# OF SCREAMS AND SILENCES:
## THE POLITICS OF SPACES AND VOICES

## PPSA Webinar Series Working Papers
## Volume 1

### June-October 2020

*Message*

At the core of politics is power, but the coordinates of power are changing. Today's digital era is atomizing claims to power and reconstituting the space in which these claims could be made. We are witnessing an explosion of power-claimants—the social media influencer, the tech-savvy crowd mobilizer—who are harnessing various communication platforms for good and ill. On one hand, this is great news for students and researchers of political science as there are more exciting things to examine besides the state. On the other hand, the seeming pluralist universe belies the underlying asymmetries of structures and relations from which power proceeds. The barriers to entry in discursive politics may have been lowered by the internet, but those at the margins can never quite challenge those who wield power. Who belong to the margins? The concerns of minorities, poor, displaced and victims of violence may have gone mainstream but they pull little political weight. The usual guarantors of the interests of those belonging to the margins—vibrant civil society, political parties, competitive elections, free press, and service-driven state agents—are losing substantial ground to entrenched elites and new social forces. Freedoms and guaranteed rights to these minorities, key tenets of a liberal democracy, are under siege.

The papers in this series cover a wide array of topics interrogating power at various scales and contexts. State disposition of power, via the President, agents like the Ombudsman and legal institutions like the Peace and Order Council are examined in terms of how they facilitate or constrain participation from below. The mechanisms and outcomes in public-service delivery in the areas of heritage, solid waste, domestic water, local development, infrastructure, and health are described. Local government initiatives and civil society agency around conflict, peace, violence, and human rights are mapped to identify gaps and challenges. The papers also showcase narratives of rebels, the displaced, women, and peace-builders. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the new terrain of state centrism and community responses in the peripheries (i.e. Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or BARMM, Baguio, Davao and Kalinga province) are explored in several papers.
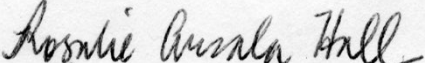
The PPSA expresses enormous gratitude to the authors for agreeing to have their manuscripts published in this volume as working papers. The papers were earlier slated for presentation in the PPSA International Conference in Iloilo City for April 23-24, 2020. Following the conference's cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors agreed to present them instead in a series of weekly web-based seminars (webinars). The PPSA successfully migrated the keynote speeches by Dr. Alfred McCoy and Dr. Leonora Angeles, and the panel sessions for the PPSA International Conference online. A total of 42 presentations in 10 webinar sessions were held via Zoom and live-streamed through Facebook from June to October 2020.

The great feat of undertaking the webinar and completing this publication was made possible largely through support from Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), which has agreed to realign the approved 2020 grant to the PPSA towards these endeavors. It is a testament of the faith of KAS-Philippines Country Director Dr. Stefan Jost on the PPSA leadership to rise above adversity—as the 2020 international conference was the second time in a row that a KAS-sponsored event fell victim to a disaster. Much credit also goes to the 2019-2021 PPSA Board of Trustees, who took on the enormous task of organizing and moderating the webinar panels, and shepherding the manuscripts through peer review and revisions.  Enormous thanks as well to our disciplinal comrades-in-arms, political science academics and practitioners who agreed to review the manuscripts over a tight timeframe, and the pool of copy editors and layout artists from the University of the Philippines Visayas who labored through hundreds of pages. Administering this publication project and taking care of the traffic are Jerome Jogno, Program Manager of KAS-Philippines, and Febrey Esclares, PPSA Research Assistant.

As a professional association, we practice what we preach. This volume reflects the diverse scholarship of our members, writing from and about politics of their locality and about issues that matter to them and their communities. This echoes the gender- and region-balanced profile of the PPSA Board of Trustees.  It is also living proof that the business of creating and connecting can and will continue, pandemic or not.  Moving forward, we hope to continue to provide the space for truly inclusive, participative, and meaningful engagements.

Rock on, PPSA!

**ROSALIE ARCALA HALL, PH.D.**
President
*PPSA Board of Trustees 2019-2021*

# *Message*

State power, Bob Jessop writes in his work "The State: Past, Present, Future", is a property of the state acting in the capacity of an autonomous subject. The state is ought to stand outside and above the various formal and informal social formations and establish rules that bind the behavior of people. Aside from regulating social relationships, it is also assumed that states have its own resources and appropriate these in determined ways.

The state is seen to favor select actors in the society and privilege few and their accompanying interest over the others. Interests stemming from multiple elites, however, seem to undermine the capacity of the state. In fact, it puts into question on whether the state has its own embedded autonomy, or it is being captured by a force above its own machinery.

In the Philippines, various historical factors have interacted over different spatiotemporal horizons that shaped the country's structural and institutional arrangements. Experiences from the past have illustrated how power can lead to various patterns of domination and transformation. Ideally, changes of balance of forces have to be mediated through institutional structures and procedures of the state embedded in the political system. In case of the Philippines, however, as seen by myriad political scientists, the state is captured by diverse interests and enjoys little autonomy from dominant classes, in particular political clans and powerful families.

The product of historical events produced institutions that renounced the former. The historical and formal constitution of states, Jessop argues, always results from past struggles, and is reproduced (or transformed) in and through struggle. In the process of undergoing changes, however, the normative function of the Philippine state to liberate Filipinos from its socio-economic problems remain unchanged even up to this date. Scholars have attributed this inability to solve pressing issues to the institutions that were inherited from its colonial past.

With the successful removal of dictatorship in 1986, civil society in the country is described to be vibrant. Yet, there are still limitations especially in the face of persistent

weak political institutions and practice of patronage. In a time where democratic ideals are being questioned, it is crucial for the last bastion of democracy to stand as a beacon to guide and inspire others.

It is unfortunate that the environment was not conducive for the international conference to be conducted physically, but I am grateful that the Philippine Political Science Association continued to conduct the event albeit in online platform to discuss these relevant issues in this challenging times. The online series proved to be one of the mediums where political science scholars can present their findings on how several actors in the society play a key role in examining the different manifestations of power at different levels.

Now more than ever, with the onslaught of the global pandemic and its effects to the health and economy of the nation and its people, coupled with natural calamities wreaking havoc in the country, Filipino people demand the government to provide necessary interventions in the provision of public goods and services. Civil society is indeed essential in filling the gap and amplifying voices of those who are relegated to the margins and bringing them into the spotlight. These discussions are important especially when welfare of Filipinos is put into risk.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung extends its appreciation to Dr. Rosalie Hall, President of the Philippine Political Science Association, members of the PPSA Board of Trustees, and individual authors for their contribution, hard work, and dedication to continue the scholarly tradition amidst these trying times. Last but not least, I thank the persons behind this publication, to Ms. Febrey Bless Esclares, from PPSA, and to Mr. Jerome Jogno, from KAS Philippines for their tireless support since the conceptualization of this endeavor.

**PROF. DR. STEFAN JOST**
Country Director
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# WP SERIES 1

# CALL OUT:

## POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE IN THE AGE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

# Khakis in the Streets: Military Role in the COVID-19 Response in Mindanao

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On March 08, 2020, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte issued Proclamation 922, placing the entire country under a state of public health emergency based on the COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly after, the Philippine Congress enacted Republic Act 11469, granting the President emergency powers for 90 days to adopt and enforce quarantine and disease control prevention measures. The military and the police were included in the Inter-Agency Task Force's security cluster tasked to orchestrate government response. As travel bans were imposed and quarantine control points were established, cities became flooded with armed, uniformed personnel heretofore unseen since the Martial Law era in the 1970s. As curfew violators' arrests and detention mounted, the government's militaristic handling of the pandemic came under heavy criticism.

The President as Commander-in-Chief is legally authorized to "call-out" the military in response to a national emergency. The optics of uniformed personnel deployed to address a public health crisis elicit serious concern. At the backdrop of extraordinary executive power, the President recently demonstrated the Administration's war on drugs and Marawi siege. The deployment further amplifies the military's domestic footprint, already considerable given its internal security focus and intermittent involvement in domestic disaster response, the conduct of elections, and support to law enforcement.

This chapter discusses the deployment of the Philippine military to address the COVID pandemic in a national emergency's legal context. How Presidential power is nuanced across various legal contexts of domestic military mobilizations is discussed. While the law distinguishes between a state of national emergency and Martial Law, the Government is pre-disposed to utilizing the Armed Forces to impose and regulate the desired social behavior. The President's power is magnified in these domestic deployments as other civilian control agents and local authorities tend not to challenge Presidential directives or contest claims on the need to discipline the population. The military's ubiquitous involvement in the pandemic response heightened the securitization of society and militarization of the Philippine state.

## Domestic Mobilizations of the Military: Some Conceptual Anchors

The Military's role in a liberal democracy is premised upon the need to insulate the state and society from the inherent dangers of an armed force. Civilian control mechanisms are necessary to ensure that the Military is utilized to reduce this risk of it turning against the people and the state it is tasked to defend. Integral to this logic is the need to confine the Military to roles in line with its nature as coercive instrument and external defense. Its function is further differentiated from the Police and other state security forces whose focus are on law enforcement and public safety and are deployed domestically. There is a liberal democratic premise that the Military is inherently ill-suited for law enforcement, given its socialization into the use of lethal force against enemies (Harig 2019; Pion-Berlin 2016). By contrast, policing utilizes the graduated application of force, with agents trained more for negotiation/bargaining with civilians to obtain outcomes that tie into the justice system. An outward-oriented and expeditionary type armed force is the liberal democratic ideal. However, many countries also permit domestic deployment of its military for intermittent and time-limited missions, e.g., disaster response. These domestic deployments are legally allowed, have low decision-making thresholds, and are

largely uncontroversial as their actual tasks are confined to logistical support and niche service provisioning (Clarke 2013, 74).

Table 1 looks at various dimensions of domestic military mobilization. Countries differ according to what are permitted domestic missions their armed forces are allowed to do and the range of tasks performed within each mission type. The legal bases for these mobilizations, whether as Presidential orders, legislative mandates, or Department directives, portend as well to the legitimacy of mobilizations and the possibility of political contestation. The implementation rubrics, whether requiring high thresholds, i.e., Department or President/Prime Minister level, or low thresholds, i.e., left to local civilian authorities or unit commanders in the affected area matter as well, when viewed from the prism of exerting accountability. The command-and-control structure explores collaboration dynamics between the Armed Forces that are injected or absorbed into setups that include other security forces and civilian agents.

**Table 1**

*Domestic Deployment of Armed Forces: Dimensions*

| Mission Types | Tasks | Legal basis and decision making rubrics for deployment | Command-and-control structure |
|---|---|---|---|
| response to natural or man-made disasters | logistical support to relief operations search and rescue provide relief services (medical, water and sanitation) demolish unsafe structures debris removal | constitutional legislation Ministry/Department order Chief of Staff order <br><br>approval level- Defense ministry/secretary,Chief of Staff, unit commander <br><br>low threshold; subsidiarity | military personnel subsumed under civilian bodies (task force) to which they are absorbed, receive orders and tasking, and report to |
| support to law enforcement | deploy personnel transfer/loan of military equipment train law enforcement officers provide information /surveillance collected from military operations logistical support (transport) <br><br>NOT allowed (policing tasks) arrest, detention, search of persons & vehicles, seizure of properties | Ministry/Department order Chief of Staff order <br><br>approval level- President, Congress, state governor, Defense ministry/secretary,Chief of Staff <br><br>high threshold; national/federal level | military unit commander (mother unit) or law enforcement unit commander to which contributed military personnel are absorbed <br><br>local chief executive as authorized civilian authority |

| Mission Types | Tasks | Legal basis and decision making rubrics for deployment | Command-and-control structure |
|---|---|---|---|
| response to domestic contingencies; emergency; extraordinary condition beyond standard procedure | | constitutional legislation Ministry/Department order Chief of Staff order | military unit commander (mother unit) |
| | crowd control and dispersal | approval level- President, Congress | |
| | combat operations | | |
| | combat operations, surveillance | high threshold; national/federal level | |
| civil disturbance (riots, protests, labor strike) | | | |
| rebellion/insurgency | | | |
| terror attacks | | | |

| Mission Types | Tasks | Legal basis and decision making rubrics for deployment | Command-and-control structure |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| secure critical or vital infrastructure (government buildings, key tourist sites, financial/commercial district, embassies) and sporting/political events | patrol, ingress/egress control points, search of vehicle and persons | legislation Ministry/Department order<br><br>medium threshold; Defense ministry order | military unit commander (mother unit) or law enforcement unit commander to which contributed military personnel are absorbed |
| control of migration flows | logistical support (transport) to border control agencies, share intelligence and surveillance report | legislation Ministry/Department order<br><br>high threshold; President/Prime Minister decision | law enforcement unit commander to which contributed military personnel are absorbed |

There is an increasing trend of the Military being deployed domestically for various missions that brings it into more direct contact with the population and civilian authorities. The terror threats after 9/11, increased migration flows resulting from international conflicts, more virulent criminal activities, and civil unrest due to severe economic downturns are pressuring governments to rely more and more upon their militaries for a response. These domestic deployments have been politically challenging for many states, particularly those with adverse histories of authoritarian rule and military abuse and those

protective of encroachments on civil liberties. There are several issues raised by this trend. First is the blurring of functional lines between civilian Police and the Military. The Military's foray into law enforcement is considered dangerous given its inherent constitution to use lethal force; the military's skill set is not well suited for law enforcement, which requires working with community people (Kealey 2003, 386). The military's deployment for immigration law enforcement in the US and in EU countries, or in dismantling informal communities where large number of refugees reside as in Nairobi, Kenya are examples of this trend (Smith 2007, 623; Boudreau 2009, 245; Gluck 2017; Takacs 2005; Lutterbeck 2010). As observed in early overseas peacekeeping and stabilization missions, military contingents have been assigned policing tasks, i.e., riot control, or are made to support local law enforcement agents which remain institutionally weak against organized crime (Friesendorf 2010, 53; Weiss 2012). As they come home and are domestically deployed by their respective governments, they take on many lessons from this overseas deployment experience. Still, they are frustrated about the limits of the rules of engagement (ROE) for domestic policing operations. The case of the Brazilian military point to a preference towards military effectiveness rather than civilian protection in policing tasks (Harig 2019). In many Latin American countries, the Military is given the lead role in crime-fighting because of an ineffective police apparatus and given the public's higher trust in the Military (Pion-Berlin and Carreras 2017, 3). In these settings, the public wants the Military to use more lethal use of force against crime syndicates while observing human rights. Contrary to the prevailing norm, the military should stay away from direct involvement and provide only support to the Police.

On the other hand, the specter of law enforcement agencies becoming more militarized, e.g., taking on appearance, skill set, and weaponry paralleling the Military, is a cause for alarm (McMichael 2017; Nueteboom and Soeters 2017; Coaffe and Wood 2006, 504-505). Police militarization is considered dangerous and may lead to the targeted use of violence against minorities and political opposition. The proliferation of military-like

outfits within the regular police, e.g., Special Weapons and Tactics Units, Crowd Control Units, and Surveillance Units is contrary to notions of democratic policing.

Second, the ubiquitousness of uniformed personnel in public spaces and mass gatherings, and of checkpoints and defensive rings point to how security has now permeated everyday lives and structure social interactions. The securitization of these public spaces and events effectively dampens the exercise of freedoms to assemble and movement. By creating borders and controls, the security forces (including the Military deployed) exercise default authority to decide who can go in and out and who are included or excluded in a particular space. Third, government policy, in turn, is increasingly militarized as problems are elevated to an emergency or crisis requiring extraordinary measures. Whether drug, organized crime, secessionist claims, civil unrest, or terror threat, the state prefers a coercive response. Elevating many of these challenges into an emergency normalizes the use of the State's coercive apparatuses. At the same time, other political options are eased out by default (see Roychoudry 2015 on state response to the ethnic problem in Punjab; Gluck 2017).

In many cases, this heavy-handed approach has resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties and justified as necessary (Eligh and Kennert 2019, 5). Following the yellow-vest protests in 2019, the French government extended the emergency powers earlier issued after the Paris terror attacks to allow military mobilization to deal with civil unrest. This slide in interpreting emergency situations from counter-terror to civil disturbance is inimical to democracy. The government can then use emergency powers to designate groups as targets or enemies subject to coercive response (Head 2019, 603). Fourth, where government enters a crisis or emergency mode, standard procedures of transparency, accountability, and checks integral to democracy risk being compromised. Many countries had a previous experience where "civil disturbance" had been used as a pretext for the government to curtail the opposition from expressing dissent or to enforce

proscribed behavior from societal actors (Boudreau 2009, 44; Coaffe and Wood 2006, 515). Sweeping emergency powers can also be used to strengthen executive domination of government and even towards an authoritarian turn with little pushback from the legislature and courts to challenge the use of emergency powers (Head 2019). In his analysis of 113 democracies, Rooney (2019, 5 and 6) found that the presence of domestic discord and legislative fractionalization is predictive of the granting of emergency powers to the executive. Rebellions or domestic political unrest and a divided legislature is likely to embolden a course of action giving the President extraordinary powers.

The domestic deployment of the Armed Forces in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is part of this global trend. For many countries faced with serious internal security threats and heightened criminality, mobilizing the Military, which is institutionally more robust and effective than the Police, is a practical response. For countries facing none or little of these internal challenges, the Military's domestic mobilization may occur only under legally defined exceptional circumstances, e.g., emergency situations and within clearly articulated mechanisms for the troops to jointly operate with the Police and other state security agents. There is a need to nuance cases where the Military has an extensive versus limited domestic role.  How emergency measures are legally framed has consequences on the quality of democratic rule. Does it concentrate more power in the hands of the executive vis-a-vis other branches? strengthen the power of the central government? expand the Military's reach into political matters? The dynamics of military interface with civilian authorities and agents, particularly at the local level where the uniformed personnel are deployed, also invite examination in terms of the aforementioned concerns of militarization and securitization.

**Domestic Mobilization of the Philippine Armed Forces: Emergency, Martial Law, Call-Out Operations and Non-traditional Missions**

The Philippine Military is mobilized domestically in varying legal contexts. Since its transition to democracy in 1986, considerable gains have been made in professionalizing the Armed Forces and instituting civilian control mechanisms, particularly over the military budget and organizational reforms. Faced with serious domestic threats from Communists, Muslim secessionists and terror groups, the Philippine Military plays a lead role in internal security operations, with the Police and other law enforcement agencies providing assistance by way of intelligence support and additional personnel if the Military so requests. While its constabulary arm had been removed since the 1990 reorganization (and transferred to the newly created Philippine National Police), the Philippine Military remains constabulary-like given that the bulk of its personnel and materiel is committed to internal security operations.

There are also secondary mission areas for which the Military is deployed within the territory. These tasks, otherwise categorized as non-traditional, include election monitoring, humanitarian assistance/disaster response, and support to law enforcement. These non-traditional tasks do not require the application of kinetic force, and are intermittent and time-bound. The Military's involvement in these is legal (with bases either in the Constitution or legislation), legitimate (widely perceived by public as acceptable tasks carried out by the Military) and historical (tasks the Military had been routinely undertaking for many years).

Table 2 sums up the types of mobilization of the Philippine Military, their legal basis, institutional mechanisms, and task performed. The Philippine Military has been mobilized domestically for a wide variety of missions, counterinsurgency being foremost. The Military playing a lead role in addressing a 3-pronged insurgency threat is an ongoing endeavor, with Presidents intermittently calling on sustained offensives (all-out-war) for

which troops and equipment are moved from one theater to another.   This Call-Out power is substantive and normalized with sustained deployments in many rural areas considered insurgency-threatened. Unless done in the context of Martial Law for which legislative and judicial scrutiny is warranted, the President's Call-Out Power is otherwise not questioned by the legislature or courts.  The military's domestic deployment for disaster response and support for the conduct of elections is historical and products of legal mandates, which over the years underwent formalization as these types of deployment become more regular or iterative. Of the phalanx of additional mission areas, support to law enforcement and national development goals more directly feeds into the power of the President. Both flow from Presidential directives and are funded by the Office of the President; they are used to strengthen the President's hand vis-a-vis competing power-holders. The Military's role expansion to encompass addressing traditional security threats, i.e., rebellion, and those securitized by the state, i.e., the pandemic, provides structural opportunities for an authoritarian turn and centralization of power in the hands of the Executive (Woo 2007, 60). The presence of legal and formal mechanisms such as MOAs and deputation arrangements between the military organization and civilian agents on these non-traditional missions do not necessarily engender more substantial civilian control.  In fact, the Military's domestic missions have exposed many to graft and corruption, entangle uniformed personnel in illicit economies, and embroil commanders in local politics.

**Table 2**

*Types of Domestic Mobilization of the Philippine Armed Forces*

| | National Emergency (e.g., pandemic, economic crisis, catastrophic disaster) | Call-out Operations (suppress lawless violence, rebellion, invasion) | Standard non-traditional mission areas (e.g., conduct of elections, support to law enforcement, support to national development) | Local Emergency (disaster, terror attack) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **legal basis** | by Act of Congress | by Executive Order or Proclamation by President | MOA with relevant government agencies (COMELEC, DILG, DSWD, DPWH, NEDA) | by Act of Congress (disaster, public safety and security) |
| **mechanism** | Inter Agency Task Force | standard civilian control mechanism through Department of National Defense (DND) | by deputation | local government-Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council; Local Task Force |

| | National Emergency (e.g., pandemic, economic crisis, catastrophic disaster) | Call-out Operations (suppress lawless violence, rebellion, invasion) | Standard non-traditional mission areas (e.g., conduct of elections, support to law enforcement, support to national development) | Local Emergency (disaster, terror attack) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **tasks** | impose curfew set up checkpoints at ingress/egress<br><br>conduct searches of home and vehicles<br><br>provide indirect (logistics/transport) or direct humanitarian assistance | combat<br><br>impose curfew set up checkpoints at ingress/egress<br><br>conduct searches of home and vehicles | support to law enforcement; election monitoring; disaster response; indirect humanitarian assistance | impose curfew set up checkpoints conduct searches of home and vehicles<br><br>surveillance reporting |

The legal contexts for which the Military may be mobilized for these various tasks place emphasis on the President's power as Commander-in-Chief vis-a-vis other civilian government agencies in exerting control mechanisms, i.e., deciding whether, when, under what circumstances, and where to utilize the Armed Forces, including additional assignments and with more robust responsibilities under a State of Emergency and under Martial Law. The President's remit as Commander-in-Chief is circumscribed by two relevant provisions in the 1987 Constitution, under which he/she can mobilize the military:

*Section 18, Article VII says:*

The President shall be the Commander-in-Chief of all armed forces of the Philippines and, whenever it becomes necessary, he may call out such armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, or rebellion. In case of invasion or rebellion, when the public safety requires it, he may, for a period not exceeding sixty days, suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus or place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law. Within 48 hours from the proclamation of Martial Law or the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, the President shall submit a report in person or in writing to the Congress. The Congress, voting jointly, by a vote of at least a majority of all its Members in regular or special session, may revoke such a proclamation or suspension, which revocation shall not be set aside by the President. Upon the initiative of the President, the Congress may, in the same manner, extend such proclamation or suspension for a period to be determined by the Congress if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and public safety requires it.

And

**Sec. 23, Article VI says:**

In times of war or other <u>national emergency</u>, the Congress may, by law, authorize the President, for a limited period and subject to such restrictions as it may prescribe, to exercise powers necessary and proper to carry out a declared national policy. Unless sooner withdrawn by resolution of the Congress, such powers shall cease upon the next adjournment thereof.

The military deployment as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic is made in the context of Section 23, Article VI, authorizing the President to call out the Armed Forces during a national emergency. Congress grants the President emergency powers and defines the extent and duration through a legislation. An emergency is that which "connotes the existence of conditions suddenly intensifying existing danger to life or well being, beyond the degree that is accepted as normal."  As articulated by the Supreme Court in the David vs. Arroyo, G.R. 171396, May 3, 2006 , these conditions include rebellion, economic crisis, pestilence or epidemic, typhoon, flood, or other similar catastrophe of a nationwide scope. Where there is a national emergency, the President may task the Military to implement/carry out policy within the parameters set by the Act of Congress.[1] It is also understood that even in a State of Emergency, there is no suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Thus, all relevant human rights and due process requirements have to be observed by the Military when tasked by the President during a national emergency.

