

REMEMBERING . . .

**FILIPINO SOCIOLOGIST AND MENTOR: RICARDO M. ZARCO
(FEBRUARY 11, 1930 - JANUARY 22, 2011)**



Professor Emeritus Ricardo M. Zarco, ca. 2000s, outside his classroom at the third floor of Palma Hall overlooking the UP Diliman campus, with the Carillon in the background.

Filomin Gutierrez

Ricardo M. Zarco mentored generations of undergraduate and graduate students of sociology at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. He worked closely with students in the areas of deviant behavior and research methodology. Many of these initial collaborations paved the way for joint research projects and journal publications. Throughout the duration of his faculty service, even past his retirement and well into his years as Professor Emeritus, he continued to collaborate with colleagues and students in research and publications projects.

He finished his AB Psychology degree in 1952 at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and moved on to complete his MA in Sociology at the same university in 1959. His graduate studies were supplemented by post-masteral courses taken at the University of Chicago in the United States in 1960.

Zarco's early integration into the Sociology Department started when he was hired as a graduate assistant in 1955. The following year, the department recruited him into the faculty as assistant instructor. From then on, he devoted himself to teaching and research in UP Diliman until he was promoted to full professor in 1976. Between 1992 and 1993, he was a visiting professor at the Department of Sociology at Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Virginia Tech) in Virginia, USA. In 1997, two years after he retired, the UP Board of Regents awarded him the status of Professor Emeritus.

Professor Zarco is generally recognized for his expertise in the sociology of deviant behavior. He taught the course in undergraduate and graduate levels for years, worked extensively on topics such as crime, delinquency, punishment, and drug addiction, and shared his passion for studying these problems in Philippine society with his students in their academic theses or in research projects. He published on the history of narcotics in the Philippines, women and substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, student organizations as conflict gangs, sexual victimization, and punishment of heinous crimes. Government and non-government sectors such as the World Health Organization, the Narcotics Foundation of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development tapped Prof. Zarco as consultant to help assess social problems and identify solutions to concerns such as narcotics and drug addiction, crime and delinquency, and sexual victimization and convict community reintegration. He also conducted research on the environmental impact of tourism, mining and transportation for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology likewise sought his input on earthquake prediction using community-based data on premonitory animal behavior. Local media channels often interviewed Prof. Zarco on his opinions regarding crime, delinquency and illegal drugs.

His empirical work can be regarded as reflective of the positivist tradition's emphasis on the search for patterns and associations among social phenomena in view of predicting future outcome. For example, he pointed out how rape is a predatory assault where offenders overpower their victims not just through their stronger physical strength but by virtue of their social superiority expressed through their socioeconomic ascendancy, authority (as fathers, older kinsmen, or employers), and control or familiarity of the territory. He also showed the patterning of inter-fraternity violence among UP students as following a five-year cycle, which should help University officials avoid the mistake of letting their guard down when the reaction to the violent episodes appears to have died down. Aside from his work on the areas of social deviance, Professor

Zarco wrote on the Chinese-Filipino family structure, social class, and male sexuality in the Philippines. Moving closer to the field of the natural sciences, he ventured to demonstrate how earthquake survivors, especially those residing in locations close to the epicenter, observed unusual behavior from animals, suggesting that communities can tap such observations to be warned about and prepared for imminent earthquakes.

Prof. Zarco was also keen on research methodology. He sought to develop research instruments for concepts such as ‘social distance’ and ‘socioeconomic status’, emphasizing the need for measurements that are culturally attuned to the Philippine setting. On social distance, he proposed the measurement of Filipino kinship - the immediate closeness and trust accorded to family members and relatives - as a distinct category in evaluating the risk factors in rape incidents. The ‘reputational approach’ to determining socioeconomic status, also known as the Zarco-Magdalenita Scale, values the assessment of members of the community (neighbors) in evaluating “by reputation” the socioeconomic capability of a household by demonstrating its accordance with similar measurements of Philippine social class.

Born in Manila on February 11, 1930 to Pablo Velarde Zarco and Marciana Morales Zarco in 1931, Ricardo grew up along with his four older siblings Alberto, Flora, Romeo and Pura in Manila. Interest in the academic and teaching profession ran in the family: his mother was a former schoolteacher, and his father, a teacher and school principal before he became the chief of the Mechanical Department of the Manila Railroad Company. Ricardo’s childhood was interrupted by the difficult years of the Second World War where he and his family were among the civilians trapped in the battle between US and Japanese forces in Manila. His interview about surviving the war was among those featured in *Remembering the Battle of Manila*, an award-winning documentary on World War II (NHK/Japan, 2007).

In the 1950s, he married Estrella Hofileña, a math professor in UP Diliman. They had three sons: Ricardo, Jr., now a medical doctor; Mark, a professor at the College of Engineering, UP Diliman; and Timothy, an assistant professor at the College of Business Administration, also at UP Diliman.

Oriented to sports and the outdoors, Prof. Zarco avidly pursued cycling, mountain climbing, camping, hunting, and shooting.



Ricardo Zarco, ca. 1960s, as a young instructor at the UP Diliman campus

Select list of publications

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- (2000). [with Shoemaker, D.J, with the assistance of Dulnuan, M.R., & Cabusas, C..] Report on student organization conflicts, University of the Philippines, Diliman, 1991-1998. University of the Philippines.
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- (1995). [with Candaliza-Gutierrez, F.A., & Dulnuan, M.R.]. Trends of murder and rape incidents in the Philippines and Metro Manila, 1980-1994. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 43, 30-45.
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- (1995). [with Candaliza, F.A.]. An analysis of rape incidents in Metro Manila. *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, 52, 99-126.
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- (1972). *Street corner drug use in Metropolitan Manila*. Manila: Narcotics Foundation of the Philippines.
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- (1959). Windows into juvenile narcotics activity. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 7(4), 7-16.

Filomin Gutierrez was among the students and colleagues mentored by Prof. Zarco. She received her PhD in Sociology from UP Diliman in 2006 and her dissertation was on crime and gender during the late Spanish and early American periods in Philippine history. An associate professor at the Department of Sociology, UP Diliman, she now teaches courses on the sociology of deviant behavior, criminology, and research methods, and conducts research and publishes on these topics.