerns are scattered across different pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The page titles “Public Advisory” and “Gabay sa Publiko” have similar meanings, but are two separate pages, each with different information presented in different languages. The same case is present for the pages “FAQs for COVID” and “Tanong ng Bayan.”</li> <li>◇ Frequently asked questions about vaccines are split from the main FAQ page.</li> <li>◇ Information from “Know Your Vaccine” are reused in “Policies.”</li> </ul>
Headings of some pages are unclear or even misleading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Instructions on mask wearing are found under “Gabay sa Publiko”; the relationship between the two is not immediately apparent.</li> <li>◇ The page “Beat COVID-19” does not show any actual information on how to beat COVID-19.</li> <li>◇ Information on how a vaccine works can only be found under “Vaccine Updates,” when it is not related to recent developments regarding the vaccine.</li> </ul>
Non-intuitive arrangement of elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The Resources sidebar displays most of the pages that contained the answers to common questions about COVID-19, but because of its location at the side of the screen, isn't the first thing seen by visitors on the COVID-19 home page.</li> <li>◇ The FAQs are hard to read because each answer has its own dropdown menu..</li> </ul>

**Non-intuitive Navigation.** In response to the question “Does the appearance of the site make it easy to navigate?”, 75% of the participants answered “No.” They cited that the information was highly spread out, that the search bar was ineffective in providing relevant answers to queries, and the unnecessary links required many tabs to be opened to search for information. Moreover, elements were arranged in a confusing hierarchy, with the pages containing important information being less visible at the side of the screen, and less useful information was always visible in the fixed header.

“It’s not easy to navigate ... There are tabs for everything, and it’s all presented to you sa homepage nila ... andaming page na nag-oopen when you go from one [page] to another, pag naghahanap ako ng answer, [I have to open another tab in my browser].”

“I think [the search bar] could be optimized more. For the first question it worked naman agad ... but then after that, [if] you don’t know [what] you’re looking for, then [the information] will be hard to find even with the search option.”

“It would be better if the [important] buttons were in the middle. Usually, when I look at the right side ... it’s the ads that are placed there. So usually hindi ko iniisip dito na ‘Ah, important buttons.’”

“When you first look at the website, [the first thing you see are] updates on Novel Coronavirus, [but] the font is like, super small. . . like may overview title doon, it’s even bigger than the headline.”

Important information was buried in pages that were not immediately visible, and less relevant information was given a spotlight. For example, a regular person would be more concerned with caring for a loved one with

COVID or determining COVID symptoms, but these are not the first things a user sees on the home page; instead, the case tracker is placed first, and this is not relevant to the situations aforementioned.

Important information was buried in pages that were not immediately visible, and less relevant information was given a spotlight. For example, a regular person would be more concerned with caring for a loved one with COVID or determining COVID symptoms, but these are not the first things a user sees on the home page; instead, the case tracker is placed first, and this is not relevant to the situations aforementioned.

“It’s kind of hard for me to ... find something that’s immediately friendly for [a] civilian ... I’m assuming [I]’m not there to look for [or] to read for how many COVID cases there are ... if I was going to answer the questions [from the performance task], it’s assumed na I’m protecting myself from COVID, or I’m taking care of someone with COVID and I can’t do that immediately if [lahat] ng information about COVID [is] presented there. So, siguro ... something more direct for people who might be handling the sickness or who might be exposed to the sickness.”

These factors confused participants, with many mentioning that information was hard to find, and some describing their preference to use Google, as it “has the algorithm to show me direct answers to my question right away ... I would rather do that than open [the DOH website] and try to search.”

**Visual Design.** Participants described the DOH website to be more aesthetically pleasing than other Philippine government websites. Participants who answered that the appearance of the site facilitated navigation cited the visual aspect of the website as a factor; it was easy to view, had a clean and basic layout like other websites, and the font of the text was

**Suggestions for Redesign.** Usability principles from literature and insights directly taken from participants were referenced in crafting suggestions for the improvement of the DOH website. Moreover, the 10 Main Usability Principles from Nielsen et al. (2001) was used as a main guide in implementing participant feedback on specific DOH pages. The suggestions for redesign are outlined below.

TABLE 6. 10 MAIN USABILITY PRINCIPLES (NIELSEN ET AL., 2001)

Principles	Characteristics
Visibility of System Status	Always keep users informed about what is going on, through providing appropriate feedback within reasonable time.
Match between system and the real world	Speak the users' language, using words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.
User control and freedom	Provide ways of allowing users to easily escape from places they unexpectedly find themselves, by using clearly marked 'emergency exits'.
Consistency and standards	Avoid making users wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.
Help users recognize, and recover from errors	Use plain language describing the nature of the problem and suggest a way of solving it.
Error prevention	Where possible prevent errors occurring in the first place.
Recognition rather than recall	Make objects, actions, and options visible.
Flexibility and efficiency of use	Provide accelerators that are invisible to novice users, but allow more experienced users to carry out tasks more quickly.
Aesthetic and minimalist design	Speak the users' language, using words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.
Help and documentation	Provide information that can be easily searched and provide help in a set of concrete steps that can easily be followed.