There had only been a few prior cases where the President was given such emergency powers. Republic Act 6826 given to President Aquino to respond to the December 1989 coup d'etat; Republic Act 7648 (Electricity Crisis Act) authorizing the President for one year to enter into contracts for the establishment of power plants; and Republic Act 8041 (Water Crisis Act) establishing the Joint Executive-Legislative Water Crisis Commission for solutions to the water crisis. Republic Act 11469 (Bayanihan Heal as One Act) gave the President power to create an Inter-Agency Task Force to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only in the first and last cases were the Military mobilized by the President.

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[1] The national emergency powers are predicated on an emergency that is national in scope. These emergency powers given to the President should not be confused with the legal capacity of local chief executives (mayors and governors) to declare state of emergencies within their jurisdiction, and come up with parallel arrangements to deal with localized challenges, i.e., natural disaster or security breaches (i.e., IED explosions, kidnapping incidents, attacks by non-state armed groups). In fact, many LGUs in Mindanao have such formal arrangements with local military commands, typically through the establishment of Task Forces (e.g., Zamboanga after the siege, North Cotabato after the BIFF skirmishes in its boundaries, and Cagayan de Oro during the Marawi siege).

## Camouflage in the Streets: The Philippine Military Domestic Footprint, Pandemic Deployment, and Implications

While a national emergency is the legal premise for the military's mobilization in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, their functions on the ground closely followed support to law enforcement using organizational templates that are already in place for counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism at the local level. Republic Act 11469 (Bayanihan Heal as One Act) provided for the creation of a national Inter-Agency Task Force, which included a security cluster to which the Military belongs. With the Police as lead agent, the Military, alongside the Coast Guard and Bureau of Fire Protection, implemented local government directives on how to address the pandemic. As various levels of community quarantine measures were adopted by local governments, the military's roles varied accordingly. In general, the military's tasks were the following: (1) securing quarantine control points at the borders, ports, and fish ports; (2) enforcing curfew, liquor ban, and other measures;(3) assisting the local government in implementing the Stay Home order, physical distancing in public spaces such as markets, and the wearing of masks and disinfecting protocols, through foot patrol and loud speaker operations; and (4) assisting the local government in repacking and distributing medical supplies and relief items (Rodrigo Angelo Ong, COVID-19 Medical Public Health Response in the Philippines Situation, Statement to the Inter-Agency Task Force). How these were nuanced is discussed below in the case of four Mindanao cities, i.e., Cagayan de Oro, Cotabato, Davao, and Zamboanga, where there already is a significant military presence prior to the pandemic onset. The cities are home to Army Infantry Divisions with units deployed to counter threats from Muslim separatists and terror groups. The discussion draws from interviews of military Task Force commanders who led the military response in these cities.

Prior to the pandemic, there already exists a Task Force formed by the City Government for which the local police and locally deployed or garrisoned military unit are members.

Task Force Oro, for instance, was formed in 2017 following the Marawi siege and declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao. TF Kutawato (Cotabato) and TF Zamboanga have also been in place for many years following terror incidents in the City. In all cases, the Task Forces were created to counter terror attacks. The Task Forces ran checkpoints at the City's borders, with the Military and the Police maintaining their own assigned checkpoints. They are also tasked to secure critical investments and infrastructure (e.g., City Hall, shopping malls, plazas) as well as festivities/cultural events (Yecla, personal communications, April 05 2020). On the military end, the manpower, logistics, and equipment contribution to the Task Force are from the locally deployed unit while command-and-control is exercised through a joint Army, Navy, and Marines Task Group that is organized by the Western and Eastern Mindanao Area Commands. The Military manpower consists of organic uniformed personnel and Citizen Armed Forces Active Auxiliaries (CAA) (Lumawag, personal communications, April 02 2020). The locally deployed Military also sits as a member of the City Peace and Order Council (POC), a dialog and decision making platform chaired by the Mayor. The Military's role in the POC is to provide regular security briefing and to recommend measures accordingly. For instance, the Military in Zamboanga advised the Mayor to create an information nest and village defense in view of the terror threats faced by the City (Divinagracia, personal communications, April 01 2020).

The city governments responded differently to the pandemic, as it is within their remit to calibrate their response depending on the recorded positive cases within their jurisdiction. From March to April 30 2020, Davao, Zamboanga, and Cotabato were on a lockdown while Cagayan de Oro was not. No additional military checkpoints were added for Cotabato City in response to the pandemic. Rather the checkpoints were reconstituted as quarantine control points, with added personnel from the local health unit, mandatory temperature checks, and queries as to the person's purpose and vehicle cargo.

With Davao being on a lockdown, the Military had to ensure that only authorized vehicles and persons entered Davao City. They checked for food and medicine passes and workers' ID (Yecla, personal communications, April 05 2020). This was not the case for Cotabato and Cagayan de Oro. In all four cases, the Military personnel assigned in quarantine control points were armed, in uniform, and wearing protective gear. As Cotabato was also the seat for the Bangsamoro regional government and the economic hub for Maguindanao, there was a lot of traffic into/out of the City for which more resources were committed to cope with 24/7 checkpoint rotations. In Cagayan de Oro, more military manpower was similarly injected into the three City boundary checkpoints ran by TF Oro (Pumbaya, personal communications, April 02 2020).

In all four cases, the "surge" was provided by Citizen Armed Forces Active Auxiliaries (CAA). The local government unit, through an ordinance, can call upon these auxiliaries to support security operations in times of emergencies such as the pandemic. It must be mentioned that, in the case of Zamboanga and Davao, Barangay Police Auxiliary Teams (BPAT) were also mobilized for the parallel enforcement of security measures within their villages, including the village border checkpoints. The quarantine control points were all removed after May 30, 2020. In all four cases, the Civil-Military Operations (CMO) unit attached to the host Army Divisions helped the local government in repacking and distributing protective equipment and relief goods to City residents. The CMO unit personnel are different from those assigned to the Task Force. Beginning June 2020, the Military also provided vehicle support to the government's repatriation scheme for stranded individuals and returning Overseas Foreign Workers (OFW) from Manila.

The Military's involvement in the pandemic response features a significant overlap with their counterinsurgent and counter terror activities. First, the CMO units, which are key elements of the winning-hearts-and-minds strategy and are designed to complement in-theater kinetic activities, are utilized in the pandemic response in the same fashion as

disaster response as a way of improving the public image of the institution. Second, the checkpoints earlier put up to avert terror attacks were reconstituted into quarantine control points, with the added function of doing temperature checks and the mixing in of health personnel in their teams. It is evident, however, that this anti-terror security mindset continued to inform the uniformed personnel's dealing with civilians at these control points. There is a report that where the military is already deployed for counterinsurgency, more strict enforcement measures are ordered by commanders (MichaelVatiokis, Coronavirus is paving the way for a return to military rule in Asia. Asian Angle, April 04 2020, https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3078346/coronavirus-paving-way-return-military-rule-asia) which is made more stark given orders from the President for security officers to shoot people violating the lockdown.[2] One commander opined "as the TF is tasked with protecting the City from terrorism, we will ensure that terrorists will not be able to take advantage of the situation." Another said that "*apart from health checks, the TF is also on the lookout for terrorism.*" The language employed to describe the measures taken against the pandemic also echoes this securitized thinking. Says another commander: "*COVID19 is an invisible enemy that cannot be defeated using standard CMO operations or relying on intelligence information; that even contact tracing is more difficult given that one does not know who is infected.*" The inability to differentiate and calibrate involvement across types of within-territory deployments for non-traditional missions is a weakness of the military institution, given its preoccupation with internal security operations. To be always armed and cautious of the surrounding security threats is misplaced particularly in the context of a health emergency.

The ubiquitousness of checkpoints and patrols by uniformed military personnel in key cities outside of Mindanao island in the COVID-19 pandemic response is a sore point for

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[2] There was one reported incident of a fatal shooting by the Police of a lockdown violator who turned out to be an ex-Army Scout Rangers. The wounds of war: Philippine Army seeks probe into killing of ex-soldier in QC . 23 April 2020. ABS-CBN News https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/23/20/the-wounds-of-war-philippine-army-seeks-probe-into-killing-of-ex-soldier-in-qc.

many. While there is an understanding that the emergency status warrants acceptable restrictions on freedom of movement, there remains uneasiness at the overt Military presence as such echoes the counterinsurgency strategy in "white areas" previously adopted by the military against left-leaning organizations. Checkpoints are spaces of control, where the military enforces rules that prohibit certain actions and prescribe modes of behavior (Boudreau 2009, 245; Dressler and Guieb 2015, 326). While not as pronounced as the Military's counterinsurgency governance schemes in remote rural villages (e.g., practice of zoning or enclosures, no go zones), military-run checkpoints precisely do not preclude the use of lethal force against violators. Where civilians are interrogated at these quarantine control points, the Military is the authoritative figure to which the former must submit or risk being jailed. The use of the Military and the Police in a public health emergency response is considered an overreaction, particularly when compared to other governments that did not go with this route (Kristine Sabillo, Experts lament Philippine militaristic approach vs COVID-19 pandemic, June 25 2020 ABS-CBN News https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/25/20/experts-lament-philippines-militaristic-approach-vs-COVID-19-pandemic ; Laurel Flores Fantauzzo, In the Claws of Police State, The Baffler, May 06 2020;).

There has already been an uproar from the Philippine business community on the erosion of rule of law as thousands of arrests and detentions have been effected by security forces against lockdown violators (Tony La Vina, Warrantless Arrests in a Pandemic, Manila Standard, June 02 2020, https://manilastandard.net/opinion/columns/eagle-eyes-by-tony-la-vina/325003/warrantless-arrests-in-a-pandemic.html; UN sounds alarm on Philippines highly militarized lockdown response April 29 2020 CNN Philippines https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/29/Philippines-COVID-19-quarantine-police-military.html). Running checkpoints and conducting patrols, which require close dealings with civilians, call for special skills which many troops outside of Mindanao (which have been running checkpoints for ages) lack. This militarized action and rhetoric is

reminiscent of the Duterte administration's war on drugs, which has been disproportionately punitive against the poor and drug users who are labelled as enemy targets (Reyes 2016, 124; Eligh and Kennert 2019, 10).

The Military's involvement must also be placed in the national government's context, primarily the President, re-centralizing power. This tendency, evident in the imposition of Martial Law in Mindanao and the 6-month forced closure of Boracay island, is widely seen as how the President exerts his will against recalcitrant local governments and civil society opponents. Even the language of the Republic Act 11469 "…ensure compliance of local government units in implementing community quarantine measures" sees the military as a way for the State to impose discipline. Rather than showing compassion, the President uses harsh language in berating people and emphasizing punishment in the pandemic response. The deployment of extra military personnel to Cebu City following its return to lockdown mode on July 01, 2020 points to this continuing trend. That the current roster of Cabinet members is dominated by ex-generals, including the head of the Task Force in Cebu City, further reiterates this militarization claims. The language deployed by local authorities echoes the same mindset, emphasizing the deployment of the Military and the Police as necessary to enforce discipline during the lockdown and the pandemic as a war where people are fighting an invisible enemy (Catherine Gonzales, No harm in presence of military tanks during pandemic-Cebu City Mayor, July 02 2020 Philippine Daily Inquirer, https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1300818/no-harm-in-presence-of-military-tanks-during-pandemic-says-cebu-city-mayor). The strong association of the Military to the President is particularly acute in Visayas and Luzon, where city governments had little or no standing working relationships with the Military. The Military mobilized and deployed in their area for pandemic response are not organic to their political ecology.

## Pandemic as a Security Concern? Pitfalls of the Philippine Response

The Philippine government's approach in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has been criticized domestically and internationally as highly militaristic. In addition to the Police, about 15% of the total ground force of roughly 100,000 have been committed to support the enforcement of the enhanced quarantine measures in key cities and urban areas. While the Military is already mobilized for counterinsurgency and counter-terror operations, their presence in checkpoints and roadblocks in Luzon and Visayas cities is out-of-the-norm. Against the backdrop of previous deployments to enforce national government measures, e.g., the war on drugs and the imposition of Martial Law in Mindanao, there is a greater sense of general apprehension on the possibility of use of the lethal force against erring citizens. This sentiment is reinforced by an ex-military general-dominated Cabinet and designations into the key decision-making body that is supposed to anchor government response to the pandemic. The use of the language of "discipline" by the President and government officials alike and their emphasis towards the punishment of violators of quarantine and curfew measures underpin authoritative claims by security personnel when dealing with civilians.

That President Duterte chose to mobilize the Military and the Police more extensively in the pandemic response in keeping with the emergency powers vested upon him by Congress is part of the overall trend of military role expansion. The Philippine Military, which already has a substantial local footprint fighting a three-pronged rebellion and terror groups, has been saddled with numerous tasks, foremost of which are natural disaster response, the conduct of elections, and support to law enforcement. In urban areas where they are already present as garrisons or command headquarter for counterinsurgency operations, their ubiquitousness does not invite surprise from locals. Local government authorities, particularly in key Mindanao cities that host these military units, have long-standing relationships with them through civil-military operations, task forces dealing with security matters, or the Peace and Order Councils. The Military's

domestic presence for counterinsurgency greatly overlaps with the authorized mobilization for the COVID-19 pandemic. In these areas, checkpoints, roadblocks, and curfews are expected, as is everyday living in securitized environments where one's person, vehicle, and belongings are subject to search and interrogation. While perhaps less strict than in rural areas in terms of the Army's counterinsurgency governance scheme, it is nevertheless worrisome as the Government's enforcement directive seems to be more inclined towards the apprehension, arrest, and detention of violators of lockdown measures.

As mobilizations are by command area of responsibility, there is a tendency at the level of ground personnel to look at all missions, including the COVID-19 pandemic deployment, as internal security-related. As previously explained, the Military has identified units presumably to do these tasks, e.g., Civil-Military Operations Unit for humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, Disaster Risk Reduction Task Groups, but the same personnel and equipment are also utilized for counterinsurgency operations, which is the organization's primary focus. They are mobilized only for the purpose of shifting from one mission to another, like changing hats. Still, they are located in the same space and always armed and in uniform while publicly performing their tasks.   While great strides have been made towards formalization in terms of the AFP's relationship with other civilian agencies with respect to these mission areas, there remains a residual danger that any type of military in-theater presence outside of their core task, i.e., combat, is detrimental to the organization in the long run. Checkpoints are inevitably spaces of volatile encounters, and military personnel accustomed to watching out against terrorists and rebels in the midst can easily misbehave. Checkpoints and roadblock assignments where one deals with civilians on a more personalized basis require skill sets that non-CMO trained personnel do not necessarily possess. As cautioned by Harig (2019) in his study of Brazilian military personnel deployed for law and order operations, there is a tendency to value military effectiveness more than civilian protection. Where

the political messaging from the National Government frame the pandemic as a security concern, they inevitably imbue uniformed personnel with greater authoritative claims than the local civilian officials who fear legal suit coming their way. The State of Emergency is no different from Martial Law because the outcome is disempowering to local governments.

The robust role given to the Military in the pandemic response was gradually eased with the shift from lockdown to general community quarantine measures in many localities beginning June 01 2020. With the exception of some cities in Metro Manila and Cebu City where the lockdown had been extended or reintroduced, quarantine control points were dismantled or now only feature the police. Regardless, the specter of arrests and detentions for violations of quarantine measures and the government's high-handed approach towards discipline rather than a persuasive appeal for risk-reducing behavior rankled many. Moving forward, this type of military mobilization and deployment needs to be calibrated in terms of the need to bear arms while on duty, manpower requirement (utilizing civilian reserves or auxiliaries, or those in CMO units), and local mechanisms that empower local health officials, not uniformed personnel, over decisions on how best to address the pandemic. The Military is already spread out thin. Its resources are put to better use in addressing internal security concerns where its core competency lies.

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# Community Peacebuilding and COVID-19 Responses: Lessons from BARMM

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## Introduction

At the outset, the GPH-MILF peace agreement's normalization track is momentarily halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The BARMM, while in transition, has to face the critical task of addressing and mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. The normalization track is one of the GPH-MILF peace document's annexes, which outlines the decommissioning process where MILF combatants will "put their weapons" beyond use. As in any politically-negotiated agreement, the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic law (BOL) has raised the communities' expectations, particularly those marginalized communities who want to experience social security, economic progress, and sustained peace and development in the community.

While Intergovernmental organizations such as the UN through its Secretary-General calls for a global ceasefire so that governments can focus on responding to the global health crisis, proactive and peace-promoting measures and strategies are generally felt at the local level. In the Philippines, the one-year-old Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) while still battling the post-Marawi siege human-induced disaster leaving many internally displaced persons in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City vulnerable, especially with the limited capacity of the post-conflict environment of BARMM in managing the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic given the limited resources and fragile peace condition in the region. Given this context, "community-level *peacebuilding is the first line of defense by conflict-ridden communities, as well as the frontline in preventing and containing the transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic*" (Abo

& Ayao, 2020). Moreover, multi-stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations, in partnership with the local and national government must strengthen efforts in supporting local capacities, including those from women's rights and youth-led organizations; leverage community mobilization; and promote ownership of the COVID-19 response (Abo & Ayao, 2020).

Building peace in a sustainable, hence effective manner is essential in countering civil conflicts besetting countries in the post-cold war era. The mandate of making, keeping, and building peace is principally a convergence between the western, rational-legal state and more local and socio-historical processes of liberal nation-state building. The state's common goal and civil society actors create a system to sustain peace as the state's raison d'etre and the political process. On the other hand, it represents the local aspiration for peace, security, development, and identity into the state, localized, contextual, and culturally sensitive and sensible to the community (Paris, 1997).

Hence, this study is conceived from this need to look at peacebuilding from a contextual nature of post-conflict peacebuilding and culture-oriented democratic governance at a community level. This study is a modest attempt to contribute to the scarce literature on peacebuilding at the local level, at a micro level, and in a context-specific setting. It provides narratives of post-conflict peacebuilding in the time of pandemic response, putting into consideration the socio-cultural nuances of the post-conflict environment. This study will benefit the academe, public administrators, development practitioners, and other institutions working on post-conflict rehabilitation and social reconstruction of their communities.

## Review of Related Literature

Peacebuilding is defined by Spence (2001) as those activities and processes dealing with and focusing on the root causes of the conflict, rather than just the effects; supporting the rebuilding and rehabilitation of all sectors of the war-torn society and subsequently, encourage and support interaction between all sectors of society to repair damaged relations and start the process of restoring dignity and trust and in the process, recognizing the specifics of each post-conflict situation such as participation of the local population in the implementation and sustainment of activities and processes even after the recovery phase has passed (Lambourne, 2004:3-7).

In challenging the mainstream democratic peace theory, which put forward the idea that states should maintain certain political regimes or economic systems, Roland Paris (2004), on the contrary, argued that researchers and practitioners should analyze the needs of a community before determining a superior structure (i.e., state). He contends that peacebuilding remained ideal despite capitalism's thriving system in a post-conflict environment (Paris, 2004: 156).

In his study on valuing the local in international peacebuilding, Nathan Funk (2012) noted that peacebuilding activities frequently marginalized local actors and relegated the population's local expectations and needs. In many cases, international peacebuilding efforts yielded merely a temporary reduction in armed violence, but not a robust and deeply rooted reconstruction and social transformation process, hence ineffective in making peace lasts. He emphasized the need to acknowledge local agency and empowerment as key factors in peacebuilding theory and practice (Funk, 2012:391-408).

Furthermore, local peacebuilding should also be about the economic sustainability of projects relevant to the continuous process of building peace and reconciliation. Thus, peacebuilding and reconciliation projects that are economically sustainable are likely to lead to more cross-community interaction and community-building, leading to building

long-term sustainable relationships among members of both communities. Further, several initiatives strongly contribute to the sustainability of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts, including (1) investing in training and capacity building, (2) education and empowerment, (3) building partnerships that connect several peacebuilding projects, and (4) enabling people to work together (Skarlato et al. (2012).

In the case of BARMM, community-oriented localized responses to the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified by the Bangsamoro communities include (1) tapping the community's local capacities. In the case of Maguindanao, the local government units (LGUs) partner with the local farmers to sustain the food supplies (such as rice and vegetables) in the province; (2) revives the 'barter system 'to cope with the issue of transportation, and limited mobility (leading to scarcity of supplies) in the island provinces of Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, and; (3) enhance social solidarity through community kitchens initiated by the local civil society organizations in Cotabato and Lanao areas.

What follows is a discussion of the abovementioned initiatives at the community level in some areas of the BARMM.

## Community Peacebuilding Practices in the Bangsamoro

### Community gardening towards Food Security

Tapping on the most important resource in the community, the human resource, as in the case of Maguindanao, certain LGUs have partnered with the local farmers to sustain the food supplies such as rice and vegetables in the province

In the municipality of Datu Anggal Midtimbang in Maguindanao, the LGU has partnered with the women farmers in the co-production of a 'community gardening livelihood project" as their way to help a group of women farmers to generate income and to boost the immune system of the residents. Since the pandemic, the local government has been

buying vegetables from the women farmers in the Barangays Buluan, Tulunan, and Mapayag to distribute to the rest of their communities, ensuring food for the residents of the locality (https://www.agriculture.com.ph/).

This is an important component of human security in the Bangsamoro because it is centered on people's local needs. Local information is being shared to sustain the food security agenda, one of the major concerns by the economically marginalized communities in the Bangsamoro. Through community gardening, the residents were able to stay socially connected and build a sense of hope and proactive engagement amidst the continued threat of armed conflict in the Maguindanao province. Through this pandemic, they strengthened their communal bond, particularly among women and youth (Online interview with a community leader, 25 May 2020).

Reviving the "barter system" as a way to cope with the limited mobility and keeping up with social connectivity.

This traditional system of trading is rather practiced with a twist in the Bangsamoro, such that according to an elderly woman resident in the island province of Tawi-Tawi, they are using "barter" mainly as a mode of exchange of foodstuff, particularly rice and other nonfood stuff from the neighbouring city in Zamboanga where the latter get the supply of fresh seafood items for their marketplace (online interview, 25 May 2020). In Lanao del Sur, the barter system is done through social media where the exchange of nonfood items is traded through closed-group Facebook pages. Members who are usually millennials are invited to join the online community (remote interview of an online member, 24 June 2020).

Enhancing social solidarity and generosity through community kitchens initiated by the local civil society organizations in Cotabato and Lanao areas

This initiative was done by the Cotabato-based Mindanao People's Peace Movement (MPPM) by mobilizing the donations made from and with the communities. They serve particularly in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Sultan Naga Dimaporo in Lanao del Norte, and Cotabato City, in the BARMM. According to the former Secretary-General, Ms. Janel Penson, the community kitchen initiative was part of the solidarity gesture called "Duyog Ramadhan" last May with the said areas' Muslim communities. It has been part of the cultural solidarity actions they've been promoting in fostering intercultural understanding and religious tolerance between Mindanao's tri-people, particularly with Muslim Bangsamoro people (remote conversation, 15 July 2020). Significantly, the MPPM is a tri-people People's organizations that aimed at promoting a participatory-based and rights-based approach to community peacebuilding.

### Challenges of COVID-19 Governance in the BARMM

The post-conflict environment in BARMM needed a balancing act to ensure the "inclusivity" of the process such that Indigenous people's rights must be protected and recognized on the one hand while ensuring conflict sensitivity and gender-responsive governance in the MILF-led autonomous region. Cultural sensitivity includes the following: Shari'ah-compliant management in the relief services (halal food packs, management, and burial of death according to Muslim rites in coordination with the NCMF, etc.), and the recognition of the traditional and customary practices of the IPs in the region (i.e., securing their ancestral lands and tribal laws must be respected), leading towards a genuinely peaceful, healthy and sustainable communities in the Bangsamoro. However, peacebuilding is no easy task.

At this juncture, it also important to tackle some of the challenges in the COVID-19 response relative to peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro areas.

*Battling Misinformation and Disinformation Online*

During the pandemic, information can heal or hurt people. Information and misinformation spread like the virus. An informed public is much needed in a post-conflict environment in the BARMM. The public must be engaged to build confidence to heal the divide after decades of mistrust and discriminatory attitudes by the majority against the minority populations in the area. Recently, Muslim residents from Marawi City expressed dismay on social media with what they perceived as a discriminatory policy by its neighboring City of Iligan. The city strictly imposed lockdown and limiting the entry of non-residents to the city. This policy caused panic. Many of the Lanao del Sur residents depend on the city for food and nonfood items. After such an incident, the mayors of Iligan City and Marawi City made a joint meeting to clarify issues and concerns. The hype got overboard due to misinformation as these neighboring cities are implementing the enhanced community quarantine. After the dialogue between the two chief executives, tensions were managed. The two cities are now managing their covid information and guidelines regularly on their social media page.

As it turns out nowadays, access to relevant information does not necessarily lead to an informed public. Media literacy and responsible social media usage need to be included in the school curricula for basic, secondary, and tertiary education. Participatory and citizen-led community responses are required steps in a region like BARMM. Hopefully, it led to a coordinated and integrated approach for both short-term and long-term responses in mitigating the destructive impacts on the most vulnerable communities

*Easing Out Government Services*

When people feel that their government is responsible for handling the crisis in a transparent and accountable manner, cooperation rather than conflict is strengthened. The crisis is contingent on the clear, communicated message of coordinate efforts at the national and local government levels. The BARMM followed the whole-of-government

approach by the National Task Force against COVID-19. It calls for support from all sectors of Philippine society to fight the pandemic. However, planning to beat the virus is one thing; implementing the mechanisms to mitigate and prevent the disease's spread is another thing.

The Bangsamoro government has set up the following institutional mechanisms as a protective and proactive measure to contain the spread of the virus: (1) Information dissemination and sharing through the BARMM's Rapid Emergency Action on Disaster Incidence (READi-BARMM); (2) Localized Social Amelioration Assistance Program through the Ministry of Social Services and Development (BARMM-MSSD), Local Quick Response Fund and Localized Buying of agricultural products such as rice and; (3) Exploring Alternative testing for COVID-19 through the Ministry of Health (BARMM-MOH) for mass testing of patients under investigations (PUIs) and patients under monitorings (PUMs). Be that as it may, the real challenge for the regional government, according to BARMM Minister of Interior and Local Governance, Atty. Naguib Sinarimbo is the difficulty in government services during the transition. The Bangsamoro bureaucracy works on a skeleton force since only two of the Ministries (Ministry of Interior and Local Governance or MILG and the Ministry of Social Services and Development or MSSD) under the Office of the Chief Minister have intact employees (www.bangsamoro.gov.ph)

The other ministries are still filling up in their offices after the mass lay off workers when the regional government started to operate.  Those who remain in the frontline, such as the staff and volunteers of the MILG and the MSSD, are doing their share to ease the burden of the people awaiting relief assistance.

*Securing Food and Medical Supplies for the BARMM residents*

The poor are afraid of losing their jobs. They have a general sense of economic insecurity. Hence, the constant call for mass testing. With improve capability, it would ease mobility and lift the community out of quarantine. A prolonged quarantine, observers believed, damage the nation's economy in the long run. For that matter, any policy may not be easy in a country polarized by politics and general mistrust against the state. Localized responses are needed to complement national efforts to contain the virus's spread and prevent the breakdown of our public health system.

In the province of Maguindanao, the LGUs demonstrated capability in securing the food supply. They purchase from local farmers. They bought basic foodstuffs like rice and vegetables to sustain the local economy of the community. This practice needs to be strengthened to boost the income of local farmers. They can also be considered as front liners in this pandemic. LGUs also address the limited supply of food LGUs expressed the fear by many that if this lockdown continues for a much more extended period, we will be facing an economic breakdown. The public health crisis, coupled with the economic crisis, is a sure recipe for chaos and damaging uncertainty.

*Tackling the Issue of Transportation and Connectivity*

Public transport suspension makes it hard for front liners such as government workers and humanitarian groups to provide medical and socio-economic services. In the BARMM, the initial response of the LGUs as pointed out by Atty. Sinarimbo is securing their communities by restricting those coming in and out of their communities, so it is quite challenging; for example, there was an initial refusal to enter the relief in Cotabato City. This refusal of entry into the city came from the existing guidelines restricting the movement of people.

Another challenge is the transportation of supplies of relief goods from Manila to Cotabato. Through the MILG, the Bangsamoro government made an arrangement with

the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to use the C-130 plane for the transport. A synchronization of efforts between the Regional and the LGUs in the Bangsamoro to ease the logistical problem in delivering the goods to the communities (Sinarimbo, iag.org. webinar interview).

### Strengthening Social Cooperation Amidst Physical Distancing

According to Atty. Sinarimbo, in a webinar series produced by the Cotabato-based Institute for Autonomy and Governance ([www.iag.org](www.iag.org)), what is notable in the Bangsamoro response to COVI-19 is the crafting of a contingency plan drafted by a joint team from the various ministries of the regional government and the Mindanao Humanitarian Team (MHT). The MHT consists of the international non-government organizations (INGOs) operating in Mindanao, specifically in the Bangsamoro region. This contingency plan utilized in the autonomous region focuses on two essential things: public health and law and order. This strategy is aligned with the national goal of slowing down the disease's spread while waiting for the vaccine to arrive. To reach as many people in the region, especially in impoverished areas, the Bangsamoro government is conscious of maintaining physical distancing during packing and delivering relief goods by both front liners and volunteers.

Be that as it may, some peace-promoting localized responses in the Bangsamoro region respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Communication and Coordination

The BARMM Inter-Agency Task Force is maximizing the use of the social media platform in terms of coordinating and communicating relevant public information such as a real-time update on the status of the affected population in BARMM, including the number of PUIs, PUMs, and confirmed COVID cases and more importantly highlighting the recovered patients. They have also been in touch with the Department of Foreign Affairs

(DFA) in their aggressive contract tracing of the two hundred fifteen (215) tableeghs (Muslim missionaries) who attended the mass religious gathering in Malaysia. Some of them voluntarily surrendered for testing and treatment. At the same time, local tracing and monitoring of those who remained in hiding are on-going. In the spirit of community cooperation, many Meranaws, for example, in Lanao del Sur, campaigned in social media with the hashtags ( #TataregKasaWalay (StayHome) and #DikaPamokeg (Don't Lie) to save lives. It's social media to help the government tracing and tracking those who contracted the disease. There is much to be done to make public information about COVID-19 to dispel the stigma and negative stereotyping, which can further escalate to violent conflicts.

*Social and Economic Assistance*

Aside from the relief assistance from the BARMM, Muslim residents have this practice called "Zakat" (Islamic obligation to donate a certain amount proportion of wealth to charity) and "Zadkah" (almsgiving, unlike Zakat, it is not compulsory). Tapping on Islamic finance practices such as giving charity for the affluent member of the Muslim Filipinos is a viable way of maximizing the redistribution of socio-economic assistance. The social justice provision in the Qur'an, which among other things, feed the poor, clothe the naked and care for the orphans and the elderly are some of the existing moral practices in the Bangsamoro, which can augment the resources of a developing country like ours. This practice is among the reasons for resilience among the Meranaw IDPs who have been internally displaced since 2017 post-Marawi siege and must be considered in the programming of the Bangsamoro governance (Ulama in Marawi City, remote interview, 02 June 2020).

*Bayanihan*

Like the rest of Philippine society, the Moro people value cooperation and solidarity, especially in a crisis. In Marawi City, the Inspired Young Optimists Guild (IYOG), a group of young professional volunteers, raised thirty thousand pesos (30,000) for the 50 street vendors in the city whose current livelihood source is gone. Another inspiring story is the Young Muslim Professions' fundraising campaign in Zamboanga City to purchase PPEs in the island province of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi. Interestingly, people from the island provinces are also offering their fresh catch of seafood in exchange for rice (because of lack of supply due to lockdown) as relief assistance mentioned by Atty. Sinarimbo, in his webinar ([www.iag.org](www.iag.org)).

The Bayanihan spirit is gleaned from the support of the communities in the transitional government amidst the challenge of COVID-19. This is done through the advocacy support of civil society organizations such as Mindanao PeaceWeavers (MPW). On July 30, the MPW, together with the communities in the region, pushed for a policy agenda in democratic governance covering challenges in crisis governance, peacebuilding, and participatory-based governance in the Bangsamoro, through offline convergence and online solidarity forum ([https://mindanaogoldstardaily.com/csos-slated-to-hold-policy-dialogue-tomorrow/](https://mindanaogoldstardaily.com/csos-slated-to-hold-policy-dialogue-tomorrow/)).

## Concluding Remarks

This study has reiterated the need to complement the top-down approach of peacebuilding with community approaches to sustain peace efforts, especially in the pandemic. The communal spirit of peacebuilding can be gleaned from the continued support of the local stakeholders in the Bangsamoro peace process by complementing the national, regional, and local governments' efforts at the local level. Due to limited mobility and community quarantines, Maguindanao residents have tapped into their community garden to ensure food is secured at every table. Secondly, they have also

maximized social media use in communicating in reaching out to their fellow citizens and leaders in the Bangsamoro government. Strategic coordination is made between the regional government and the BARMM provinces through the MILG, and peace advocacy has been strengthened through the willingness to engage in the localized responses and peace-promoting COVID-19 responses. The Bangsamoro community has manifested that they are the front lines in the fight against the pandemic.

Finally, the key to community peacebuilding is maximizing the community's resources, including their active participation as local concerns are addressed better local ownership of the program leading to its sustainability.  Noteworthy, the BARMM is seen as one of the peacebuilding partners in steering the community towards the collective goal of peaceful and healthy communities, taking the role of a facilitator post-conflict peacebuilding programs, as in the case of the study, the mobilization of the community-oriented response to the COVID-19 pandemic is deepening the democratic agenda of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

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# Calibrated Framework Towards the New Normal: The Davao Region Experience

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## Introduction

The coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) is an infectious[3], highly transmittable, and pathogenic viral infection that emerged from Wuhan, China[4]. Officially declared as a pandemic on March 11, 2020[5], the disease is said to be transmitted from one person to another via droplets (when one talks, sneezes or coughs), through contact and fomites[6]. The first recorded COVID-19 case[7] in the Philippines was noted during the latter part of January 2020, which made the government impose stricter regulations. Some of these regulations include the declaration of a travel ban both for inbound and outbound passengers, the creation of the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the

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[3] Coronavirus. Accessed at https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1. Accessed on April 28, 2020.

[4] Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 94. Accessed at https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-COVID-19.pdf?sfvrsn=b8304bf0_4. Accessed on April 28, 2020

[5] WHO declares novel coronavirus outbreak a pandemic. Accessed at https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/ 3/12/WHO-COVID-19-pandemic.html?fbclid=IwAR3TGlDwCI-GRuRfTV7WcWCa0xymJi208ZaegQey_bTeKvthls7o Mla8otU. Published March 12, 2020. Accessed on April 28, 2020.

[6] COVID-19 FAQS. Accessed at https://www.doh.gov.ph/COVID-19/FAQs. Accessed on April 28, 2020

[7] First recorded case in the Philippines was a 38-year old female Chinese national who travelled to the country from Wuhan (https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/1/30/Philippines-coronavirus-case.html). Her partner, a 44-year old male Chinese national was the second confirmed case in the country and was subsequently reported to be the first reported death of a patient outside China (https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/2/2/novel-coronavirus-cases-death-Philippines.html)

Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, the imposition of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) measures all over the country, and the purchase of testing kits, personal protective equipment (PPEs), and other medical supplies.

In the Davao Region, the first recorded COVID-19 case was reported on March 15, 2020[8]. On the same day, Davao City Mayor, Hon. Sara Duterte, and Tagum City Mayor, Hon. Allan Rellon, issued a joint statement declaring both cities to be on partial lockdown. Two days later, the Region 11 COVID-19 Task Force, headed by Mayor Duterte, was created to synchronize the Region's efforts in combating the disease. Some of the guidelines set by the Task Force include strict home quarantine and the issuance of Food and Medicine passes; suspension of private and public transportation for inter-LGU travels; transportation arrangements with strict social distancing measures for the identified frontliners; unrestricted movement of cargoes; imposition of curfew hours, liquor ban, social distancing, and other protective measures[9]. However, despite the efforts of the Region, even with the extension of the Community Quarantine, new cases had been continuously recorded daily. Though there is relative improvement with regard the number of active cases, it is still vital to understand the COVID-19 Epidemiology in Region XI to further improve the measures being done to combat the pandemic especially since, during the time of the study, there was no mass testing conducted in the Region yet.[10].

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[8] Mindanao's 2nd confirmed COVID-19 case reported in Davao region; Davao and Tagum cities declare 'partial lockdown'. Accessed at https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2020/03/mindanaos-2nd-confirmed-COVID-19-case-reported-in-davao-region-davao-and-tagum-cities-declare-partial-lockdown/. Accessed on April 28, 2020.

[9] New guideline issued by Regional TF on COVID-19. Accessed at https://mindanaotimes.com.ph/2020/04/07/new-guideline-issued-by-regional-tf-on-COVID-19/. Accessed on April 28, 2020

[10] It should be noted that at the time of writing, more testing sites have been already identified and testing mechanisms in the region have already been set in place.

To this end, the Joint Ateneo Institute of Mindanao Economics[11], JAIME[12], initiated a baseline data analysis of COVID-19 cases in the Region in the hope of understanding the pandemic's impact on life and property and eventually formulating a *"Calibrated Quarantine Proposal in the New Normal"* which the local chief executives in the Region may consider in making decisions on the ways forward, post May 15, 2020 ECQ. The scope of this analysis covers only the COVID-19 regional data from March 8 to May 6, 2020 as reflected in the Department of Health XI (DOH XI) case tracker published in its official website. Qualitative data are unavailable due to mobility concerns on the part of the researchers. Hence, the data presented and analyzed in this research simply utilized the descriptive analysis approach using basic statistical tools.

This paper is divided into four parts. Part 1 discusses the profile of the Davao Region in terms of its population, economy, and health. Part 2 provides the baseline COVID-19 data of the Region from March 8 to May 6, 2020. Some of the baseline data discussed were on who are the most affected, how transmission commonly happens, and the rate of admission in the Region. Lastly, Parts 3 and 4 discuss the Proposed Quarantine Model and its implications on the New Normal.

**Davao Regional Profile**

The Davao Region[13] is mainly composed of four main provinces - Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, and Davao de Oro. The Region has a high level of functional literacy (86%) with 13.7% of its household existing on a PhP 25,912 per capita poverty threshold per annum. Among the cities and municipalities in the Region, Davao City is

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[11] JAIME or the Joint Ateneo Institute of Mindanao Economics is a research consortium of the five (5) Jesuit Universities in the Philippines established in 2015 following the Mindanao Jesuit Conversations. It is currently lodged in Ateneo de Davao University.
[12] Members of the Study Group: Ms. Tetchie D. Aquino, Atty. Romeo T. Cabarde Jr., Atty. James Earl R. Chew, Mr. Jeff Y. Fuentes,
Ms. Jonalyn T. Marcojos, Mr. Christian C. Pasion
[13] Davao Profile. Accessed at http://davao.da.gov.ph/index.php/about-us/regional-profile

the most densely populated City where many of its populace come from the nearby provinces who travel to the City for work and education.

The largest business sector in the Region includes Wholesale and Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Hotels and Restaurants, Agriculture and Forestry, and Education. Around 2.9 million individuals actively participate in the Region's labor force with the services sector contributing the largest (49.9%) to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). This also means that because of the pandemic, the services sector has the largest number of affected workers, losing income of around PhP 2.6 billion of the total regional loss of PhP 3.36 billion. In addition, if there is no registered growth in the GRDP during the pandemic, the number of poor families in the Region is estimated to increase from 176,400 families to 251,543 families. Even at best where the decrease in GRDP is only 1%, the number of poor families will still go up to 188, 923 families. It should also be noted that even with the Social Protection Programs of the Government (Social Amelioration Program, *Pantawid Pamilyang* Pilipino Program,   Small Business Wage Subsidy Program, etc.) , all of the families in the lower income bracket (PhP 8,333 monthly income and below) will still not be able to surpass the poverty and food threshold.

At the time of the study, there were only 23 hospitals in the Region - 18 private and 5 public - that are classified as Level 2 and 3 hospitals. Of the Level 3 hospitals, four of the five are located in Davao City (Southern Philippines Medical Center, Brokenshire Integrated Health Ministries Incorporated, Hospital, San Pedro Hospital of Davao City, Inc. and Davao Doctors Hospital). Only 389 ventilators were available to be used for severe COVID-19 cases. In addition, based on the ideal ratio standards set by the World Health Organization, there was an inadequate number of health professionals in the Region with only 3 doctors and 7 nurses available for every 10,000 population.

As the main gateway of the Region, the City Government of Davao has put up early pre-emptive measures that cushioned the influx of COVID-19 cases in the Region. As have

been observed and experienced by the researchers of the study, public health safety protocols and quarantine measures were the primary strategies[14] of the Region in containing the transmission of the disease. In addition, the researchers surmised that three lines of defenses were observed in the Region's COVID-19 response - pubic health in the frontline, law and order in the midline, and the economy in the backline.

## COVID-19 Baseline Data

Most of the cases recorded in the Region were in Davao City where, at the time of the study, handles 88.75% of the COVID-19 cases. Data show that there are more males infected than women and that transmission was primarily obtained through exposure to a person with a confirmed COVID-19 case. Mobility and social behavior appear to be the principal precursors of the infection.

Infected individuals were found across all age brackets and for the Region, age does not appear to be a factor in either recoveries or fatalities. From the onset of symptoms, data show that recovery takes longer (22 days) compared to fatality (14 days). In addition, there are more recoveries (53.12%) than fatalities (13.2%). Pre-existing health conditions were suspected as comorbidity factors to fatalities, but this needs to be further studied as data were unavailable at that time. The population density shows no link to the viral spread, but risk is high especially in densely populated communities with contiguous and adjacent houses.

There was a decrease in marginal admissions during the period of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) compared to the initial General Community Quarantine (GCQ) period. Cases appear to have risen again during the Extended ECQ (EECQ) which could have been a result of having more testing facilities and faster processing of test

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[14] It should be noted that during the time of the study, there was no mass testing mechanism in place yet and many of the policies to arrest the pandemic were more reactive than proactive.

results. This is also apparent in the data on doubling rate which was slower during the ECQ period (44 to 32 days) compared to the GCQ period (4 to 3 days) but became faster during the EECQ (32 to 27 days). Despite this, there appears to be proof in the effectiveness of quarantine measures in containing the disease. The trend shows that the flatter increases over a longer period due to implemented interventions compared to having no intervention at all. Hence, keeping the interventions in place will result in a flatter rate of increase. The longer the doubling time, the lesser the reproduction rate.

**The Calibrated Quarantine Framework for the New Normal: A Proposal**
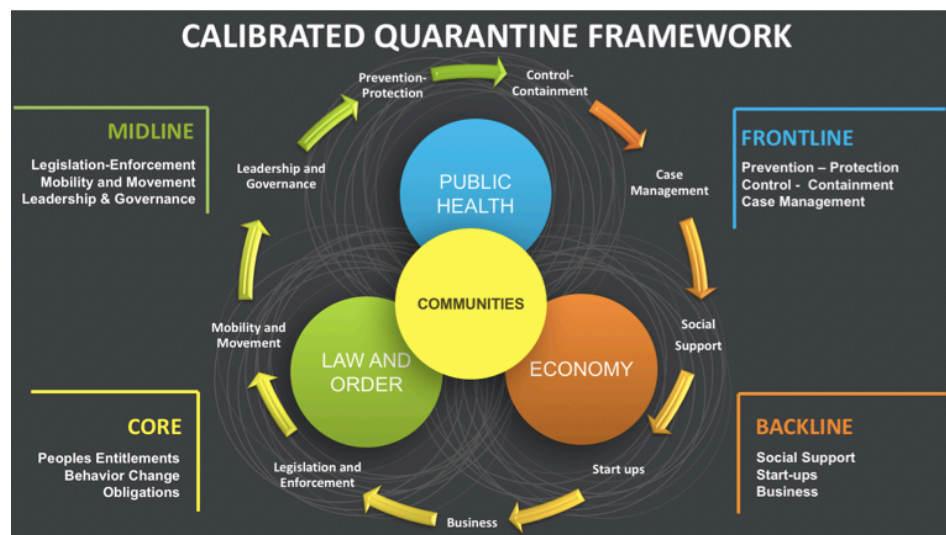


**Figure 1.0.** The Calibrated Quarantine Framework[15]

The main objective of the study was to formulate recommendations to the local government that are based on analyzed data. Hence, given the findings[16] of the study, a

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[15] Unlike the national model of quarantine that appears to be like a switch (GCQ-ECQ-GCQ), Davao Region must think of a water surge barrier model, where floodgates are opened one at a time in order NOT to overwhelm the communities with the impact of easing in and out from the quarantine measures.

[16] The results of the study was reviewed and presented to a panel of experts for their comments and validation which led to the drafting of the Proposed Calibrated Quarantine Framework. The Panel of Experts is composed of Epidemiologists, Statisticians, Social Scientists and Medical Practitioners from all across the Region. In addition the Proposed Framework was as well presented to the Davao City Government and the Commission on Population and Development Region X!.

Proposed Calibrated Quarantine Framework for the New Normal[17] was formulated, which proceeds from the COVID-19 observable responses implemented in the Davao Region. The framework underscores three mutually reinforcing components of **public health, economy, and law and order[18].** The public health response provides the *frontline defense* consisting of three main elements: prevention - protection, control - containment, and case management. Law and order serves as the *midline defense* composed of legislation - enforcement, mobility and movement regulation, and leadership - governance. Economy is the *backline of defense* which comprises social support, start-ups, and business as its main elements. At the core of the mutually reinforcing components are the **communities**[19] which shall stand to benefit or suffer under regulated conditions. Communities need to be engaged in moving forward since their participation is critical in calibrating a new society. Communities need to manifest their commitment to behavioral change under the new normal by exacting compliance, cooperation, and mutual support.

In the proposed framework, calibration entails that the easing out of restrictions should take place in several phases, similar to the opening of floodgates one at a time. The present "switch" model[2021] used by the National Government seems problematic because it usually causes panic, anxiety, and uncertainty among people. Hence, many individuals tend to crowd public places such as markets and groceries and disregard

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[17] As the new normal ushers in the next two (2) years (approximately, following the typical timeline before a vaccine is discovered), Davao Region must be able to formulate a framework for an effective quarantine.

[18] The three mutually reinforcing components were initially identified by the researchers based on the findings of the study and were validated and supported by the Panel of Experts. Same components were also presented to Gov. Uy and Mayor Duterte who had no objections on the data presented.

[19] Communities here refer to the general populace of the Davao Region.

[20] The National Government has imposed four quarantine levels in the country that seems like a switch on what measures to implement. These levels are the General Community Quarantine (GCQ), Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ)

[21] ECQ, MECQ, GCQ, or MGCQ: Understanding what the letters mean. Accessed at https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/18/ecq-mecq-gcq-or-mgcq-understanding-what-the-letters-mean/

public health safety measures. The proposed framework recommends that conversion from Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) to General Community Quarantine (GCQ) must be based on the improvement of the $R_0$ (Rate of Reproduction[22]) at a given time say 14 days, when the virus generally incubates. As have been discussed with the panel of experts, ideally, if the $R_0$ goes to as low as under 1.0, an ECQ can be eased down to GCQ but still calibrated into phases. The additional easing off of restrictions should depend on the $R_0$.

To illustrate the said calibration, GCQ Phase 1, allows the opening of certain businesses under Executive Order 112[23] and allows public transport[24] with safety protocols set in place to operate intra-city/municipality. Since physical distancing in public transport limits the number of passengers that can be accommodated, the use of bicycles is highly encouraged because aside from it being eco-friendly, it reduces the need for public transport. Motorcycles (*habal-habal*) will only be allowed to transport relatives by consanguinity and affinity. There must be a government subsidy for the public transportation sector considering the increase in operations cost and reduction in profit due to the observance of safety protocols.

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[22] Rate of Reproduction is the reproduction number when there is no immunity from past exposures or vaccination, nor any deliberate intervention in disease transmission. Reproduction number is often used to reflect how infectious a disease is.
Accessed at https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/mathematical-models~mathematical-models-models.htm~mathematical-models-2.2.htm

[23] Industries allowed to operate under EO 112 include financial services, business process outsourcing (BPOs) services, legal and accounting services, professional, scientific, technical, and other non-leisure services, barber shops, salons, and other personal care services as defined by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and other non-leisure wholesale and retail establishments at a maximum of fifty percent (50%) work-on-site arrangement and without prejudice to work-from-home and other alternative work arrangements. (https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2020/04apr/2020030-EO-112-RRD.pdf)

[24] Department of Transportation Guidelines suspends the operations of all public transportation in ECQ declared provinces in the country. (https://www.lto.gov.ph/images/Advisory/COVID-19_Transport_Protocol_v3_+ROAD.pdf)

The loosening up of limitations for public transport and economy means that measures ensuring public health be increased. This is to ensure the public that the government is still able to identify, isolate, investigate, test, trace, and treat ($I^3T^3$) probable, suspected, and confirmed COVID-19 cases on account of easing out. Health care system facilities, personnel, and supplies must also be augmented and expanded.