**Simplify information.** In line with Nielsen's principles of "aesthetic and minimalist design" and "recognition rather than recall," participants suggested making website pages less text-heavy, adding more images, and hiding information not relevant to average users. These changes would make the home page of the DOH website less overwhelming and lessen the general information overload.

"[The DOH website is] supposed to be [made more for] general information. ... the secretary [pages], we don't really care about that, we want to know if the vaccine works. So, I think they should prioritize the [information] on the side panel because I wouldn't have seen that at first glance until I scrolled down to explore the page."

"I think there's too much stuff on the screen ... People who go to the DOH website, just the average person using this, does not need to see everything. Like I don't need to see all these graphics competing for my attention, all these advisories. It's just cluttering the screen and it's not—I'm getting analysis paralysis by looking at it. So, simplify. That's my suggestion."

**Organize information clearly and accurately.** Participants suggested that information should be presented in such a way that main questions will be immediately answered. The home page should be revised to accommodate users' most imminent concerns, considering that it is the page users see first. Information relevant to the concerns of the

public should be shown before (e.g., How to care for someone with COVID) the case tracker. Moreover, the different subpages related to COVID-19 should be easily visible and accessible from the main page.

Pages with similar or related content should be merged, and a legend or guide should be added for different categories. The “Resources” bar should be moved to the middle of the home page to be more visible and emphasized. These changes will simplify navigation and make the website user-friendly, even to those with low technological or computer proficiency. One participant’s comprehensive suggestion regarding this aspect is as follows:

"So, for example ... there should be a tab specifically for COVID Care or where to get tested, like, where can I get tested if I am suspecting that I have COVID ... I'm assuming [t]he website is designed to give more information to the public. [It would be better] if it's organized according to people's questions, so ... I'm thinking like, one portal for prevention, one portal for investigation or if you're ... suspecting of COVID, what will you do next? Another portal for management ... another portal for vaccines. So, these make it more specific to what the public is experiencing, rather than just like, here's all the miscellaneous information about COVID. It makes it easier for people to navigate it."

These are in line with Nielsen’s principles of “visibility of system status” and “recognition rather than recall.”

**Proper execution of website features.** The DOH website already features a search bar and website translation, but functions should be expanded. The search bar should be optimized to respond to most queries in different languages and with only a few keywords. All pages showing information about COVID-19 should feature a translation option for different languages (e.g., Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, etc.), not just the FAQs page. One participant

emphasized the importance of COVID-related information available in different languages:

"Nagulat ako nung nakita ko yung first FAQs, sabi ko “wow, we have it in 11 languages!” And pagdating [sa] vaccines, especially its importance, we have to encourage people to take vaccines, [it's too bad that] dalawang languages lang and scattered pa, and they don't have it in the main FAQs ... they could really be more consistent with how they present information."

Overall, the DOH should revisit the goals for their website and use the revised goals as a redesign guide. One participant remarked, “Maybe along the line [the DOH] tried to make it organized, to make it logical, but they lost it the more information that had to be put out. So, I [would suggest they] re-evaluate it, look at it, stick to what they were trying to do in the first place and then re-execute.”

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study evaluated the DOH website’s usability, identified factors that affected perceived usability, and suggested DOH website improvements. The results indicated low effectiveness and satisfaction through the below average completion rate and SUS scores, thereby showing that participants had difficulty finding answers to performance task questions and had an unpleasant experience in using the site. Efficiency was acceptable because at least half of the participants accomplished tasks within the maximum acceptable task time. The negative factors that hampered the participants were the website’s disorganized information, inconsistency, design, and non-intuitive navigation. Comparing these experiences with existing literature, they align with the unfulfillment of usability design principles (Nielsen et al. 2001).

Thus, quantitative and qualitative results showed that the DOH website was unusable, thereby validating the results of previous studies.

Given this, the following key improvements were suggested:

- ◇ Simplification and re-organization of information
- ◇ Addition of a fixed navigation sidebar
- ◇ Optimization of the search bar
- ◇ Consistency of overall visual design
- ◇ Options for translating pages to different languages of the Philippines

This study has some limitations. First, the study only evaluated the usability of the DOHDOH website in terms of its ability to provide COVID-19 information relevant to the public and not specialized fields (e.g., healthcare workers, organizations, and researchers). Future studies may focus on these populations to speculate the usability of the DOH website as a source for specialized information on public health. Second, the DOH website evaluated was the March 2, 2020 version, which was the latest version at the time of study; any updates or modifications made to the website after this version were not included in the evaluation. Therefore, potential barriers that were identified may have already been addressed. Third, this study only evaluated COVID-19-related pages of the website. Future researchers may evaluate the usability of the whole DOH website. Lastly, this study ends with recommendations for improved usability; future studies may include actual implementation and deployment of the improvements to test for usability.

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