As $R_0$ improves (0.5-0.99 to 0.1 t0 0.49 and to 0.0 - 0.99), local governments within the Region can proceed to the next phase, respectively. However, if $R_0$ worsens, then they must revert to the earlier phase in order to arrest the further increase of $R_0$, through control - containment measures. As mentioned, the $R_0$ must be established consistently for 14 days before moving to the next phase.

All of the suggested measures necessitate the need for strong law enforcement to ensure that the quarantine protocols and public health safety measured are enforced and followed. The higher the compliance rate, the lesser is the possibility for transmission to happen. On the same vein, the more tests that could be conducted, the sooner potential carriers will be isolated. It is important to note that a careful balance between jumpstarting the economy and ensuring public health will be possible by behavioral change and compassionate law enforcement. Until a vaccine is discovered, the principles set allow us to buy time.

To be more specific, the following were the recommended ways forward that may be considered by various local governments in the Davao Region in charting the next steps to address the pandemic[25]:

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[25] It should be stressed that these recommendations were formulated on latter part of May 2020. Some of the recommendations may have been in place, and some may not be necessary at the time of the writing of this article.

## Front Line: Public Health

Table 1 shows the recommended mechanisms in ensuring Public Health, the identified first line of defense according to the researchers. The mechanisms listed are recommended to be implemented until a vaccine has been discovered or depending on the circumstances after, even beyond that. Whether provinces are classified under ECQ or GCQ, among others, these measures should be set in place and be considered as part of the new normal.

**Table 1:**

*Recommendations for Public Health*

| Recommendations for Public Health |
|---|
| - Maintain Public Health Safety Standards (hand hygiene, physical distancing, wearing of masks, thermal scanning, etc.) as universal measures of prevention - protection in all public places and spaces;<br>- Expand or augment the Region's testing capacity to effectively implement the $I^3T^3$ Formula (Identify, Isolate, Investigate, Test, Trace, Treat) as a control mechanism which could be aided with digital technology;<br>- Implement mass testing, especially in densely populated hotspots, also to returning residents, workers, and repatriates;<br>- Increase the capacity of health care facilities both for quarantine and treatment coupled with the early procurement of testing kits;<br>- Contain the spread of the virus by strengthening quarantine measures and prolonging border lockdowns except for the free flow of necessary and essential goods;<br>- Maintain an exclusive COVID-19 treatment facility and secure health facilities for non-COViD cases supported by COVID-19 hotlines, telemedicine, e-prescriptions, and delivery services of medicines;<br>- Integrate mental health support for patients and their families which includes, but not limited to, improving the living conditions of quarantine and treatment facilities;<br>- Ensure help is accessible by setting up hotlines for social support, keeping transportation available for frontline workers, and even providing them Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS);<br>- Improving the capacity of the health care system by keeping adequate medicines, medical supplies, equipment, and protective gear for the medical professionals;<br>- Calibrate health care responses by keeping a timely, accurate, and complete database of COVID-19 related statistics which includes appropriate classification of patients (e.g., suspected, probable, confirmed), cases (e.g., mild, severe, critical, asymptomatic) and all comorbidities and underlying conditions attached. |

As of November 2020, most of the recommended measures are still in place. Some of these include the maintenance of public health safety standards; the expansion of the Region's testing capacity by adding more testing sites in the Region[26], especially in the airports and seaports; the implementation of the QR code system for a more systematic and effective contact tracing; and the maintenance of COVID-19 hotlines, telemedicine, and e-prescriptions. One area that the researchers see that still needs improvement is the COVID-19 data related collection and management.

**Midline: Law and Order**

The Table below lists the recommendations towards law and order. The recommendations are categorized in a timeline - short term (until the end of 2020), middle term (the whole of 2021), and long term (first six months of 2022). The suggested timeline is based on the assumption that no vaccine will be developed until 2022. As such, the said measures could be adjusted if a vaccine is successfully developed and utilized and/or an effective mechanism to control the spread of infection has been implemented.

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[26] Four new COVID-19 test facilities underway in Davao Region Accessed at http://davaotoday.com/main/economy/health/four-new-COVID-19-test-facilities-underway-in-davao-region/

**Table 2:**

*Recommendations for Law and Order*

| Recommendations for Law and Order |
|---|
| **Short Term:**<br>- Critical guidelines and protocols must be issued to funnel the management of the pandemic. This may include, among others, measures for: handling cadavers; disposal of infectious wastes; management of prison facilities and high - density facilities; policy on surveillance, reporting, transport, treatment, and reintegration of patients; re-entry of returning residents, workers, and repatriates; tax amnesties and waivers of penalties; public health safety in public transportation; and standard operating procedures for compassionate law enforcement;<br>- Strict enforcement of enacted measures including the regular monitoring and inspection of public health safety standards which may employ the services of field monitors and crowd controllers; implementation of health-related ordinances; periodic orientation and debriefing of law enforcers; and setting up the Region's ICT capacity and connectivity; |

| Recommendations for Law and Order |
|---|

**Medium Term:**
- Legislate ordinances by codifying all guidelines into a Public Health Emergency Code apart from a New Normal Ordinance and Anti-Discrimination Law against the Front Liners and Infected Individuals and Their Families.

**Long Term:**
- All measures must be assessed, reviewed, and institutionalized in order to strengthen the mechanisms of pandemic prevention - protection, control - containment, case management, social support, law enforcement, and health - economy balance;
- Regulate the movement of people, goods and services by calibrating the opening of air, sea, and land transportation vis-à-vis the need to prolong the regional border lockdown. This may require the maintenance of strategic checkpoints in borders employing no touch inspection policy.
- Calibrate the easing out of quarantine measures by setting clear guidelines on identifying local lockdown measures (district, *barangay*, *purok*, street) backed by epidemiological evidence. This may also need a gradual modification of the implementation of Food and Medicine pass (FM pass), curfew, liquor ban, business operations, public transport, etc.;
- LGUs must create macro and micro structures to manage the impact of COVID-19 and other future pandemics. This means strengthening the regional COVID-19 Task Force as a template; setting up inter-LGU or inter-*barangay* coordination mechanisms together with regional and national agencies; establishing qualified and multi-disciplinary public health emergency teams cross-bred with DRRM (Disaster Risk Reduction and Management) teams complete with contact tracing, investigation, communications, analytics, enforcers, social support, and recovery and reintegration teams;
- Review the public - private partnership in exploring economic start-ups, pandemic response, and social support to ensure resources are adequate;
- Formulate plans or integrate the same in existing DRRM plans covering all aspects of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of pandemics;
- Ensure government transparency during a pandemic by maintaining a regular bulletin of information that is accessible to the public with appropriate messaging and effective messengers;
- Intensify advocacy and education for public health safety measures which may include, among others, distribution of IEC materials, their integration in formal and informal curricula, and democratizing access to education and decision - making through engaging communities in dialogs.

Among the suggested short-term protocols for Law and Order, one of the most immediate guidelines that was set was on the re-entry of returning residents, workers, and repatriates. Davao City, being a major hub for travelers, required passengers entering the City via the Francisco Bangoy International Airport to submit, prior to check-in, a negative RT-PCR test result issued within 72 hours from date of departure. Those who cannot do so will be tested for free upon arrival at the airport but will have to wait for their results, which may take more than eight hours, before they can leave the airport. Those who have positive results will be immediately referred to the COViD facilities in the City.

## Backline: Economy

The pandemic has brought major drawbacks not only to the Davao Region's economy but to the whole country as well. As have been mentioned, even at best, where the decrease in GRDP is only at one percent, the number of poor families in the Region will still go up to 188,923 families. Table 3 shows the recommendations of the study on the economy.

**Table 3:**

*Recommendations for Economy*

| Recommendations for Economy |
| --- |
| - While the battle against COVID-19 is ongoing, LGUs must continue to improve their support provision by immediately designing an up-to-date and transparent registration, coordination, distribution, and monitoring of social support programs and their beneficiaries with the *barangays* designated as the central recording unit of all the assistance provided and the CSSDO/MSWDO as central reporting units. |
| - Keep an adequate volume of resources to provide for affected families and explore alternative sources of income for households in the short and medium terms; |
| - Facilitate a survey on affected local economies in order to establish a database and calibrate start-up funds for qualified beneficiaries especially the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); |
| - Facilitate stimulus packages from the national government and link them to financial markets where soft loans, loan payment holidays. And jumpstart funds are made available for MSMEs; |
| - Evaluate the LGUs' fiscal position to determine its capacity to provide support and draw sources of additional support; |
| - Resume business operations at a calibrated phase according to existing national guidelines and laws prioritizing essential workers for critical economic sectors until a full-scale business environment is restored including the non-critical sectors and their non-essential workers; |
| - Require employer counterpart in ensuring that returning employees are COVID-19 free and remain to be such while at work and in securing a commitment to an internal and external monitoring and inspection of compliance; |
| - Create a compassionate business climate by granting tax deductions as assistance to vulnerable sectors, eliminating or reducing fees, deferring of quarterly taxes, staggering payment of tax liabilities, and lifting the imposition of interests and other penalties; |
| - In the long run, LGUs must create an environment that facilitates technology modernization and utilization which include, but not limited to, the acceleration of infrastructure projects and promotion of at-scale agribusiness development and e-commerce. |

## Core: Communities

At the heart of all measures is honoring the claims and entitlements of peoples and communities especially the vulnerable groups by respecting, protecting, and fulfilling their economic, social, and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. The results of the study show that the residents of the Region have a high level of literacy which means that making the people understand and comply with the measures enacted will be possible as long as proper messaging is done. The people should be ensured that they are able to access correct information and services. Local Government Units in the Region should engage them in decision-making processes by providing platforms for participation and dialogs. In addition, social preparation activities should be integrated in phasing a calibrated quarantine. All of these measures are to ensure the communities ' commitment to behavioral change and collective responsibility against COVID-19.

## Implications to a New (and Better) Normal

Having to manage the impact of COVID-19 in the next two years or at least until a vaccine is available in the market begs an answer to the question on what the new normal is going to be. There appears to be multiple answers to that. For some, it means a reversion to the pre-COVID-19 society, and for others, it is a completely different (new) world. Be that as it may, the new normal, both as a concept and as a reality, must be interrogated. As such, proceeding from the results of the study and their eventual translation into concrete ways of moving forward, the new normal that the residents of the Region will have to face may have to consider the following implications:

The New Normal **challenges** everybody to re-assess their own social behavior. Can one continue to observe physical distancing? Can individuals be consistent in the proper wearing of masks? Do people practice proper hand hygiene? Can everyone be responsible in using information technology?

The New Normal **pushes** everybody to rethink their way of life. How healthy is the food one eats? Do individuals have health-seeking behaviors? How much quality time does one spend with his/her own family and loved ones? To what extent does an individual value financial literacy as a fundamental life skill?

The New Normal **encourages** the revamp of policies and politicians. Are the excesses of market capitalism good for the people? Did the labor standards and practices elevate the dignity of the Filipino workers or did the pandemic reveal a deep sense of alienation? Are the residences and/or settlements designed for a pandemic-proof future? Are the right kinds of leaders being elected?

The New Normal **confronts** everyone with the imperatives of environmental consciousness. How seriously was the natural balance of ecology distributed? Is the merit of keeping organic produce now appreciated? Are healthy and breathable spaces available in urban jungles?

The New Normal **inspires** everyone to aspire further for the common good. Do communities have a sense of collective social responsibility keeping in mind that what one does could affect others? Is the desire to survive the pandemic more of an individual desire or a communal one?

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# Indigenous Practice and System in Times of Crisis: A Closer Look at Sadanga's "Refusal to Accept Relief"

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The COVID-19 pandemic has not left any aspect of human life unmoved. It has penetrated our health institutions, our education system, economy, and governance. It has prompted many initiatives to be launched in response to the threat of the health crisis. Children, women and the elderly are being lgiven attention in terms of their vulnerabilities. However, while there are several attempts to respond to the health crisis, there are sectors of the society that have not received equally important space in the conversation: the indigenous peoples.

Globally, IPs are disproportionately more vulnerable than non-IP communities. Tebtebba presents some of the challenges to the IP communities during the pandemic. IPs lack access to basic amenities and they are virtually invisible as a result of many countries not having their health reports disaggregated by ethnicity. The lack of comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the disease makes it even more difficult for indigenous peoples to navigate the situation. Some IPs are in voluntary isolation, have lesser immunity, and are far from any medical facility. Anyone can get increased vulnerability due to lack of accessible COVID-preventive protection and treatment at the community level. And IPs who are engaged in cash-crop production cannot transport their products to markets due to the lockdown; hence, constraints in mobility limit access to food as well as limit or prevent income. Discrimination further exacerbates the situation as relief packages and health care do not reach marginalized communities. Lastly, government guidelines seem to target urban communities (Tebtebba, 2020).

These vulnerabilities exist but focusing on these vulnerabilities might perpetuate the problematic depiction of indigenous peoples as 'victims', as 'liabilities', as 'backwards', as being 'at a deficit 'and as 'passive recipients 'of aid.  The previously mentioned notions of the indigenous people are narrow and myopic. Global responses from indigenous people's communities have been noted, and more are surfacing.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights reports the following among the responses of indigenous communities:

> *In Uruguay, the Conacha, an umbrella organization for 10 Charrúa indigenous groups, is utilizing an online educational platform of the "Charrúa Intercultural School – ESICHAI" where they exchange ancestral knowledge about the use of medicinal plants to strengthen the immune system.*

> *In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, indigenous communities in    Kananga, Tshikapa and in the Kasai region are increasing their consumption of "Vernonia amygdalina," a traditional plant believed to treat several diseases, including alleviating COVID-19 symptoms. In Nepal, the customary institutions and representative organizations   of   indigenous peoples have focused on increasing their immunity to survive disease, building on their knowledge and practice of the use of herbs and wild spices available in the forest.*

> *In Paraguay, Mbyá-Guarani indigenous leaders are sharing their traditional knowledge on how to produce natural and homemade disinfectants.* (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner forHuman Rights, 2020)

These examples show that IP groups are not just passive recipients nor liabilities in society but also can be solution-generating groups from whom we can learn.

The strength of several indigenous communities has been demonstrated by the global health crisis. Malnutrition and inadequate access to health services make these fragmented communities vulnerable and especially susceptible to infectious diseases. Their way of life is being challenged by the global crisis. Many cultural traditions and rituals which call for assemblies and pilgrimages for celebrations such as harvest or coming-of-age ceremonies have been scrapped. The government's "attempt to adapt to the essential necessities of groups are often vague and do not resolve the long-term effects on indigenous peoples' livelihoods and survival as independent populations" (Indigenous peoples: Vulnerable, yet resilient, 2020).

> *'Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards"* (The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Indigenousness transcends and cuts across geographical boundaries and classes. If we are to look at some examples in the world, there are a lot of pro-active responses by indigenous people's groups.

Just like any other community, indigenous peoples groups have specific conditions that they navigate around and make-do to get by and survive as a community, which is worthy of the attention that could encourage context-specific and localized response initiatives. This paper acknowledges the different conditions under which communities operate

during a crisis.  This is important since notably, in the history of development, a lot of development initiatives have failed because they did not engender a consultative and participatory or at least a democratic space for problem solving.

Historically, indigenous people's groups have been victims of unsung development initiatives, in a mismatch to help the actual situation in which they live.  This paper attempts to integrate indigenous peoples in the picture, specifically in crisis response. The study aims to put into perspective the reality that indigenous practices are still, as they should be, relevant in the discourses on health, policy, sustainability, and ecological issues. Specifically, the researchers aim to see the intricacies of indigenous people's knowledge system in the Cordillera in dealing with the health crisis towards contributing to the creation of intercultural health measures.

Similarly, the study aims to advance the cause for indigenous people against misrepresentation and discrimination. Thus, this study will be a venue to create a space for the indigenous peoples and will aid to generate a wider space for them to be part of the dialogue.

Last March 2020, it was  all over the news that an indigenous peoples 'community waived their relief food packs for "the more needy," or the mayor refused to receive the relief food packages from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.  The mere fact that Sadanga, a community in a fifth-class municipality in the Mountain Province of the Cordillera Administrative Region, is capable of refusing a particular form of help is very interesting.  It became a pool of intriguing information; hence, Sadanga became the primary focus of this study.

In an attempt to uncover the intricacies of the indigenous peoples during the COVID-19 crisis, this paper is grounded on the following preliminary questions:

1) Under what conditions and consideration did Sadanga, a 5th class municipality, 'refuse' the initial relief from the government?

2) What indigenous practices, beliefs, knowledge were at work in relation to the crisis response of the indigenous peoples of Sadanga during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3) How does the indigenous knowledge of the people of Sadanga illustrate the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge in localized crisis response?

In conducting indigenous studies, it is important for the researcher to be culturally sensitive all throughout the research process. **Culture sensitivity** is the mode of behaviour "where cultural peculiarities and specific circumstances of particular indigenous groups are respected and given due consideration". Cultural sensitivity requires a study to aim on correcting historical injustices inflicted on indigenous people's groups and assist in protecting their cultural and historical heritage (NCIP Administrative order No.1, 2012).

According to Hart (2010), in every type of society, there is always a "dominant worldview" that is accepted by majority of the people in that society. He argues however, by following the conflict theory approach, that there is always a substitute perspective, although it may not be as popular as the dominant one. Hart (2010) then proposed that studies on indigenous peoples be detached from the prevailing worldview.

Related to the ideas of Hart, Dutta (2015) noted that many of the scholars from the "global South" noticed that in the present dominant system of development, there is the absence of culture and the lack of opportunity for indigenous peoples to participate in development projects.

*.... the **Culture-Centered Approach (CCA)** advanced by Dutta (2015) sees culture as arising unexpectedly from "subalternity" or the "condition of being erased" which is exemplified through the acts of listening to, and by the political struggles of, "subaltern" communities  (Dutta, 2015).  The proponents of the CCA work for the re-writing of history from the point of view of the groups facing possible extinction.  The followers of CCA distaste the erasure of the voices of the classed, raced, and gendered subjects in the mainstream production of knowledge. They likewise contest the mainstream notion of development that integrates culture and participation in the "advancement of capitalist market promotion". They promote the idea of listening to narratives on local-specific stories and placing focus on the participation of the subalterns in everyday politics* (Dutta, 2015).

In as much as researchers should be culturally sensitive, respect for **traditional knowledge or indigenous knowledge** should be practiced. Traditional knowledge or indigenous knowledge is a combination of the practices of the indigenous communities including their awareness of traditional lifestyles (Fiagoy, 2011). This type of knowledge evolved from an extensive and established collective practice by indigenous and local peoples in the political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres of their lives. The influence of traditional or indigenous socio-political institutions has been downgraded over the years with government systems becoming more and more imposing (Yogogan-Diano, 2015). Castro-Palaganas suggests that policy- makers have the political obligation to include the indigenous people in their research endeavor, planning activities and program development (Castro-Palaganas, 2001).

This study supports Garroutee's call for "**radical indigenism**". Garroutte (2003) came up with this concept that aims to reassert and rebuild knowledge from the "root" or "radix".

With all the above-mentioned considerations, the researchers are guided, although not exclusively, by the "Indigenous Research Paradigm" as supported by Wilson (2008) and Hart (2010). Hart mentions Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), who identified the need for modern indigenous people's research projects that resist the oppression found in research. According to Wilson (2008), this paradigm illustrates that research with and among indigenous communities should be in consideration of the four elements of the paradigm: ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology, which are not to be imagined as separate elements but as elements interplaying within one circle which is the whole paradigm. Hart quotes from Wilson on the elements of the paradigm:

> "Ontology or a belief in the nature of reality. Your way of being, what you believe is real in the world...Second is epistemology, which is how you think about that reality. Next, when we talk about research methodology, we are talking about how you are going to use your way of thinking (your epistemology) to gain more knowledge about your reality. Finally, a paradigm includes axiology, which is a set of morals or a set of ethics."

It is rather ambitious at this phase of the research to fully uncover the depths and intricacies of the indigenous knowledge and people of Sadanga especially because of the logistical complications at play. It is however, hoped that knowledge gained from this inquiry shall ultimately serve both the indigenous and research community.

Apart from the guiding principles of the indigenous research paradigm utilized as a method and framework of understanding, this project does not entirely depart from the

methods that research typically employs. Key-informant interview was essentially helpful in gathering insightful information about the people of Sadanga during the crisis, particularly of the condition under which they operated during the crisis, and the interplay of indigenous knowledge with how crisis is managed and responded to respectively. A great amount of narratives from social media and other digital materials available online were equally important to engage other 'participants 'in the research, especially because social media platforms undoubtedly were key in maintaining the sense of 'community ' (imagined or otherwise) during the crisis.

As the paper aims to understand indigenous communities 'mechanisms to 'sustain 'amid a crisis, it would include indigenous people's beliefs and practices that reveal the capacity of indigenous peoples to address crisis by 'refusing 'help (which, interestingly has not been the way many communities have dealt with the crisis). In addition to this, it is best to look into and understand the part of their culture which are visibly utilized during the time of pandemic and are seen to be pre-emptive in nature.

> "Traditional health systems in indigenous communities are complex and quite structured in their content and internal logic. They are characterized by a combination of practices and knowledge about the human body, and coexistence with other human beings, with nature and with spiritual beings" (ibid).

## Issues and Challenges

Doing research in the context of a pandemic or health crisis is an entirely new perspective, thus methodological challenges were encountered.

> "Social media practices and technologies are often part of how ethnographic research participants navigate their wider social, material and technological worlds, and are equally part of ethnographic practice. This creates the need to consider how

*emergent forms of social media-driven ethnographic practice might be understood theoretically and methodologically"*
(Postill, J. and Pink, S. 2012).

Re-engineering research in the context of the health crisis includes the decision on how to navigate research when the mobility of people is very difficult. Because communities during pandemic are in distress, remote collaboration with co-researcher and research participants was a challenge. Ethical considerations in conducting research under a COVID-19 crisis is likewise a concern since communities are still dealing with the pandemic. Maximizing ICT and social media platforms in the conduct of this research was necessary because there are communities with problems in digital connectivity.

Since the online platform became the main source of information, the study adopted the descriptive analytical method based on the narrative of Sadanga Mayor Gabino P. Ganggangan, gathered through one-on-one key informant interview. Secondary data were taken primarily through online articles, social media posts and websites of local and national news agencies.

The Cordillera Administrative Region has shown the efficiency of applying community traditions in fighting against COVID-19 pandemic. With the strong culture and tradition of "community bond", unity and cooperation, the Cordillera has become a model and been recognized in successfully preventing the spread of the virus.

Carlito Galvez, the incumbent head of the National Task Force in combating COVID-19 encouraged Local Government Units around the country to embrace the excellent practices of the Cordilleras in effectively containing the spread of the virus. He emphasized the strong unity of the Igorots, their culture of good collaborations and the discipline of the people as the major ingredients in winning their fight against the pandemic.

The Cordillera Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMC) Chairman, Albert Mogol, further explained that the Cordillera Administrative Region is practicing a strategy called the 4S's (System, Synergy, Synchronize and Sustain) and 4P's – Predict, Plan, Prepare and Perform. These are implemented together with other pre-emptive measures that the Region is traditionally practicing.

Among the different ethnolinguistic groups found in the Cordillera, many cultures and traditions are useful and are related to the quarantine community rules and regulations. For example in Benguet and the western parts of Mt. Province, they have the concept of "*ubaya*" while for the eastern parts of Mt. Province, like in Bontoc, they have the concept of "*tengaw*". Both serve as the home-quarantine version of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) imposed by the government at the onset of the pandemic.

Minnie Degawan of the Kankanaey tribe and the Director of Indigenous Peoples Program at Conservation International, explained that "*ubaya*" is a crucial ritual to ensure the community's survival. Degawan then concluded that, if the indigenous people's rights to their own resources and lands were protected, they could better fend for themselves, especially in times of pandemics like this. The communities and community members would automatically know and feel what their society needs and give immediate support to each other (Price, 2020).

Indigenous groups in the Mountain Province carried out their various rites to pledge to Kabunian and the All-Powerful Maker to save the province from the feared 2019 Corona Virus Disease (COVID) and to retain the region 's status as COVID-free. The indigenous groups of the Mountain Province include western Mountain Province of Kankanaey, consisting of the communities of Bauko, Tadian, Sabangan, Sagada and Besao; the provincial capital of Bontoc and Sadanga of Bontok; and the communities of Barlig,

Natonin and Paracelis of Balangao. The cultural methods have been passed on from generation to the next over many ages by the descendants of the indigenous groups and are observed for several years. This is the reason the current generation is expected to practice and implement the tradition so that they can retain and secure a very valuable and meaningful practice (Hent, 2020)

Crisis and pandemic responses of the Cordillerans were founded on the customs and practices, traditional knowledge in various situations upsetting their communities. All these however are grounded on the vital belief – *'to make sure that everyone survives in our whole community'*. The term *"kasinna"* which means, 'all will be well' is a hopeful affirmation that soon, balance in the community will be achieved. The term *'kasiyanna'* is actually a hopeful prayer to the world, hoping that sooner or later the world will heal, so that nobody will be sick again (Degawan, 2020).

*"Am-among"*, a Bontoc word which translates to "uniting together" is actually a festival celebrated annually in the town of Bontoc for the purpose of unification and strengthening the bond as a family.  (Cabreza, 2020).

*"Inayan"*, a Kan-kanaey word which means "sinful or terrifying", is very much alive in the Cordillera culture. When elders say don't do something because it is *"inayan"*, it means the action is wrong or it is something that might bring bad luck and misfortune to the community.  This is the reason why two towns in Ifugao, three towns each from Kalinga and Benguet, four towns in Mt. Province and nine towns in Abra returned the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) benefits supposedly for their communities. During the press briefing conducted by Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in May 28, 2020, Director Leo Quintilla reported that a total amount of P10 Million pesos from the Cordillera Administrative Region were returned to the Department. This happened despite the fact that most of the towns who returned their SAP are classified to be part of 4th and 5th class municipalities. To validate and to uncover the real reason behind the action, officers from the Central Office of DSWD visited the region. The *"Inayan"* culture

of Cordillera was predominantly the reason cited (Alimondo, 2020). Although the 'inayan' culture in the Cordillera becomes an interesting subject, the researchers at the moment are particularly challenged to penetrate the core elements at play and the extent to which it is practiced and observed at the moment due to the setbacks caused by the pandemic.

In Bontoc, nobody has entered the border into the area of Bauko, (the northern area of the Cordillera) ever since March 2020. A guideline explained that the restriction was caused by the declaration by local elders, some of whom are also municipal officers, of a*"teng-ao"*. A "*teng-ao*" is the indigenous version of a lockdown; if invoked, based on the agreement of the council of elders, it implies that no one will visit or exit the area for a day or longer (Karlston, 2020). From here alone, we discover how the existing practice of the indigenous peoples in Cordillera have their preexisting localized strategies in containing crises that communities face.

Months after the worldwide crisis caused by COVID-19, the plight of different indigenous groups is increasingly coming to the surface. Publications and researches on indigenous peoples are more frequently being undertaken. This raises hope that indigenous groups will be supported when and if this pandemic is over. It will be wise to learn from them and to guarantee that indigenous people would be at the forefront of all action in terms of their organization and rights. It would also be beneficial to utilize the knowledge and expertise of young people who are exposed to technology to convey the needs of the people to the outside world (Degawan, 2020).

## Sadanga: A Closer Look

Sadanga has eight barangays and a population of more or less 9,000. It is about eight to nine hours away from Baguio City. Of the eight barangays, five barangays are challenged to get connected to the internet even for calls and text messages. As of July 20, 2020, no COVID-19 case has been reported in the municipality.

Last July 2020, in Baguio City, Mayor Gabino P. Ganggangan of Sadanga, Mountain Province allowed the researchers to conduct a key informant interview with him regarding the decision to waive the food packs allotted for Sadanga.

According to the Mayor, it was his personal decision to waive the said food packs from the Department of Social Welfare and Development. His decision was based on his assessment that the rice supply of their municipality was enough to sustain their needs for another two months. Being familiar with the planting and harvesting season, the Mayor was sure that rice would be available for harvest before the community finished their present supply. Unlike other farming communities in the lowland, who harvest then sell their produce to be able to have cash, people in Sadanga plant and harvest their rice and stock it in their granaries for their personal supply until the next harvest season.

Aside from being confident in the availability of rice for the community, the Mayor's decision was also based on what he saw on television regarding families in the lowlands and other urban places who were quarreling because of lack of "*ayuda*" or relief goods. The mayor was aware of the lifestyle of the people in urban cities where most are dependent on a daily supply/purchase of their food needs. The Mayor was so sure of his decision to waive the food packs, and in fact up to the time of the interview, he was glad to inform the researchers that nobody from their community has gotten hungry.

Another major factor why he did not accept the food packs was the practice their community calls "*gawat-abus*". "*Gawat*" came from the term "*gumawat ak kenka*" which means "may I borrow?", while "*abus*" came from the term "*abussek sikka*" meaning "I return the favor". The "*gawat-abus*" system operates on the belief that not everybody is equal…

> …there are those who have more and there are those who have
> less… if it so happened that I am the richer one among our close
> relatives, you can come to me for a loan, and I, being the better
> off, have the social obligation to give you… I cannot refuse you,
> because once I refuse you, that becomes news in the
> community, then people will look down        on me… it will
> be a dishonor for me….

As for the loan, the mayor clarified that it is different from a commercial loan granted by a bank. Though a relative may borrow, for example a cavan of rice, it will be returned with no interest, no deadline, no collateral. "*Gawat-abus*" is somewhat "a type of charity… but is not free". Relatives should also impose among themselves that somehow, sometime later, one has to return what they borrowed, either in cash or in kind or in whatever form…

Lastly, there is also the presence of the *"kadanggyans"* in the community. The mayor can ask the "richer ones" (*"kantyawan ko"*) or urge them to look after their other relatives who do not have food during the pandemic. It is not proper "to have a bounty, while your relatives are hungry". This is part of the Sadanga culture that motivated the decision of the Mayor to waive the relief packs.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Mayor Ganggangan has been closely monitoring the directives from the national government. When the President declared the "lock down" and mandated all local government officials to enforce quarantine or ECQ (Enhanced Community Quarantine) the Mayor reflected on how to implement the mandate properly. He believes that "people are born to be free"… and sees the quarantine method as something "worse than the marital law"… so he asked himself: "as a Mayor, how can I follow the order of the President to lock down everybody?" He was sure that his

constituents "will revolt against it". Considering the nature of the pandemic, the mayor thought that "the only way that he can get the cooperation of the people is for them to understand why". At this point the indigenous concept of "*far-en*" came into his mind and he decided to adapt it to the situation.

The Mayor clarified that although he did not ask the opinion of the council, nobody disagreed when he declared the state of "*far-en*" in the community. In fact the local residents were supportive, based on his assessment.

He clarifies that his action does mean that there are no poor families in Sadanga.  There are a lot, being a third-class municipality, but the Mayor was sure that they would not go hungry because it is in their culture to take care of each other during hard times.  Families believe and live with the idea that they should not let their kin or other relatives suffer.

"*Far-en*", according to the Mayor, is similar to the Christian concept of a Holy Week.  It is a traditional practice of the elders of the community. He explains further: "if there are similar situations like this, pandemic, or series of accidents, or any other dangerous situation that is life threatening, or a series of deaths, like cholera or other epidemic… the elders declare "*far-en*".  "*Far-en*", once declared, is usually followed by a ritual.  After the conduct of the ritual, nobody from outside of the tribe or barangay is allowed to enter in the whole duration of the "*far-en*".  Neither are community members allowed to get out of the village. The people of Sadanga know the practice…. The Mayor sees the concept of "*far-en*" as very similar to the concept of a "lock down".

Traditionally, there is another concept related to" *far-en*" and is called "*ti-er*", meaning "stay home".  "*Ti-er*" usually lasts for around five to seven days and during this period, no work is allowed to be undertaken in the community; in fact, people are not even allowed to go to their fields. This concept of "*ti-er*" according to the Mayor, is very similar to the

concept of "home quarantine". The mayor clarified that "*ti-er*" is a very common practice in the community, and there are many kinds of it: "*ti-er*" before the harvest, "*ti-er*" after harvest, while "*fer-an*" is implemented only during times of calamities or epidemics. Prior to his present declaration, "*far-en*" was last implemented in their municipality two years ago, when there was an outbreak of "*buris*" or diarrhea.  Based on the mayor's recollection, that "*far-en*" lasted for three days.

If things don't settle down or do not get better, there is a next level called "*ta-lin*".  During "*ta-lin*", elders encourage the people, especially those young couples with young children, to get out of the community, to go to their respective farms and isolate themselves until such time that the cause of the "*ta-lin*" will dissipate.  This stage can last for months.

According to the Mayor, the recent declaration of "*far-en*" that he made has a little modification.  Traditionally, as mentioned earlier, it lasts for five to seven days, but during the pandemic, "I declared the municipality in a state of *far-en* effective immediately for the duration of the health emergency".  The duration was indefinite.  So that the people would not complain, he made sure to come up with "mass IEC" (information/education campaign).  Through the barangay captains, people were educated regarding the virus so that they would understand the severity of the situation.  According to the mayor: "that is the only way you can get their cooperation, … if they understand".

Overall, the interview with the town chief of Sadanga revealed recurrent themes which include the following:

1)      **Urgency in leadership during crisis.** From the mayor himself, the decision was initially an urgent personal decision but was grounded greatly on the pressure to act responsively during a crisis. This entails the importance of recognizing local leadership during crisis as they are those who work on the ground and are key

witnesses to the dynamics of communities operating under distinct conditions. This reveals that yet again, collaborative partnership between the central government and local communities poses a promise of potentially saving resources and delivering efficient crisis response.

2)      **Familiarity with the farming season and practices.** While the mayor admits to having decided on his own initially, the decision reveals not only urgency in leadership, but reinforces the decision to refuse initial food packs. Leaders' familiarity with the community farming practices, grounded the decision. It would appear that without familiarity with community's practices, no confidence in refusing relief would have been possible.

3)      **Confidence in the indigenous local practices.**   Indigenous people's communities operate under distinct local practices with or without the presence of a health crisis. Fortunately, the practice of 'far-en' and 'ti-er' among others has put confidence in the community's capacity to confront the pressures of the health crisis., Although pressured by globalization and widespread dominant cultures, indigenous people's practices during the crisis reveal that indigenous people are not mere passive recipients of help but are people who are capable of putting forward crisis response that are appropriate to their distinct conditions, rooted in their distinct history and identity.

4)      **Persisting sense of community.** The sense of 'community' with entanglements on practices and belief system of the indigenous people of Sadanga is a testament to how sustained relationships and linkages in a community is a pivotal characteristic of indigenous communities in contrast to non-IP communities. This is not to over glorify IP communities but this is to acknowledge the crucial relevance of maintained social ties in indigenous communities during a crisis.

5)      **The Moral Obligation.** It is apparent that the refusal of the initial food packs was not entirely indigenous, not entirely about leadership but was the notion of what is perceived as 'right' at the moment of crisis. This sheds better

light in re-presenting the indigenous people contrary to the preconceived and perpetuated distorted image of the indigenous people.

6)      **Importance of integrating localized crisis response.** There is practical relevance in recognizing the importance of integrating localized crisis response to match current conditions and predicament and what mechanism should be adopted or departed from, to guarantee that the welfare of people is upheld. This alone reveals the challenge to generate solutions in partnership with potential beneficiaties to promote a more democratic space in crisis response.

The researcher's preliminary correspondence with the local chief of Sadanga richly contributed to this project. However, it is recognized that further correspondence with other sources from the community shall reap equally enriching insights on this project which will elevate the discursive analysis of the subject. Eventually, when logistical complications posed by the pandemic are subdued and better contained, the researchers anticipate stronger data gathering techniques that will have profound contribution to revealing that the indigenous people's practices are, as they should be, still relevant in the conversation and generate solutions that put forward the indigenous people and not marginalize them further.

There is more work to do than what has been done. The researchers look forward to conducting in-depth inquiry on the intricacies of Sadanga's indigenous practices to give better justice on the subject. At the moment, it is safe to conclude that Sadanga's refusal to accept food packs is an interplay of the dynamics of local leadership, indigenous people's persisting sense of community and indigenous practices on crisis response. Fortunately, even under the pressure of globalization, indigenous peoples continue to rectify the distortions of how they have been (mis)understood by the non-IP community at large. Aside from revealing indigenous people's capacity in crisis response, the practical relevance of inquiring further on indigenous communities during the pandemic

is the promise of developing initiatives that match the communities 'values and beliefs, respect their culture and, ultimately, integrate these lessons from the indigenous peoples of Sadanga towards the improvement of how crisis should be understood and dealt with in the future.

Academic inquiry on the indigenous people is not only motivated by the goal of understanding. It is not only in the excavating of discoveries, nor is it research per se; it is a movement to put forward the interest of the indigenous peoples, to elevate our understanding of them and to advance the cause towards their protection. It is not a bias; it is an advocacy.

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# Impact of COVID-19 to Global Migration: Prospects for Filipino Migrants and their Children Left-Behind

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## Introduction

Migrant Workers' Day is celebrated every June 7th of the year to commemorate the signing into law of Republic Act 8042 or the Migrant Workers Act of 1995. It is celebrated in recognition of the valuable contributions of our modern day heroes, the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Up till the present, many Filipinos are still longing to leave their homes and families to seek employment abroad and that OFWs remain as strong pillars of the Philippine economy. However, the rest of the non-migrant Filipino population is not fully aware of the sacrifices migrants have had to make. Undeniably, beyond such a rhetoric and patriotic label as "new heroes" of today, one of the most neglected concerns of the OFWs is the impact of migration on their families. It goes unnoticed that this has a huge long-term effect especially on their left-behind children in terms of health, proper parental guidance, and psychosocial well-being. Their plight and life struggles are once again placed on the line as the world is facing the corona virus pandemic crisis.

This paper seeks to explore how migrants and their families especially left-behind children cope during the COVID-19 crisis, especially in the context of Southern Mindanao. Before the outbreak, migration scholars have already expressed their predicament over the government's seeming lack of coherent mechanisms to implement existing policies that directly address the concerns of migrants 'children. As the world is grappling with how to survive the current global pandemic crisis, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are now facing a bigger challenge ahead on how to sustain parenting, either remotely or as repatriates, not to mention the fact that repatriation is now

becoming a common issue as returning migrant parents have to abruptly adopt to the "new normal" arrangements where children have to stay at home for distance and flexible learning modalities. Though this paper will not directly address repatriation problems and the attendant issues and concerns about parenting back home, the researcher will, however, offer assumptions and recommendations to address such a predicament.

## Research Methodology

This article partially covers part of a research project with Human Rights Working Group (HRWG-Indonesia) in 2019 funded by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Japan). However, in this paper, the researcher expanded the main focus of the question which is, "Why do migrants and their families, especially children left behind, still struggle to get by despite government efforts to address their predicaments?" The study employed the exploratory-descriptive methodology and employed data-collection techniques that primarily involved documentary sources and online and phone interviews as movement and face-to-face conversations are severely restricted by the pandemic crisis.

## Framework of Analysis

This research subscribes to the assertions of the Institutional theory on migration studies that "…governments can expect to have great difficulty controlling and regulating the migration flows once they have begun because the process of network formation lies largely outside their control and occurs no matter what policy regime is pursued" (Castles 2007). Thus, this study reiterates that, despite the pandemic crisis and the urgency to come back home, many of the migrant workers would rather stay abroad. While others are forcibly repatriated, these migrants are even ready to leave the Philippines when opportunity is presented to them. Secondly, the lack of coherent policies that address the migrants' children's concerns and the tendency of the government to encourage a temporary labor migration cycle is, indeed, a push factor for these migrants to remain as migrant workers abroad. Thus, the phenomenon of circular migration and chain migration

of Filipino workers abroad has a long-term impact on their children left behind and has only gotten worse with the unexpected crisis the world is facing now in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## OFWs in Southern Mindanao

According to the 2018 PSA Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF), in terms of the Distribution of OFWs by Region of Origin and Place of Work Abroad, out of 2,299,000 deployed abroad, about 18 percent came from Region IV-A (CALABARZON) while the same average percentage is from Mindanao converging particularly in Region XII (about 5% of the national percentage). Region IV-A is the top-sending region in the country after Metro Manila (National Capital Region). Region XII (formerly Central Mindanao region) includes the provinces of South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani along with General Santos City (SOCSKSARGEN). On the other hand, the PSA survey also says that 3.3% of the migrant workers came from Region XI (Davao Region).

**Table 1.**

| Place of Work | 100.0 |
|---|---|
| Africa | 0.9 |
| Asia | 82.6 |
| East Asia | 18.7 |
| Hong Kong | 6.3 |
| Japan | 3.3 |
| Taiwan | 5.5 |
| Other countries in East Asia (including China, South Korea) | 3.7 |
| Southeast and South Central Asia | 9.0 |
| Malaysia | 2.4 |
| Singapore | 4.9 |
| Other countries in Southeast and South Central Asia (including Brunei) | 1.7 |
| Western Asia | 54.9 |
| Kuwait | 5.7 |
| Qatar | 5.2 |
| Saudi Arabia | 24.3 |
| United Arab Emirates | 15.7 |
| Other countries in Western Asia (including. Bahrain, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan) | 4.0 |
| Australia | 2.1 |
| Europe | 7.8 |
| North and South America | 6.6 |

Notes: Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.
The estimates cover overseas Filipinos whose departure occurred within the last five years and who are working or had worked abroad during the past six months (April to September) of the survey year.

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018 Survey on Overseas Filipinos

Moreover, though disaggregated as per national data, the 2018 survey also pointed out that the majority (about 80%) of the Filipino migrant workers is deployed in Asia (with Europe as the second majority, comprising 7.8% of the total). More than 50% of the OFWs are working in Western Asia/Middle East while around 25% are based in Saudi Arabia. In terms of gender, 55.6% of the OFWs working abroad are women (1,284,000), majority of whom are at their reproductive age (between 24 to 35 years old). More than 50% of the female OFWs are working in elementary occupations. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2017), these occupations "consist of simple and routine tasks which mainly require the use of hand-held tools and often some physical effort." This may refer to what migration scholars call as "dirty, difficult, and dangerous" work (otherwise known as 3D jobs) including domestic workers, cleaners, and launderers (ILO, 2017).

**Table 2.**

*Male and Female Overseas Filipino Workers by Occupation: 2018*

**TABLE 2  Male and Female Overseas Filipino Workers by Occupation:  2018**

| Major Occupation Group | Both Sexes | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of overseas Filipino workers (in thousands)** | **2,299** | **1,016** | **1,284** |
| **Total** | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Managers | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Professionals | 9.0 | 8.1 | 9.8 |
| Technicians and associate professionals | 7.0 | 11.8 | 3.1 |
| Clerical support workers | 3.8 | 2.9 | 4.6 |
| Service and sales workers | 18.8 | 19.0 | 18.6 |
| Skilled agricultural forestry and fishery workers | 0.2 | 0.5 | - |
| Craft and related trade workers | 9.2 | 19.0 | 1.4 |
| Plant and machine operators and assemblers | 13.8 | 27.8 | 2.7 |
| Elementary occupations | 37.1 | 9.8 | 58.7 |

*Notes*: Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

The estimates cover overseas Filipinos whose departure occurred within the last five years and who are working or had worked abroad during the past six months (April to September) of the survey year.

*Source*:  Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018 Survey on Overseas Filipinos

On another note, the PSA also reported that, as of the year 2000, there were around 2,732 overseas workers or migrants in General Santos City. Remarkably, in 2010, the PSA survey said that out of the 415,137 household population in General Santos City, 1.5 percent (6,205 persons) were overseas workers. Male overseas workers outnumbered their female counterparts as they comprised 56.1 percent of all overseas workers from this city. Overseas workers aged 30-34 years old made up the largest age group, comprising 19.5 percent of the total overseas workers in the city. This was followed by the age groups 45 years and over (18.7 percent), 25 to 29 years (17.6 percent) and 35 to 39 years (17 percent). Most of them usually go to Middle East countries like Saudi Arabia, and the majority of them work as domestic workers, factory workers, and nurses (POEA 2016).

## Migration and Governance Infrastructure

This section highlights the general policies that are indirectly contributing to the betterment of migrants and their families. Indeed, migration governance is very much intertwined in Philippine society. A study by The Economist Intelligence Unit (2016, 50) commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) known as the "Migration Governance Index," concludes that as a migrant-sending country, the Philippines has a "well-developed policy and institutional architecture for managing outward migration." This can be observed in the presence of legal measures that facilitate migration and protect migrant workers. At the national level, the executive branch of government covers a wide range of offices and agencies which offer services to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) while in the realm of the law-making process of the government, various committees address the predicament of the OFWs both in Congress and down to the City and Municipal Councils (local legislatures).

Moreover, when it comes to legal instruments for the protection of children, the Philippines is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Prior to its ratification in 1990, the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) was created through Presidential Decree 603, otherwise known as the Child and Youth Welfare Code in 1974. CWC is mandated to coordinate the implementation and enforcement of all laws and formulate, monitor, and evaluate policies, programs, and measures for children. Currently, CWC continues to function and exercise the same powers as an attached agency of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (CWC 2017). Since then, the Philippines has made progress in ensuring that the inherent fundamental freedoms and rights of children are protected by law.

## Impact of Parental Migration on Left-Behind Children

Up until the present, the World Bank (2019) concludes that the migration of workers is largely motivated by the search for economic opportunities. Consequently, there are approximately 9 million Filipino children under the age of 18 who are left behind by one or both parents to work or live temporarily or permanently outside the Philippines. Prior to the lockdown and community quarantine measures, as data sources are lacking on the comprehensive data profiling of children left behind by their working parents abroad, the researcher conducted short in-depth interviews of OFW children in Davao and General Santos City. Since most of the migrants who leave to work abroad are mothers, the data from the interviews suggest that the stay-behind children are taken care of by their immediate family relatives either by the father, grandmothers or both grandparents or their uncles/aunts as guardians when the mother is working abroad.

Most of the child-respondents opened up their pent-up emotions about their personal longing on missing their mothers while growing up since most of their mothers left them at a young age. The following are some of the common narratives from their responses:

    a. Loneliness; Skipping classes; often stays with father's house with half-siblings/step-family (taken care of by Grandmother)

    b. Spoiled sometimes; demotivated at school; having emotional problems; delayed education/behind compared to children of her age; elder brother has to work in Manila (taken care of by Grandmother)

    c. Left to grandparents at a young age; still longing for his mother's care; technology helps somehow - constant communication; older sister helps him with studies

Follow-up short virtual interviews were conducted to a few of these OFW children and a few others shared about the difficulties of their migrant parents working abroad amidst the pandemic crisis. A few others mentioned the need to be more calm and patient during the crisis situation by adopting the "new normal" lifestyle. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, online messaging and teleconferencing still help mitigate their worries through constant monitoring and regular communication.

## Existing Initiatives and Mechanisms

This section presents the existing local initiatives that benefit Filipino children in general. Indeed, policymakers have been proactive in addressing the concerns of the OFWs even prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In fact, Republic Act No. 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, has been amended several times including R.A. 10022, which further improves the standard of protection and promotion of the welfare of the migrant workers, their families, and overseas Filipinos in distress, among others.

Moreover, as early as 2002, the National Government already laid down the institutional foundation for the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for

Children (Child 21) as indicated in DSWD Administrative Order No. 21 that ultimately set the framework for planning programs and interventions that promote and safeguard the rights of Filipino Children (DSWD 2002). As an offshoot of such framework plans, CWC also came up with a five-year "Plan of Action to End Violence against Children (2017-2022)." In 2012, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched its "Child Protection Policy" to protect children in school from all forms of abuses, violence, exploitation, discrimination, and bullying. At the local level, the Government has since adopted UNICEF's "Child Friendly Cities Initiatives" which began in the 1990s. As a matter of fact, UNICEF even cited the government's good practice in its efforts to incorporate such measures in the local audit system. At the local level, the Government has since adopted UNICEF's "Child Friendly Cities Initiatives" which began in the 1990s. As a matter of fact, UNICEF even cited the Government's good practice in its efforts to incorporate such measures in the local audit system.

> "*Local government units (LGUs) that pass the audit with a rating of at least 75 per cent become eligible for the Seal of Child friendly Local Governance (SCFLG), annually conferred by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC). The cities showing the best performances eventually qualify for the Presidential Award for Child friendly Municipalities and Cities. The Presidential Award gives outstanding cities and provinces national recognition and financial incentive*" (UNICEF, 2020).

These policy and planning initiatives both at the national and local levels thus prove the strong commitment of the Government to adhere to UN conventions and other international commitments. Theoretically, such protection measures are also extended to children of OFWs, both in the Philippines and abroad. As cited in the Enable Kids Project (2016), OWWA offers different scholarship programs for OFWs children and dependents under its "Education and Training Program" such as the following: 1) Education for

Development Scholarship Program (EDSP); 2) OFW Dependents Scholarship Program (ODSP); 3) Skills for Entrepreneurship Scholarship Program (SESP); 4) Education and Livelihood Assistance Program (ELAP); 5) The Education and Livelihood Assistance Program (ELAP); and 6) Moral Enrichment for Children of OFWs. Through these scholarship and assistance programs, many of the disadvantaged OFWs children and dependents can still pursue their dream of becoming professionals in their chosen fields despite the financial and other forms of difficulties they are facing.

On the other hand, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA 2020), through its consulates abroad such as those in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), also provides assistance for the registration of birth of irregular children of OFWs. To illustrate the case, the following are some of the guidelines issued by the Philippine Consulate General in Jeddah-KSA that give due consideration to such circumstances:

- Through the Birth Declaration or Affidavit or either parent or the physician or nurse who attended the birth. A Birth Notification or hospital certificate is sufficient in making a Report of Birth.

- For delayed registration, a Joint Birth Affidavit, the Birth Declaration or Affidavit of the person reporting such birth may be accepted. A registration is considered late when it is made thirty (30) days after the date of birth.

- Procedures and requirements for registering vital events such as births, deaths, marriages and other events as required by law are laid down in Administrative Order No 1, Series of 1993.

- In following up with the National Statistics Office (NSO) the Birth Certificate of Filipino children born abroad, applicants need not give to the NSO the DFA date of transmittal, reference number and dispatch number from the Philippine Consulate General in Jeddah. Only in instances when the Birth Certificate cannot be located by the NSO will the applicant be requested to secure the information from DFA.

<cursor>At the local level, in order to replicate the national government initiatives, various measures have been introduced. In Davao City, Ordinance No. 056-08 series of 2008 mandated the City Government to establish an OFW Center. According to MMCEAI Executive Director, "the center is designed to look into the concerns of OFWs, most especially the distressed workers and their families and to help track the countries of destination of the migrants in Davao City, as well as take into account the actual number of OFWs and their families in the City." In a press release together with IGDD Director four years ago, it was publicly revealed that among the functions of OFW Center were be to conduct an OFW profiling, ensure gender-sensitive education and trainings for all migrant workers by establishing standards of course contents integrated in their Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (PEOS), and extend legal, health, and livelihood assistance (Perez 2015). Unfortunately, the implementation has been delayed due to lack of funding from the City Government. In hindsight, the then Mayor who passed the said ordinance, now President Rodrigo Duterte, is contemplating on putting up a separate Department of OFWs (Department of Migration) (see also PMRW 2016).

In General Santos City, a number of local legislative initiatives, which at first glance look promising, are obvious attempts on the part of the City Government to augment the programs and policies at the national level. As early as 2010, City Ordinance No. 12 (series of 2010) entitled "An Ordinance Enacting the Revised Gender and Development (GAD) Code of the City of General Santos, and for other Purposes," somehow slightly covers the concerns of migrant workers. As per documents provided, the said Ordinance includes the following provisions:

> Section 14.  Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) Support. – The City Government, through the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) and Public Employment Services Office (PESO), shall gather information on overseas contract workers from General Santos City, especially those who become

victims of abuses, results of which shall serve as basis in identifying special support to all OFWs concerned.

Section 15. Information for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). – The City Population Management Office, in coordination with Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), shall develop fact sheets on gender issues affecting OFWs for distribution at the barangay level where initial clearances are secured.

Apparently, as shown above, the OFW program is also embedded in the GAD programs, which is meant to address abuses committed against women migrants. Moreover, Resolution No. 599, Series of 2014 urged the City Mayor of Gensan to enter into a "Memorandum of Agreement" with various agencies in the regional offices of POEA, DOLE, OWWA, TESDA "in regard to the promotion of the rights and welfare of the public, migrant workers, and their families." Sadly, this is yet to be undertaken until this time. In 2017, a similar initiative was undertaken by the City Council of Gensan (Resolution No. 720, Series of 2017) "requesting the City Mayor to assign a case manager to be taken from the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) to cater to deportees, repatriates, and returned undocumented OFWs who are bonafide residents of the City." Again, this is yet to be acted upon by the local chief executive.

In Davao City according to local news, three government agencies inked a joint Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on March 30, 2017 to collaborate in providing protection to the children of OFWs. The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Regional Director Eduardo Bellido said that "OWWA, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) will step up their efforts to boost their campaign in addressing the plight of the families and children of the OFWs who were left behind while they are working abroad in search for greener pastures to provide for their family a better life." The MOA aimed to provide a strategic

component to further enhance the campaign and coordination among government agencies to provide welfare assistance, prevention, and remedial mechanism against child abuse and exploitation, particularly on the children of OFWs. The Regional Director also reiterated that "pursuant to the joint agreement, there will be a seminar for the protection of children left behind by the OFWs…it aims to heighten awareness on the issue and problems concerning children left behind by the OFWs, identify appropriate intervention to ensure the protection of children left behind, intensify the child protection campaign on violence against children, and establish a convergence program with OWWA, DSWD, DOJ and the local government units (LGUs)," Director Bellido said (Revita 2017).

Nevertheless, it is good to cite that such services above are still made available to the OFWs and families left behind during the pandemic crisis with the help of non-government organizations (NGOs) and LGUs. During the lockdown measures, news accounts also highlighted government efforts to repatriate the remains of OFWs who allegedly died from COVID-19. As many of the Returning OFWs (ROFs), along with the Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs), flocked to the cities and towns from Metro Manila, DOLE, OWWA, and POEA launched the "OFW Assistance Information System" (OASIS) which is an online platform to facilitate better service delivery to OFWs in view of the pandemic crisis – repatriation, testing, quarantine, and transportation.

## Impact of COVID-19 "Sanitary Cordon" on OFWs and their Families

"Cordon sanitaire" (restricted movement) is a term originally denoting a barrier used to stop the spread of infectious diseases. Historically, migrants are seen as needed but unwanted. Through time, they are seen as panic buttons when things go awry or when there is a societal crisis as they are treated as "outsiders" and "undesirables" (disposable workers). During the age of voyages and exploration, itinerants and emigrants had to undergo strict inspection before they are allowed in their ports of entry. Today, this

similarly situated scenario can be seen across receiving countries of migration (or destination countries). This is now again happening in Singapore and Malaysia where temporary workers are being subjected to discrimination to access of social services. Undocumented migrants, if caught, suffer immediate deportation or, worse, detention in cramped facilities that only make them more vulnerable to get infected by COVID-19. Again, as shown in these illustrations, migrants suffer especially in difficult circumstances (the case of OFWs in the UK and Saudi Arabia).

In June of this year, this became a trending topic in social media as OFWs in Saudi Arabia were caught and filmed scavenging through garbage and trash cans for food as many were forced to leave their workplaces and dwellings due to the pandemic crisis while others died without proper funeral services. In the UK, undocumented migrants are reportedly placed in the worst situation as they cannot access basic social services and government subsidy for the unemployed workers such as food stamps and hospital care.

Prior to the global health crisis, circumventing or delaying hospital care among undocumented and/or irregular migrant-workers was common and that, if they had illnesses that were bearable or could still be cured by self-medication, they usually forgo hospitalization. Most of these patients sought care only when symptoms came out for fear of forced deportation or repatriation. These unhealthy practices are highly risky especially for pregnant migrants and those who are about to give birth. Circumventing hospital care is another serious matter for women and female migrants with children.

## Summary and Recommendations

In summary, the researcher found out that, in the case of the Philippines, there is indeed a fair share of both national and local policies that seemingly address the concerns of migrants and their families, but, when it comes to the specific question about left-behind children, this remains the question. On the other hand, scholars have pointed out how

many of these children keep longing for their mothers/fathers when they see other children or classmates with "normal" family arrangements at social gatherings in schools and in public. Societal and peer pressure could lead to depression and absenteeism at school. Nevertheless, digital communications and other online platforms could also help but they need a "personal touch." In any case, to possibly address the emotional and behavioral problems of the left-behind children, effective and innovative mechanisms such as mental health intervention strategies as well as educational enrichment programs both for left-behind children and their teachers are to be had (Umami & Turnip 2019).

In addition, the Philippine government (both at the national and local levels) and civil society organizations/NGOs have pushed for well-meaning policies and improvements of existing programs to address varied issues and concerns of the migrants and their children. Sanchez and Villa (2008) suggested that LGUs can encourage more OFWs to engage in entrepreneurial businesses instead of encouraging migrants to return for work abroad or as mentioned by Umami and Turnip (2019, 244) "to increase the interaction between left-behind children and their parents, the government could limit the duration and frequency of work among migrant workers." Most of the migrants support the idea that LGUs organize business opportunities and livelihood programs especially planned for migrant workers and their families.

On a final note, the Philippine government should rethink its policy on encouraging migration abroad – we must learn from policy failures or policy paralysis from the previous experience. This global pandemic crisis proves the argument of scholars like Castles (2007) that non-migration policies may be more powerful in shaping migration than are migration policies. There is indeed a need to encourage more OFWs to engage in entrepreneurial businesses here at home or generate jobs and industries for local

development instead of encouraging migrants to return for work abroad. If it is unavoidable, we make migration policies better for our left-behind children and the OFW families and help increase the interaction between OFW children and their parents. As mentioned above, this could be done through a government policy of limiting the duration and frequency of work among migrant workers (or the cycle of contract renewal) and, if migrants choose to permanently return back home, a sound repatriation and reintegration program must be strengthened as well, that is, if we want to save the future of our children and the generations to come.

Thus, the problems raised by the institutional framework of migration theory can only work well for the advantage of the government when it is able to successfully harness the full potentials of a migrants' network within the migration infrastructure and governance regime as they return back home for livelihood opportunities instead of encouraging their return migration abroad.

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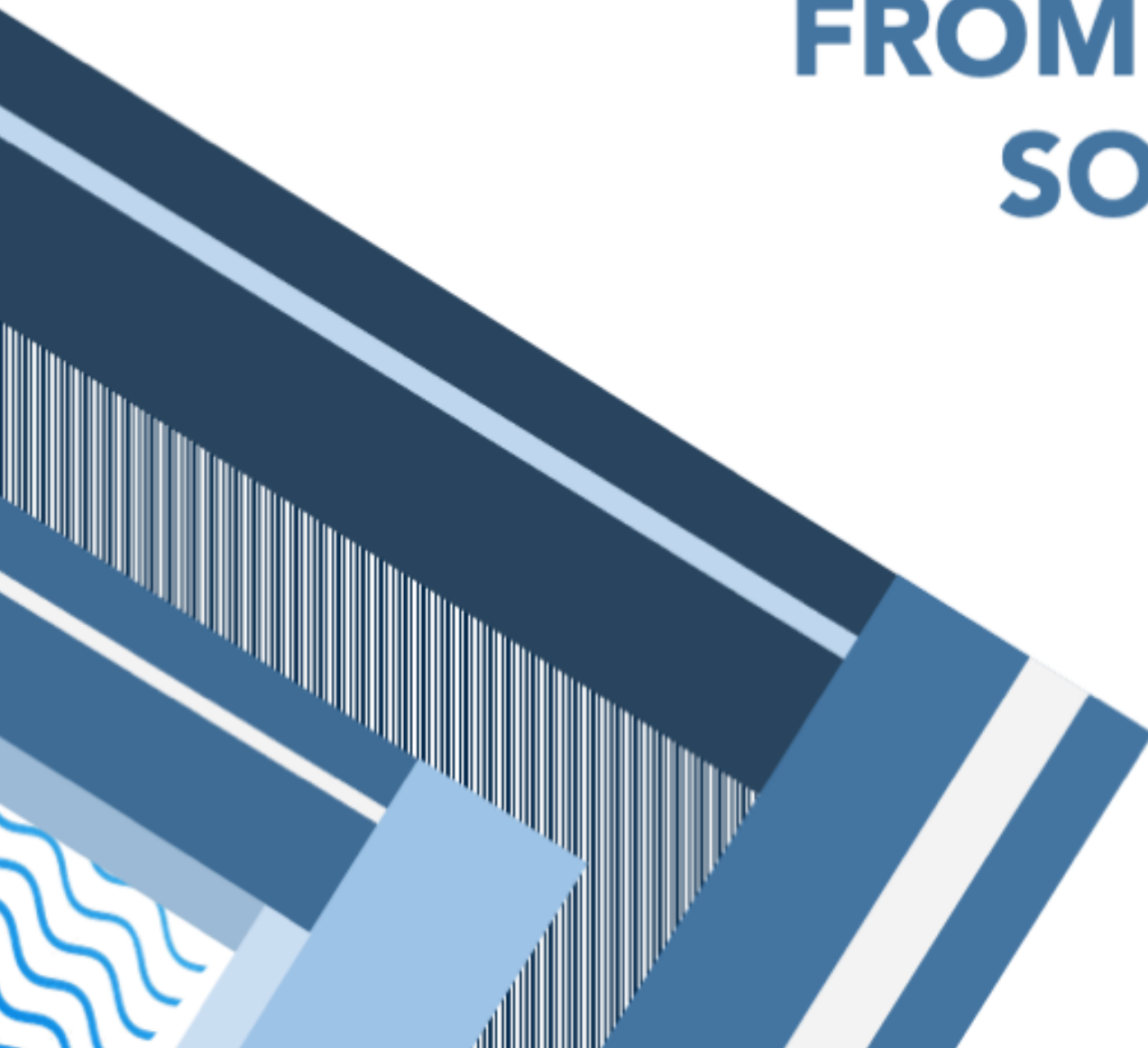
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# WP SERIES 2

# STORIES OF PEACE, NATIONALISM AND PARTICIPATION FROM THE SOUTH

# Feminist Nationalism in the NPA in Mindanao

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## Introduction

The socio-political landscape of the country underwent change during the Marcos period (1972-1986), the contours were shaped by one man—Ferdinand Marcos. He maintained control through bureaucratic and military support, and through a complex network of spies and allies.[27] The people's responses varied: some acquiesced to his political leadership;[28] others challenged the status quo and struggled for the abolition of martial law; and some employed "parliamentarism"[29], but the most prominent response came from the Communist Party of the Philippines[30], a revolutionary group that established the New People's Army (NPA) as its paramilitary wing in March 29, 1969.

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[27] David Rosenberg (1977) in his Introduction to Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines notes that the declaration of martial law meant a sharp increase in the concentration of political power within the central government, especially in the urban areas. President Marcos and his closest allies share this power with the technocrats who increasingly control and direct the economy and with the military and national police who are in charge of the major enforcement agencies (p. 27).

[28] "Though corrupt practices did indeed diminish sharply in the first several months after the declaration of martial law, when fear of the consequences of misdeeds was still high, old ways quickly returned. In one of the few attempts by scholars to measure low-level corruption, researchers found that in one government bureau during late 1973 the extra-legal receipts of employees for processing papers, based on the most conservative assumptions, substantially exceeded their legal income" (Wurfel, 1977).

[29] D. Wurfel. (1988). Filipino Politics, Development and Decay. Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City. Philippines.

[30] The CPP was established in 1968. Its more immediate heritage is the first communist party, the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), which fought wars against foreign invaders. Its guerilla group was the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap), which fought against the Japanese forces during WWII (Weekley, 2001, p.17).

Operating under Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, [31] the CPP-NPA thrived under conditions created by martial law.[32] Hence, even if it was founded before martial law, the group's existence became more manifest during that time.[33] It was a timely response to the government's abuse of power and authority, and it utilized not only existing social issues (corruption, military abuse, and repression)[34] but also nationalism as a means to attract followers and legitimize its actions. Nationalism was a concept compatible with the Communist framework, and in time the NPA became identified more as a nationalist movement in the Philippines.[35]

Nationalism was defined by the CPP as anti-imperialist, and it championed national sovereignty at a time when the question still seemed not to be solved satisfactorily.[36] It also advocated for a "national identity" that in the words of Kathleen Weekly (2001), is "cleansed of what some Filipinos call an inferiority complex, or an undue deference to

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[31] See p. 77 of Chapman's (1987) Inside the Philippine Revolution: The New People's Army and its Struggle for Power. "The CPP's ideology was largely drawn from the Chinese communism of Mao Zedong and its model agrarian revolution…" It described the country as a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society 'ruthlessly exploited' by U.S. imperialists, the "comprador big bourgeoisie", landlords and bureaucratic capitalists" (Seachon, 2004). Mao Zedong's model emphasized a peasant-led revolution.

[32] "Virtually every democratic institution erected since independence was attained in 1946 was dismantled: the Congress, political parties, the free and lively press, the independent judiciary" (Chapman, 1987,p. 96). There was also the deteriorating Philippine economy, military's abuses, and the crude slaying of Benigno Aquino (Chapman, 1987, pp.238-239). See pp. 96; 238-239 of Chapman's (1977) Inside the Philippine Revolution: The New People's Army and its Struggle for Power. Richard Kessler (1989) maintains that "The institutionalization of Marcos's martial-law rule over the next decade paralleled the rise of the CPP." Further, the CPP noted in an October 1972 policy statement: the situation was "far more favorable to the revolutionary movement than ever before."

[33] Over the thirteen years of Marcos' martial rule, the CPP and its New Peoples' Army (NPA) organized bases of mass support in almost every province of the country, and sustained networks of thousands of politically active people. It won the hegemonic place in the Philippine Left by being the most consistently daring, the most vocal and the most visible of the regime's opposition" (Weekly, 2001, Introduction). "By the time President Ferdinand E. Marcos was deposed, in February 1986, it was known that the NPA was active in 62 of the country's 73 provinces and that it controlled or influenced at least 20 percent of the barangays…" (Chapman, 1987, p. 14).

[34] The martial law period violated the Bill of Rights, the economy and the institutions of liberal and representative democracy which allowed for some measure of dissent and free expression.

[35] In post-colonial third world countries like the Philippines, the kind of Communism that developed was nationalist in nature. It followed Maoist Communism, which states that before one country becomes internationalist, in the tradition of Marxism, it has to be first and foremost nationalist.

[36] K. Weekley. (2001). The Communist Party of the Philippines, 1968-1993: A Story of its Theory and Practice. p.4. University of the Philippines Press. Diliman, Quezon City.

things American…"[37] The Allied Organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (2005) makes clear that:

> "*The CPP defines the basic tasks of the revolution as to achieve national liberation by ridding the nation of US domination in the political, economic, military, cultural and other fields to realize democracy not only by fighting the growing repressiveness of the state but more substantively by emancipating the peasant masses and the entire Filipino people from the feudal and semi-feudal bondage*".[38]

Thus, the activities of the NPA were geared towards the attainment of genuine Filipino independence[39]. They also wanted to achieve a just society that values liberty and equality[40], and that champions the plight of workers and peasants who have long been marginalized in the history of the Philippines. Their views of freedom and equality were necessarily intertwined with their nationalist perspective, as they continually weave together a narrative of a people's struggle against the forces of tyranny and imperialism.

Membership in the CPP peaked during the martial law period and just like before[41], women went up to the frontlines and worked hand in hand with their male counterparts. The party's rationalization of women's involvement in the revolutionary struggle is based on the Marxist perspective that prevailing social and economic conditions have oppressed and marginalized them. Thus, their participation in the movement is a

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[37] Ibid., p. 5

[38] The Allied Organizations of the Democratic Front of the Philippines. (2005). 4.

[39] Genuine Filipino independence means for the CPP-NPA, freedom from American control of the political, economic, military, cultural, and other aspects of Filipino life.

[40] Liberty in the jargon of the movement, means being able to enjoy the benefits of genuine independence; and equality in this period mainly pertains to class equality.

[41] Women's participation in revolutionary movements, beginning the Spanish period, to the American and Japanese periods are recorded in literature.

necessary first step to their liberation.[42] Amado Guerrero (Jose Ma. Sison) states in his book *Philippine Society and Revolution*

> "*The women compose about one-half of the Philippine population and they cut through classes. The vast majority of Filipino women, therefore, belong to the oppressed and exploited classes. But in addition to class oppression, they suffer male oppression. The revolutionaries of the opposite sex should exert extra efforts to make possible the widest participation of women in the people's democratic revolution. They should not take the attitude that it is enough for the men in the family to be in the revolutionary movement. This attitude is actually feudal and it would be to aggravate the old clerical influence on women if they were to be kept out of the revolutionary movement. Women can perform general as well as special tasks in the revolution. This is an effective method for liberating them from the clutches of feudal conservatism and also from the decadent bourgeois misrepresentation of women as mere objects of pleasure.*"[43]

Guerrero's exposition became the overriding theoretical basis for the recruitment of women in the NPA. They were indispensable, especially at that time of great political turmoil; and they were empowered agitators who represented a once silent voice in the realm of politics.[44] The idea of empowerment was reinforced by the movement's

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[42] Female oppression in the Philippines is claimed by the movement to have historical roots in its experience of colonialism, first from Spain and later, the U.S. "Spanish rule propagated the European notion of the superiority of men primarily through the Church, exhorting women to be meek and passive wives/mothers. Later, U.S. imperialism, bringing with it the culture of business, further propagated the decadent concept of women as mere objects of pleasure. Since males were considered the prime movers of production, labor power became entirely male-oriented. Most women were relegated to the task of reproducing and rearing future sources of fresh labor power…In general, women were reduced to mere chattels-private property of men." (San Juan, E., 1998, p. 156).

[43] A. Guerrero. (1970). Philippine Society and Revolution. pp.275-76. Hong Kong.

[44] During the martial law period the goal was to remove Marcos from dictatorial power, and by extension, to combat U.S. neocolonialism; and women were called upon to help in achieving that goal, because they too are part of the nation. They have responsibility, inherent in their Filipino-ness to protect the nation from abuse, both internally and externally. Women, as part of that nation we call the Philippines, are expected to work with their male counterparts, in ensuring national sovereignty and in carving out a promising future for

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ideology, as it encompasses issues of gender, equality and justice. Such was an important component to the political mobilization of these women whose participation is predicated first on the promise of equality and second, on the belief that they matter—that they are capable of effecting change.[45] It was a motivation that enabled women to take ownership of the situation as directly affecting them and their well-being; hence, they needed to take part in it.

Although not clearly articulated, women's involvement in the revolutionary struggle showed indications of gender-specific, or feminist goals that are interwoven with, but also separate from the quest for national liberation.  This distinct feminist agenda is manifested by the creation of a separate women's group within the New People's Army; the purpose of which is to look into women's unique needs and interests. But because these women were directly influenced by the political ideology of the revolution, which regards the "anti-imperialist effort as primary, and the struggle for equality of the sexes as secondary", the greater cause that they were fighting for was nationalism.[46]

Their expressions of nationalism were reflective and constitutive of the many facets of a woman's life, and the many roles she was expected to perform, in both the personal and public milieus. They were expressions of her desire to make a difference in a society that relegates her to a position of minority, and they were unapologetic political manifestations of how they conceptualized or understood love for one's country. Not only

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the country. Maria Lorena Barros, founder of MAKIBAKA, the underground women's organization in the National Democratic Front, most succinctly points to women's role in the struggle: "If an armed conflict does arise, we will fight alongside the men. We should take up arms, if necessary. We are working for a better society for men and women alike, so why should the men always bear the brunt of the struggle?" (San Juan, E. 1998, p.161).

[45] "The triad of the CPP, NPA and NDF advancing the revolution has shown an appreciation of the woman's question—that is, the recognition of the historical exploitation of women as a sector within a social class and as a gender; the need to transform an unjust social system along with the task to liberate women in all aspects; and the indispensable role of women to achieve revolutionary victory" (Mithi Laya, 1999).

[46] E. San Juan. (1998). Toward Socialist Feminism (Chapter 5), in "Filipina Insurgency: Writing against Patriarchy in the Philippines". p. 168. Giraffe Books. Quezon City, Philippines.

were these expressions important in understanding one of many facets of that complex being that is the woman, they were also vital in taking into account the ideological adjustments that the movement as a whole was making in order to continually justify its very existence. Moreover, they show an attempt to weld together the sometimes incongruous interests of national liberation and women's liberation, in terms of prioritization.

A sort of feminist nationalism[47] developed within the movement, and was nurtured by the continuous and increasing political consciousness of these women guerillas. This feminist nationalism is not only informed by a third world political perspective, but more importantly, by a Filipino feminist understanding of nationalism[48] and the Filipina's place in that endeavor. This is evident in the way these women revolutionaries tackle nationalism and themselves—always in relation to Philippine social contexts. They have been seeking ways to incorporate their feminism with the nationalist character of the New People's Army; their feminist perspective is tempered only by the movement's belief in the primacy of national liberation.  But it is still discernible, and it forms part of the complex discourse on nationalism. The nuances that come with their expressions of nationalism are very seldom recorded in literature. How these expressions evolved, progressed and were redefined in order to suit the demands of the changing political tides are also very seldom reflected in literature. In fact, in the entire literature of the revolutionary movement, the section on women, their views, and their experiences is scarce, and it becomes even scarcer when one wishes to look into women revolutionaries in Mindanao. This reality warrants the need to look into women NPAs in Mindanao, especially their experiences during and after the Marcos period.

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[47] Ibid. See also D. Aguilar. (1998). Toward a Nationalist Feminism. Giraffe Books. Quezon City, Philippines.
[48] Filipino feminism recognizes the similar, yet unique conditions of Filipino women's marginalization. They acknowledge the different levels of oppression these women experience and argue that solving the women's issues requires different approaches.

It is against this backdrop of interacting factors that this research is conceptualized. It aims to look into women NPAs 'nationalism in Mindanao during the Marcos period until the present. It describes how their nationalism is dictated not only by the specific political ideology that they hold, but also of the specific gender-based issues they represent, and how they reconcile the differences. It investigates an incipient feminist nationalism that is alternatingly dormant and pronounced, yet always present as a force within the movement.

## Theoretical Framework

Feminist nationalism is an approach that endeavors to challenge the Western feminist view that nationalism is detrimental to feminism. It attempts to show that feminist struggles are compatible with nationalist activities, and that they reinforce each other in a constructive way. As an alternative conceptualization, feminist nationalism is borne out of the post-colonial, third world context, where the struggle for political recognition and quest for national identity has coincided with the rise of feminist concerns for equal rights and privileges between sexes. Feminist nationalism highlights the fact that nationalism and its processes are profoundly gendered, and thus requires the use of a gender perspective so as to adequately address existing social inequalities that cut across issues of class, gender, and race. Using this as a framework, this study looks into how women's nationalism is influenced by their understanding of existing social issues, and its embedded gender-based aspects/dimensions. It explores the possibility of an incipient feminist movement within the NPA.

## Discussion

The Marcos period saw the rise of radicalism in the Philippines and the emergence of "cause-oriented" groups that were organized, and unified at certain junctures to achieve a common objective—to dismantle the dictatorship. Foremost among these is the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which established its paramilitary arm, the New

People's Army (NPA) in 1969. The CPP-NPA is a nationalist movement that operates under the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist framework, and defines nationalism in the context of the Philippines as a third world, postcolonial society. Thus, it is anti-imperialist, (specifically anti-U.S.)[49]; it champions national sovereignty; and advocates for a Filipino national identity.

Women, just like before participated in this nationalist movement. Their involvement in the revolutionary struggle is based on the Marxist perspective that prevailing social and economic conditions have oppressed and marginalized them, not only as Filipinos but also as women. Thus, their participation is a necessary first step to liberation. At that time, such rationalization seemed enough even for those whose involvement was predicated by specific feminist interests, being previously members of women's groups that also proliferated during that era.

Prioritization of the nationalist goal for national liberation over feminist articulations of gender equality rarely became an issue, until after the fateful day of February 25, 1986 when martial law ended peacefully through the iconic EDSA people power. Marginal participation of the CPP-NPA in this democratic transition brought disillusionment among its members, and with Marcos's removal from power, questions about its continued relevance emerged. The confusion was eventually put to rest with this rationalization: genuine national liberation has not yet been achieved, so the communist revolutionary struggle must continue. The goal was essentially the same, because the conditions "*have not changed.*"

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[49] The CPP-NPA's anti-U.S. position is fueled by the belief that the Marcos regime was supported by the Americans in order to maintain its economic interests in the country.

This theoretical justification, combined with all other unresolved social issues that had been anticipated to disappear following the end of martial law kept the movement alive.[50] However, the end of the martial law period brought to the fore internal issues that affected the trajectory of the movement, as it was compelled to re-assess the very ideology from which it was created. In particular, gender-specific concerns such as the roles of women, their needs and their status within the movement solicited attention. The latent feminism that was already existing within the movement was stirred, and women slowly became conscious of the different levels of oppression that affect them.

They began interrogating Marxism's view on the "*woman question*", and realized that the Productivist explanation for women's subordination wasn't enough. Their critique consisted of the inability of the theory to take into account sexuality and reproduction as areas where exploitation of Filipino women usually happens. Class is the dominant discourse and production remains to be the fulcrum on which discourse on the need for social transformation revolves.[51] As counter-discourse, feminists began to make sexuality a core issue in the articulation of women's concerns.

They endeavored to expand the Marxist view of women to include the private sphere—an area considered to be outside the domain of the movement.[52] They also began looking into the roles assigned to women in the NPA, and realized how such roles actually replicated the patriarchal system they wished to dismantle. They articulated the gender-

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[50] John Kessler argues that in order to understand the persistence of the Communist insurgency after Marcos, one needs to understand the historical pattern of rebellion in the Philippines. For him, 'the nature of the struggle has not changed very much over the past 200 years. The desire for a nation free of foreign influence, with wealth distributed equitably, although often voiced, is still unfulfilled". The NPA sees itself as inheritor of that struggle, a revolutionary force capable of leading the Filipino masses to freedom. In Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines. (1989). Yale University Press. New Haven and London.

[51] Sylvia Estrada-Claudio, and Aida Santos. (2006). The women's movement(s) and social movements: conjunctures and divergences. Paper presented at the Broad Left Conference, National Capital Region, Cavite.

[52] Aida F. Santos. (2010). Marxism and the Philippine Women's Movement: Reflections on Praxis, in "Marxism in the Philippines: continuing engagements", by Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem and Laura L. Samson. Eds. pp. 113-140. Anvil. Manila.

specific needs of women, and complained that these were not fully met in the overall blueprint of the organization. In essence, feminist members were fighting patriarchy both within and outside of the NPA.

But it wasn't only the Marxist view of women that these feminists problematized. They looked into the ideological discourse as a whole, and pointed out theorizations which directly affect the treatment and status of women in the movement. Having appropriated nationalism into the Maoist communist framework, feminists were also prompted to examine the underlying assumptions of nationalism, and locate the intersections that have defined and institutionalized the roles and treatment of women in the nationalist project. This feminist problematization unraveled the fact that nationalism is a gendered discourse, and the processes that make possible the imagination of the nation show preconceived notions of gender roles and expectations.

Feminists launched a comprehensive critique of the way nationalism is defined and practiced within the movement. This effort led to the development of a feminist nationalist movement within the larger revolutionary context, and it spread throughout the regions. The feminist nationalist movement that emerged in Mindanao is part of that process. It was at that time necessary and inevitable—partly because feminism has been a crucial element in the construction of Philippine communism, and partly because of the movement's continued search for meaning and relevance. In Mindanao, the development of feminist nationalism has been met with resistance, and on different levels.

First, feminist nationalists had to deal with the view that feminism and nationalism are divergent and irreconcilable movements. Feminism regards gender equality as its primary goal while nationalism considers national liberation to be its foremost objective. The impossibility of reconciliation lies in the belief that neither one of these movements would yield in favor of the other's goal. Feminist nationalists thus had to look for ways to

navigate effectively within the constricted space of the movement's staunchly nationalist atmosphere.

Second, feminist nationalists had to deal with different levels of gender-consciousness existing in the movement. In fact, there were even women members who were not aware of their subordination from the inside. This is mainly due to the limited theoretical grounding they were exposed to upon involvement. The uncritical appropriation of nationalism, with all its gender-blind or more often gender-based conceptualizations, as an integral part of the communist struggle compounded the problem for feminists.

Third, feminist nationalists had to deal with chauvinistic male members who ignored feminist efforts and dismissed their goals as less important compared to the nationalist goal of liberation. These male members did not share the feminist view of women's struggles. "While there has been no written articulation of this antifeminist stance from male comrades in the social movements, there had been many meetings, formal, and informal discussions where feminists or their feminist ideas and inputs were vehemently challenged, marginalized, accepted for the sake of tokenism, or worse, parodied or simply ignored." [53] Clearly, while feminist nationalists have been gaining ground in reformulating Marxist theorization to accommodate a more gender-sensitive nationalism, they are nevertheless having difficulty in praxis.

How these problems manifested themselves in the NPA in Mindanao is evident in the way women members expressed their nationalism. Uncritical of the underlying gender dimensions of the nationalist discourse, these women NPAs embraced popular nationalist notions that are compatible with the Marxist framework. During the martial law period, they viewed themselves nationalists first, and feminists only second. This position is attuned to the overall stand of the revolutionary movement, which regards the struggle to be in its nationalist phase; therefore, feminist aspirations are still on hold.

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[53] Ibid.

Interestingly, the informants in Mindanao have also redefined nationalism in ways that would appease existing cultural norms. This is done by blurring the dichotomy between the political and the personal. For instance, these women NPAs defined nationalism not only as love for country, but also as an extension of love for family. Such expansive definition of nationalism accommodates the cultural notion that women should always be in faithful commitment to their families. Even the notion of heroism, or "*pagkabayani*", specifically directed to be an act of sacrifice in the service of the "*bayan*" or nation, has been expanded to include sacrificing oneself in the service of one's family. As such, in the informants 'context, *pagkabayani* includes loyalty to both the *bayan* and the family. Reinforcing this position is the Marxist view that women's oppression is a consequence of capitalism, and would be eliminated automatically with the establishment of a socialist state. Oblivious of the implications, these women's uncritical appropriation of nationalism has led to the perpetration of a masculinist discourse that acknowledges their contribution to the nationalist project, but also limits their participation in it. The women NPAs 'internalization of the nationalist jargon which if analyzed carefully has obvious gender connotations, is often overlooked. For instance, their view of the nation as "*motherland*", clearly a gender-based conceptualization that is suggestive of a woman's nurturing, caring yet vulnerable quality is embraced credulously.

The gender element embedded in this conceptualization is the inference that just like women, the nation can be weak and helpless, and should therefore be protected or defended. Strength, willingness to engage in war, and bravery on the other hand are requisites for effective defense—qualities that are attributed to men. Hence, to be able to participate in the nationalist pursuit, women should take on "*manly*" qualities; to defend the nation in the way their male counterparts perform it. The imagination of the woman as "*amasona*"—in the sense of her assumption of what is believed to be male

qualities; in other words, the revolutionary woman's masculinization is an expression of that gender-based nationalist construction.

Failure of the woman to transform into that manly character would mean her relegation to secondary or supporting roles. Such view, and all others of this nature have been entrenched deeply in the nationalist discourse that even the emergence of a feminist nationalist movement inside the revolutionary NPA in Mindanao has little success in mediating the perpetration of these views. It doesn't mean however that it has not made important achievements in its endeavor. It has maneuvered its way around the difficult contours of the NPA's nationalist landscape by pointing out areas, in theory and practice, where patriarchy exists.

## Conclusion

The Feminist Nationalist movement in the NPA in Mindanao has succeeded in obliging the movement to reformulate the "woman question" by recognizing the limitation of viewing women's subordination solely from a Productivist lens. It is also able to create space for an active Feminist undertaking that tackles communism from a gendered perspective. The integration of feminist thought in Marxist-Leninist-Maoist nationalism indicates the success of Feminist nationalism in building a place for gender to be included in the NPA's nationalist imagining. Although in terms of theorization, views about nationalism of women NPAs in Mindanao do not show this integration, and the strides that they have done in terms of practice are remarkable.

For instance, the feminist nationalist movement in Mindanao is able to re-launch the dormant women's group within the NPA and make it a truly integral part of the movement's structural arrangement. They have criticized gender role divisions within the movement and pointed out the often overlooked social hierarchy that legitimizes and normalizes chauvinistic male behavior. They have worked in changing male and even

female attitudes in all aspects that affect women's lives—work, family, relationships, etc. They have looked into both the public and private spheres of revolutionary life and have analyzed the factors that put into motion the complicated interplay between gender and nationalism in the context of revolution.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of feminist nationalism in the NPA in Mindanao is its ability to put gender equality on equal footing with national liberation in a nationalist movement like the CPP-NPA. Although imperfect, this feminist nationalist movement is a dynamic combination of what was believed to be two divergent undertakings. It is a continuous negotiation of interests that seeks to accomplish not only one, but two goals; because they are equally important in the creation of a genuinely fair and just society. This feminist nationalist movement in Mindanao is proof that contrary to western feminist opinion, feminism, and nationalism in the context and experience of women in the NPA in Mindanao are reconcilable.

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# Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW): Constructing Peace Network in Mindanao

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Southern Philippines is host to two active insurgencies – the Communists and the Secessionists. Both of them have challenged the state in sporadic violence for decades through the classic guerrilla mode of hit-and-run. The conflict has brought about humanitarian problems. The civilians are caught in the middle, running for safety when armed offensives break out, and causing physical and psychological traumas. These humanitarian concerns go beyond the capacity of the state to respond. Thus, civil society steps in to encourage a peaceful resolution to the conflict (Arguillas 2003, 1).

It is in this context that the peace movements and coalitions came to life to fill up the spaces where the state is deficient. Civil society leaders in Mindanao decided to establish the Mindanao Peace Weavers (MPW) to address the lingering questions of humanitarian problems brought about by the conflict. It works with non-government organizations (NGOs), local government units (LGUs), and state officials to prevent the conflict from further escalating.

MPW engages the government, the rebels, and the communities to bring them together in the spirit of reconciliation and to heal the cultural divide. In 2004, MPW member organizations banded together to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Central Mindanao. It informed the two sides (the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Philippine government) about the humanitarian crisis that had resulted from successive military operations (Mindanews 2008). The government launched two of these operations – the first was to take Camp Abubakar, the main MILF camp, in 2000; and the second was to

dislodge Salamat Hashim, the leader of the MILF, from his residence in the Buliok Complex in 2003.

It is in these contexts that this article presents the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the peace process. This paper answers the following: (a) What were the events (political context) that shaped the establishment of MPW? (b.) What were the various peace networks in Mindanao, their interests, and their agenda? (c). How did MPW participate in the peace process between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)? (d) What were the gains and limitations of MPW?

The paper plots key events in the 20-year struggle to find a viable solution to the Mindanao conflict – from the government's "all-out" war in 2000 to the operation of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2020.

## Historical and Political Context of MPW

The Philippine government opened negotiations with the MILF shortly before the 1996 signing of the peace agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the parent rebel front, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The negotiations led to the declaration of a cessation of hostilities in July 1997 between the MILF and the Philippine government. When the Ramos administration ended on June 30, 1998, the new president, Joseph Estrada, commenced formal negotiations between the GPH and MILF in October 1998.

The negotiation began to crumble after the Philippine military clashed with the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), the military arm of the MILF. The AFP chased lawless elements that entered the camps of the MILF. The MILF panel responded by proposing that the government give due recognition to their camps to prevent similar incidents. The government agreed. It acknowledged seven rebel camps but later

reversed itself, sensing that recognizing the MILF camps meant giving "quasi-belligerency" status to the MILF (Quimpo 2016, 6). This led to President Estrada's declaration of an all-out war against the MILF.

Eight years after declaring the "all out" war, former President Estrada clarified that the decision to declare war against the MILF was due to a series of violations committed by the MILF. He accused the rebels of not honoring their word and "only used ceasefires to regroup and strengthen their forces," an accusation commonly leveled against the rebel group whenever the government violates the ceasefire. Estrada narrated it was the MILF who initiated an encounter in November 1999 in Central Mindanao and North Cotabato. Furthermore, the MILF occupied the Talayan Municipal Hall in Maguindanao on January 10, 2000, and the Kauswagan Town Hall in Lanao del Norte. He blamed the MILF for bombing a ferry in Ozamiz City on February 25, 2000. The government also wanted to clear the 184-kilometer Narciso Ramos Highway. This road network connects the two principal cities of Cotabato and Marawi, where the MILF maintained a significant presence by collecting toll fees from passing vehicles.

The Philippine military scored a victory over the MILF in 2000 when it dislodged the rebels from Camp Abubakar, their main camp, which was then located in Maguindanao. The MILF moved their camp to the Buliok Complex which covers the town of Pikit in North Cotabato and Pagalungan in Maguindanao. The 200-hectare (Concepcion et al. 2003, 16) Buliok Complex constitutes scattered villages that are connected by a kinship network. It has community facilities like schools, farms, mosques, government village halls, health centers, and a population of 4,260 persons who depend on farming and fishing (Canuday 2006, 124). In 2003, the military mounted a series of offensives in Buliok that claimed the lives of 176 people: 161 guerrillas and members of associated armed groups, eight soldiers and militia members, and seven civilians. While the rebels disputed

the figure, claiming that only about 40 rebels were killed, the offensive sent more than 41,000 people fleeing their homes, as reported by the *New York Times.*

In 2013, the World Bank reported that between 2000 and 2003, some 932,000 people were displaced by the conflict, although the majority (90%) returned to their homes or moved to new locations. Old IDPs mixed with new batches from newly affected areas. *Bakwits* (the local term for Internally Displaced Persons) come and go depending on the intensity of military operations, and encounters between the rebels (MILF) and the military, or between the military and the lawless elements. With the help of civil society, violence subsides, and parties resume the negotiation, then violence manifests again.

In 2008, the peace negotiation suffered another setback. The Philippine Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) on the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) between GPH and the MILF as unconstitutional. Both peace panels had to postpone the signing of the MOA-AD in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. MILF commanders reacted to the TRO by attacking communities and military targets. MILF Commanders (Kato and Bravo) undertook the offensives without approval from the MILF Central Committee (CC). Civilian populations evacuated to safer ground to avoid the crossfire, which swelled the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In a photo essay in 2011, veteran journalist Bobby Timonera showed the devastation brought about by war in Mindanao. There were cases of old *bakwits* mixed with new batches – all of them affected but belonging to different times of the conflict. This vertical conflict between the MILF and the AFP coexists with another one, *rido* or clan wars. A rido usually complicated existing tensions, and displaced communities where it flared up. The civilians who are accustomed to the occasional encounters between the MILF and the AFP, keep an eye on small and intermittent rido wars between clans. A rido drags clan members who work with the MILF, AFP, and the MNLF (Torres, 2007). It is in such

situations that CSOs step up their efforts. They engage different layers of civilian government from local to national,  articulate the need to protect civilians during military operations, and the state of  the well-being of IDPs in evacuation centers.

| "All Out War" 2000 | "Buliok Complex" | "MOA-AD" 2008 | "Zamboanga Siege" | "Mamasapano" Encounter |
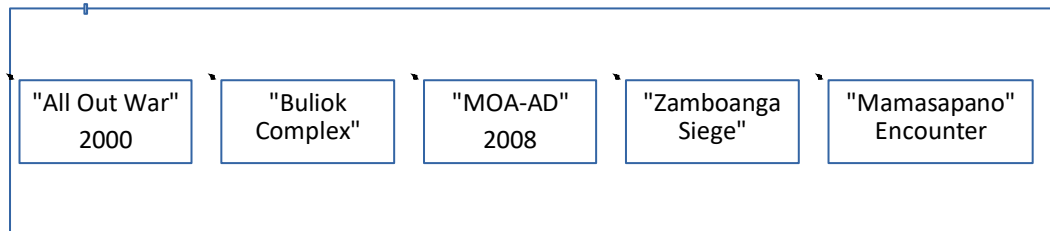
**Figure 1.** Sequence of Conflict

The question is how can CSOs shape the peace and conflict in Mindanao. The odds seem to be overwhelming, but CSOs always find an opening. The road to a negotiated settlement of the conflict is aided by enabling conditions on the part of those who bring warring parties to the negotiating table. Sidney Tarrow calls this the "political opportunity structure" (POS) which he describes as "consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements" (Tarrow 1996, 54 citing Kriesi 1991; Kriesi and Giugni 1990; Kriesi et al. 1995).

The graphic image of violence, the psychological trauma, and the disruption of everyday life, summon CSOs to band together to stop the carnage. The government displays an imbalance between the military and the civilian. The AFP is fast and efficient in applying violence; the civilian agency, Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD), has difficulty in alleviating the situation of vulnerable *bakwits*. War invariably triggers a running humanitarian crisis.

A conflict creates an opportunity for social movements. In the case of Mindanao,  the CSOs appealed to the warring parties to talk at the peace table. Applying Tarrow's political opportunity structure, conflict (or the threat of war) sends four signals: (1) opening

up of political access, (2) shifting alignments, (3) availability of influential elites, and (4) elite division. Under reasonable conditions, the state stays fortified. It is business as usual.

The war brought unprecedented access to institutions of power that were previously not available. It is because "rational people do not often attack well-fortified opponents when they lack the opportunity to do so" (Tarrow 1996, 54). CSOs wait for the proper time before hitting the ground running.

The alignment of forces also shifts during this time. War and its attending circumstances simplify the alignment of groups. These "signal(ling) the possibility of new coalitions emerging, encourage insurgents to try to exercise marginal power and may induce elites to seek support from outside polity" (Tarrow 1996, 55). During this period, CSOs become hyperactive to form coalitions and seek support from the elite and the public to pursue their goals.

Powerful elites emerged to lend their voice among CSOs or TSMs advocating for peace. In Mindanao, the voices of CSOs go hand-in-hand with a statement of support from leaders of INGOs, Church and business leaders, and aid agencies. This situation is where elite division becomes visible: those who support war and those who do not. It shows that the "division among elites not only provides incentives for resource-poor groups to take the risks of collective action; they also encourage portions of the elite to size up the role of 'tribune of the people' to increase their own political influence" (Tarrow 1996, 56).

## Network of Networks

Civil society organizations built a network to respond to various challenges in communities. One of these challenges was the intermittent conflict between the Philippine government and the MILF. CSOs understood that existing links were not enough to tackle the problem at hand, so they expanded their network to include all

other networks. This had to be done when President Estrada's declaration of an all-out war became nationally popular. The network expansion was done mostly in communities affected by war. For example, membership in MPC in 2001 came from North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, and the Lanao provinces, areas mainly affected by the all-out war in 2000. The Mindanao People's Peace Movement (MPPM) also drew support from Lumad communities in Agusan, Maguindanao, and Sultan Kudarat provinces (Mindanaopeaceweavers 2015), which experienced the effects of war.

The decline of the Left social movement in Mindanao also contributed to the seemingly free zone for CSOs. Released from the dominance or influence of the mainstream Left's politics in their work with depressed communities, CSOs gravitated into coalitions. After the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) lost control over some of their CSOs due to internal party debates in the mid-1990s, it became more comfortable for these CSOs to relate with other CSOs. They had wider options to entertain coalition work (Holmes 2011, 154-155; Pinches 2010, 296, 303) in different dimensions of peace advocacy.

The peace CSOs -- Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM), AGONG Peace Network, Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS, Inter-Religious Solidarity Movement for Peace, Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference (MPAC), Mindanao Solidarity Network (MSN), and the MPC – formed the Mindanao Peace Weavers. During the founding assembly of MPW, the Mindanao Association of State Colleges and Universities Foundation and *Bisayang Dako Alang Sa Kalinaw* participated as MPW convenors. All but one network -- Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao (InPeace) -- joined the MPW.

### Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM)

The MPPM gathered together a network of peoples' organizations working on peace, human rights, and the environment. MPPM promotes the concerns of the tri-people: the

*Katawhang Lumad* (indigenous population), Bangsamoro, and *Katawhang Migrante* (migrant population). The movement was formed in 2000 in Davao City as a response to President Estrada's declaration of all-out war against the MILF. Its immediate call was the cessation of hostilities between the two camps. Initially, MPPM was formed to campaign against the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1999, but it later directed its attention to the effects of all-out war.

The member-organizations of MPPM come from Northern Mindanao, (Lanao del Norte, Iligan City, Misamis Oriental, Misamis Occidental); Maguindanao and Cotabato City; Bukidnon and North Cotabato; SoCSKSarGen (South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, General Santos City); Lanao del Sur and Marawi City; Davao City; CARAGA Region; Zamboanga Peninsula; and Sulu, Tawi-tawi and Palawan. Their membership appears to promote the rights of the indigenous population by stating that they must be part of the peace agreement between mainstream Moro rebel organizations and the government.

### AGONG Peace Network

Agong Peace Network, Inc. is composed of more than 32 grassroots-based peace organizations and individual peace advocates aimed at promoting the culture of peace in Mindanao. The network was originally called the "Mindanao Peace and Reconciliation Group," reflecting the training they got on the culture of peace in Cagayan de Oro City in 1997. During its third meeting in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, they adopted the name "Agong" to highlight advocacy for the indigenous people of Mindanao. Agong refers to the brass percussion instrument commonly used during festivities and clan meetings. The Agong network is spread out in Southern, Western, Northern, and Central Mindanao.

The Catholic Relief Service (CRS) serves as the secretariat of Agong. CRS is one of the prominent NGOs in the Philippines that does humanitarian work. Its primary area is

peacebuilding, which explains its involvement in the Agong Network. CRS has become the enabler of Agong, with its active role in its formation.

### Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS)

Formed in February 2002, the CBCS is composed of NGOs and POs within and outside of ARMM and it advocates human rights, peace, good governance, and the right to self-determination. CBCS works with the leaders of its network to bring its advocacies to the communities. Starting with 29 organizations in 2002, it claims to have grown to more than one hundred member-organizations from different parts of Mindanao in 2012.

### Inter-Religious Solidarity Movement for Peace (IRSP)

IRSMP envisions a society in peace and harmony where wholeness and integrity are developed; where everyone possesses dignity as children of the same Almighty God; and where power rests in the hands of the people. Its mission is to forge a brand of unity where cultural diversity is respected and given latitude. Its goals include the defense of the rights and dignity of the children, the youth, the aged, the differently-abled persons, women, and other marginalized sectors of society, as well as putting an end to political injustice. Its areas of operations include Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi.

### Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference (MPAC)

MPAC was born in 1990, at a time when the term "peace advocacy" was not yet popularly used. The peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) posed significant challenges to the peace advocates. MPAC's member-organizations undertook community efforts through the Tulunan Peace Zones and Quick Response Teams. Its programs and services have developed covering the following: Advocacy and Popularization of Successful Peace Stories; Documentation and Theory-building on Local Peace Efforts; Consensus Building on Selected Advocacy Issues; Life-Giving and Life-Sustaining Skills Training; and

Advocacy on active Non-violence for Peace. The Technical Assistance Center for the Development of the Rural and Urban Poor (TACDRUP) is the enabler of MPAC.

### *Mindanao Solidarity Network*

MSN is a loose network of Metro Manila-based peace advocates, NGOs, peoples' organizations, and networks that support peace initiatives in Mindanao. The solidarity effort emerged mainly as a response to the resurgence of the conflict in Buliok, Maguindanao in February 2003. Among the main activities initiated by the Mindanao Solidarity Network are the call for a ceasefire, peace fora, peace rallies, and *Duyog Mindanao*.

### *Mindanao Peace Caucus*

MPC was the Mindanao program of Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID). A "spin-off from IID" (Randy Ponteras, interview, October 28 2019), it was born as a result of the humanitarian emergency in 2000 as "a platform and network of grassroots organizations, communities, and NGOs affected and engaged in the conflict in Mindanao." It has forged relationships with Muslim and Christian organizations, POs, NGOs, and cooperatives located near conflict-affected communities. The idea is to fashion grassroots "tri-people" representation of civil society organizations, with tri-people in membership at the organizational level, that caters to tri-people communities. Much more, the encounter areas kept changing day by day as combatants maneuvered to secure advantageous positions against each other. While the war rolled through villages and communities of Christian settlers, Muslim Moros, and Lumads, IID and MPC became technical in observing the war through the "Bantay Cease-fire" (Rood 2005, 28).

### *InPeace*

Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao (InPeace) is a coalition of religious, community, and (partly) academic institutions in Mindanao that also push for peace. The InPeace network

is not comfortable joining the IID and other coalition partners. InPeace is more attuned to the anti-war than the peace coalition. It supports the peace process between the NDFP and the GPH, but the organization has a hard time relating to transnational social movements (TSMs) outside of its orbit. InPeace chairman Bishop Felixberto Calang, in a media interview, interpreted the "core of the conflict" as traceable to "landlessness and exploitation of resources by multinational-operated mining and plantations" (*Bulatlat* 2011).

Most InPeace member-organizations belong to the "national democratic" framework. Steven Rood (2005 8, 37) and Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (2005 16, 33) took note of its tendency to be sectarian in orientation and its difficulty in relating with other groups pushing for peace in Mindanao. Miclat's statement is telling: "*May invitation (sa kanila) pero wala. Di nag-join* (There is an invitation for them. They won't. They never join). They will not be part of the coalition that they cannot control." This could be because the interest of InPeace lies in an ideological framework, e.g., opposing the war in Iraq (2003) and in Mindanao (2003). The anti-imperialist campaign of InPeace figures more prominently than the immediate cessation of hostilities and assistance to affected communities.

Foreign funders are aware of these dynamics among civil society players in Mindanao. Steven Rood (2005, 37-38) recommended that "donors must be clear-eyed about the ideological characteristics of civil society. Just as MNLF-linked NGOs received grants and other forms of assistance after the 1996 Final Peace Agreement. Mindanao-wide, the division between the militant left and mainstream organizations is unlikely to be bridged. Rather than programming to try to produce one mega-network, choices must be made as to which groups are to be provided with resources to pursue their goals."

This cautionary tale affects further the activities of InPeace since funding agencies might avoid them or vice-versa. Funding agencies matter a lot in the activities of coalitions. Without adequate support, coalitions could have difficulty running their activities. This happens in other countries. In Senegal and Bolivia, for instance, CSOs depend on funders. When funds run short, they reduce their activities. It causes them to split themselves (Ghimire 2011, 74-76).

### *Mindanao Peace Weavers*

Except for InPeace, the coalitions mentioned above formed the MPW, which evolved when individual coalitions responding to different concerns at different times decided to increase the size of their advocacy platform. The Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), which initiated the Mindanao Peace Caucus, saw the insufficiency of MPC. The humanitarian emergencies were daunting. Together with other networks, IID convened the MPW, making it the broadest coalition to date of peace networks located in Mindanao. The military assault on the Buliok Complex in North Cotabato forced IID and its networks to convene a more prominent platform of action. One called it "a network of networks," which indicated the sheer size of the organization. They aimed to (again) engage the warring parties to return to the negotiating table and attend to humanitarian problems brought about by the war (Miclat, interview, September 14, 2013).

Tactically, the MPW achieved what it wanted: the cessation of hostilities. A few months after, the MILF signed the Suspension of Military Activities (SOMA), while President Arroyo, after arduous lobbying, issued the Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO). The suspension of hostilities paved the way for the restart of the negotiation and the return of the IDPs to their villages.

IID works as the central secretariat of MPW and shares the responsibility with three other essential partners: Balay Mindanao (in Cagayan de Oro City), Catholic Relief Service (in Davao City), and Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN, in Davao City). As

a network of networks, MPW is the biggest network of CSOs, majority of which, are in Mindanao.

It appears that MPW was a mutation of an earlier CSO – the MPC. The member organizations decided to expand their reach by linking together and consolidating rehabilitation efforts for the devastated communities. This realization came as a result of two wars: one in 2000 and another in 2003. The communities were still recovering from the first one when the second war came along. As Ghimire wrote, "Social movements frequently mutate, or entirely new ones may emerge, thus the need for a constant renewal on the existing theoretical and analytical parameters" (Ghimire 2001, 3). The transnational peace movement constantly shifts to respond to a broader issue and be useful as well in meeting new challenges.

Today, a new platform is in the offing and is about to be unveiled. According to Miclat, it is "MPW++" because some CSOs expressed interest in joining and working with them. MPW has to expand to include other formations and organizations (Miclat, interview, September 15, 2013).

From a particular vantage point, it appears that IID was able to amplify its influence on the domestic level through the formation of peace coalitions, participation in peace gathering, and taking the lead in secretariat work. MPW consciously and unconsciously mimics the principles of the World Social Forum (WSF) which states: "(it) is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, the free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective actions…" (Ghimire 2001, 90).

The Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS), a member organization of MPW, independently pursued grassroots consultation in 2011 in coordination with the Geneva-

based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, independent from IID and MPW (International Crisis Group, August 3 2011, 6). In short, there was no classic instrumentalist control over a member organization. Another MPW-member organization, Saligan, pioneers in alternative developmental legal practices to empower communities.

It conducts developmental legal work with basic sectors of society such as women, farmers, workers, and Indigenous Peoples (IPs). However, its involvement with peace has to do with their concerns about the rights of the IPs that might be affected when the warring parties decide to ink a formal peace agreement. Saligan operates two branches, one in Naga City and another one in Davao City.

The internal factors allow TSMs like IID, with MPW, to maintain a local presence before an international audience. Experience in assisting communities in humanitarian emergencies and working with local coalition partners, enhance the credibility and international standing of IID to share with other TSMs outside of the Philippines. The local experiences set the stage for IID to establish transnational links.

## MPW and the GPH-MILF Peace Process

MPW assembled coalitions that had experience in peace advocacy and built a network across the island of Mindanao. Their participation in the peace talks between the GPH and the MILF did not start from zero. The members tapped their organizational experiences to participate in the peace process. The road to the negotiating table started from a consensus that they articulated. MPW ratified a 15-point peace agenda, called the Mindanao People's Peace Agenda (MPPA), in 2010 which covered issues relevant to the peace process, such as: the right to self-determination, human rights and justice, humanitarian accountability, good governance, sustainable development, and a national peace policy, solidarity, and peoples' participation.

MPW has played the roles of observer; ceasefire monitor; advocates for IP representation; policy lobbyist; promoter of an all-women protection corps; conductor of direct actions; and platform-provider for panel members.

### As Observer in Peace Talks

The GPH-MILF panels granted MPW an observer status in the process, but the three representatives of MPW had to pay their own way to attend the actual peace negotiation in Kuala Lumpur. In the words of Miclat, "*Kanya-kanya ang pag raise ng pondo, halimbawa sa Kuala Lumpur, as observer status, kanya kanyang gasto sa plane ticket at accommodation.*" (Each of us had to raise funds, for example in Kuala Lumpur, [when we attended the peace talk] as an observer. We paid for our own airfare and accommodation). The MPW projected its influence through its member-CSOs (like IID). It gave them the foundation of all of its local, regional, and international lobbying and advocacy for peace. The opportunity to participate in Kuala Lumpur talks translated into a building of trusts between CSOs and panel members from the MILF and the GPH. There were times in the past when MPW and its member organizations lobbied for ceasefire before panel members in what CSOs called as "backchanneling". They directly talked to members of JCCCH for a ceasefire to be implemented on the ground. In fact, MPW through MPC was given an opportunity to sit as observer in meetings of JCCCH. MPW participated in actual verification visits on the ground to monitor the status of ceasefire. In 2011, AFP officials recognized the role of back channels as contributory in the "minimal violations of ceasefires".

In another case, MPW gave MILF the venue and platform to air their side. MILF, as rebel front, had no legal personality to speak before the public. The same opportunity was also extended to government peace panels. MPW facilitated in several occasions to forge a tie with MILF to explain itself and its actions before the national media.

By breaking into the peace table, CSOs attained a status at par with the International Monitoring Team (IMT) and the International Contact Group (ICG). IMT is composed of representatives from Brunei, Japan, Libya, and Norway. Malaysia serves as head. ICG has representatives from Japan, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and several international NGOs: Muhammadiyah, The Asia Foundation, the HD Centre, and Conciliation Resources (EU Press Release, May 18, 2010).

### As Local Ceasefire Monitor

MPW gave the impression that they were earnest in their peace advocacy, something that the international think-tanks like USIP may not have had. The MPC's Bantay Cease-fire published "mission" reports that documented violations in areas hardly reached by the media and by convenient means of transportation. The Bantay Cease-fire teams reached MILF lairs and communities despite security risks and different road conditions. Its advantage was: the teams were composed of residents and their NGO counterparts. The report reflected testimonies of the bottom (the poorest of the poor) and of the participants in the conflicts (military officers and local officials) (Bantay Cease-fire Report, 2004).

The MPC's "Bantay Cease-fire" monitored the official declaration of a ceasefire between the GPH and the MILF. Ceasefire monitoring is vital to validate claims of violations on the ground as parties regularly exchange accusations of breaches of the peace. Bantay Cease-fire acted like a third-party, civilian-led monitor to keep the parties truthful in reporting violations. It reported to the Local Monitoring Team (LMT) that continually monitors the condition of peace. LMT is a local organization and a joint effort of the parties in conflict to police each other. It is composed of representatives from an NGO nominated by the MILF, representatives from an NGO nominated by the GPH, and a representative from the religious sector (who can be a Muslim or Christian). Bantay Ceasefire complimented the role of the LMT (Rood 2005, viii and 28).

The volunteers wore vests and carried mobile phones. They kept lines of communication open with MILF commanders, local officials, and police forces, to avert encounters. They also monitored troop movements of both sides. They sent reports to the International Monitoring Team (IMT) composed of representatives from the MILF, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Malaysian military. The IMT monitored the overall ceasefire and reported directly to the GPH-MILF panels.

Bantay Ceasefire also educated MILF commanders and military officers to recognize violations or possible violations, and distinguish whether it is MILF-sanctioned or rido-motivated. This way, the LMT knew how to respond. The Buliok assault, for example, started with a clan war that dragged the AFP units and MILF elements into the fray (Torres, 2007).

### Inclusion of rights of the indigenous population in the peace talks

MPW was consistent in advocating for the interests of the indigenous population. Some IP communities lived within the territories claimed by the MILF and they feared losing them under the new peace agreement. Thus, the negotiations had to be open to all. This position meant that the interests of the people of Mindanao: the Bangsamoro, the Lumads and the settlers, stayed protected. MPW carried a strong lobby position for the Lumad and Moro peoples"to resolve issues of traditional boundaries through traditional conflict-resolution mechanism" under the IPRA and the ARMM Organic Act.  The MPW held the view that the Lumad and Bangsamoro communities experienced "historical injustices and systematic marginalization." To correct these conditions, MPW pushed for "recognition of communal ownership of the tribal domain and the right to control and govern these by indigenous customary laws without outside interference."  In this regard, it called for substantial representation in the government's peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the National Democratic Front (NDF).

The MILF allowed a representative from the Teduray community to sit in the peace panel. Timuay Melanio Ulama was designated as an MILF peace panel consultant for IP issues. He now sits as a member of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA).

*Policy Lobby*

The MPW saw for themselves the value of lobby work for matters that bear the cause of peace in Mindanao. It asked policymakers for the resumption of the peace talks with the MILF and the suspension of provocative statements between parties that could spoil the peace process. MPW also attended hearings in the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as hearings called by the Committee on National Defense and Security and the Committee on Peace, Unification, and Reconciliation of the Philippine Senate. Their participation concerned the Proposed Senate Resolution No. 1281,"Expressing the Sense of the Senate for the Suspension of the Resumption of the Peace Talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front."  It also directly appealed to former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the then Secretary of Defense Angelo Reyes for the resumption of the peace talks with the MILF.  In its lobbying work, MPW was joined by CSOs like MPC, IID, BRC, Mindanao Solidarity Network, CBCS, Agong Network, PAZ, and many others.

This lobbying was done with the participation of *bakwits* themselves who articulated their concerns for peace since they bore the direct brunt of military and rebel encounters. Under the banner of "bakwit power" grassroots leaders from North Cotabato and Maguindanao went to Manila and sought an audience with President Arroyo. One of them was Babu Umbai Maliganan, who appealed to the president and her cabinet to stop the war. She said that she had been running from war since she was young until now that she is already a grandmother. When she met Arroyo in Congress years after, Babu Umbai told Arroyo,"*Ma'am, ang promise mo sa akin, hindi mo pa naibigay. Yung peace para sa*

*Mindanao*" (Ma'am, your promise to me has not been fulfilled – peace in Mindanao) (Mindanews 2014).

### All-women protection corps

Bantay Cease-fire became a third-party volunteer to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreements on the ground. MPC initiated the all-female Women Civilian Protection Corps (WPCP) to be part of the IMT. MPC based its action from UN Security Council resolution 1325 that endorses the participation of women in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. The WCPC gained recognition from both parties in the conflict, the GPH and the MILF. During its inception, WCPC stayed in five identified sites: Aleosan, North Cotabato; Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte; Sarangan, Sultan Kudarat, and Davao (*Mindanews,* 2010). Their mandate was:

> *"an effective mechanism for monitoring, verifying, and reporting*
> *of the compliance of the Parties to their commitments under*
> *international and national humanitarian laws and human rights*
> *laws, to take constant care to protect the civilian population and*
> *civilian properties against the dangers arising in conflict areas"*
> (Balisalisa 2014, 19-20).

### Direct Actions for Peace, "Caravan for Peace"

Apart from working with both sides of the negotiation panels, MPW directed the campaign to build peace constituencies and popularize the importance of peace. During the controversial MOA-AD debacle in 2008, Father Angel Calvo of the Claretian missionaries and convener of the Inter-religious Solidarity Movement for Peace (IRSMP), led a peace caravan that started in Baguio City in the northern part of the country and ended in Cotabato City in the south. Named "Duyog Mindanao,"  the caravan was intended to spread the value of peace as against the popular conception of war as an option to settle the decades-long conflict in the south. It impressed upon the public that

"war is not an option." MCW assembled a network of CSOs to launch the peace caravan, including Waging Peace Philippines, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC-SEA), the Liga Filipina Policy Institute, Care for Mindanao, Bangsa Moro Peoples' Solidarity, Anak Mindanao, Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates and the Balay Rehabilitation Center.

### *Fora Provider for GRP and the MILF*

MPW understood that the peace panels had to communicate their intention and progress to the public. They appeared on television and explained their position on the radio. They shared their views before business organizations, local government officials, and academics. It became the business of MPW to provide a venue for panel members. The MILF had no legal personality so the MPC (a member organization of MPW) served as forum organizer to allow the MILF or the GPH to explain their side (Balisalisa 2014, 32).

### Gains and Limitations

The gains of MPW could be seen at the height of military offensives and in the process of negotiations for the temporary suspension of hostilities. Tactically, MPW made gains when it engaged the parties in conflict in the aftermath of the MOA-AD controversy in 2008 that led to unsanctioned military attacks by two MILF commanders, Commander Bravo of Lanao del Norte and Ameril Umbra Kato of Maguindanao. They attacked communities and military targets. They burned houses. In the case of Commander Bravo, his forces occupied a town in Lanao del Norte and raised the flag of MILF before withdrawing to their base in the hinterlands bordering Lanao del Sur. The series of armed encounters claimed 300 civilian fatalities and resulted in over 700,000 IDPs by half of 2009 (MacDonald and Viñals 2012, 14).

MPW sought the sides of the MILF and the Philippine government and achieved what it wanted: the cessation of hostilities between the parties. The MILF signed the Suspension

of Military Activities (SOMA), while President Arroyo, after arduous lobbying, issued the Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO). The suspension of hostilities paved the way for the negotiation between the GPH and the MILF to re-start and allow IDPs to return to their villages.

The MPW, through MPC, gained observer status during the second and third weeks of formal talks in Kuala Lumpur.  As observers, MPW representatives used the opportunity to talk to the GPH-MILF technical committee about the issue of ancestral domain. Thus, an MPC delegate spoke on the issue of the ancestral domain in a closed-door session (Soliman 2005, 5).  In this case, the CSOs gained an advantage by speaking directly at the peace table.  This is what Gus Miclat meant by shaping the agenda at the negotiating table (Interview with Miclat, September 15, 2013) – something that they had been longing for.

*Resource Mobilization*

The advantage of CSOs forming coalitions is the ability to raise funds. Since MPW worked with big coalitions, Miclat said, "they requested CRS, for example, to fund their small activities." CRS is a member and secretariat of MPW. They raised resources per individual organization to pursue the  important tasks of attending peace panel meetings in Kuala Lumpur. They shared resources in the coalition when activities were common to all, such as assemblies and organizational meetings. Outside of those, they paid their own way (Miclat September 15, 2014).

In a coalition, the secretariat prepares the proposals submitted to funding agencies based on the inputs provided by the members of the coalition.  The expertise developed by the IID in this regard illustrates its ability to raise sufficient funds to mount their campaign (Miclat September 15, 2013). Funding agencies appear to favor them as a result of long track records of keeping accountability.

*Limits of CSOs*

The entry of civil society in negotiations requires scrutiny.  First, the perceived closeness with the parties at the peace table and CSO representatives need examination from an outside observer. Soliman Santos cautioned CSOs that "sometimes the NGO person concerned wears two hats – a government and an NGO hat. In other cases, there is a complete 'cross-over' from the NGO frame to a government frame. There are also similar two-hat and 'cross-over' cases involving NGO persons and various rebel peace panels" (Santos 2005, 5).  CSOs may have ceded their independence in favor of one party at the peace table.

Second, the conflict between the Philippine military and MILF could mobilize the MPW into action to assist communities and engage partners to help. Controversial issues could divide them and throw away the internal unity of peace coalitions. For example, the discussion on MOA-AD proved to be divisive for the coalition. A member organization pushed for the endorsement of the MOA-AD. For them, the MOA-AD was something to be accepted for the settlement of the conflict in Mindanao. But all of the other MPW partner-organizations refused to do so. For them, that was not enough. Besides, Miclat reasoned, they have their own Mindanao Peoples Peace Agenda (MPPA), which they crafted for two years and was much broader in scope than MOA-AD. He said: "*may pomosisyon (sa loob ng koalisyon) katulad ng* MILF" (There were those who position themselves in favor with MILF).  Thus, that organization had to take a leave from MPW. Surprisingly, the organization later returned to the MPW and resumed partnership with them (Miclat interview, 2013).

Third, there  was the danger that resource mobilization became the priority  and the group moved away from the earlier formation of social movements. Social movement scholars  explain  that  resource  mobilization  could  veer  away  from  "grievance-based

conceptions of social movements and focus instead on mobilization processes and the formal organizational manifestations of these processes" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996, 3-4 citing McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977). The priority shifted to fundraising instead of sticking to the original purpose of the social movement. When the fund dried up, the social movement folded up.

## Lessons and Cautions

### *MPW as a product of armed conflict producing humanitarian emergencies*

By its admission, MPW exists because of humanitarian emergencies after momentous events like the all-out war (2000), the Buliok Complex operation (2003), and the MOA-AD debacle (2008). These events shaped the way MPW organizes itself. The CSOs pull together from their various advocacies and communities to mount a more robust response to humanitarian crises. They mark their successes along the way by linking communities to policymakers, advocating immediate cessation of hostilities, or taking care of *bakwits*. In a way, MPW's presence in the Kuala Lumpur negotiation has set a milestone for civil society in making their presence felt among the parties in conflict.

MPW and its member organizations succeeded in articulating the various concerns of the communities affected by war of the need for the parties to talk. What the MPW did, as the peace movement, was to cut the vicious cycle of violence that perpetuates in societal institutions such as families, schools, churches, and village organizations that continue to harbor sentiments against the "others" (Ferrer 2005, 32). MPW inserted itself in the two-party dynamics between the GPH and the MILF and lobbied for new agenda that may be set aside or overlooked between the two parties. It successfully endorsed the inclusion of an IP representative in the MILF panel. It carried IP concerns in the peace talks. It also expanded the role of women in peace negotiation. They may not have been formal peace negotiators, but they were in the technical working groups of both parties.

*MPW learned from convergence (of a network) and connecting to the ground (Bakwit Power, Bantay Ceasefire)*

MPW placed a premium on convergence among themselves and expansion to include other CSOs in the campaign. This convergence projected a size that parties at war could not ignore. There were no CSOs that match their strength in terms of the number of organizations it holds and the diversity of its constituencies. MPW practically covered the entire island of Mindanao. Significantly, "Manila networks" as they were called, aided them (Prieto, interview, November 16, 2019). MPW spoke from the periphery, and its messages were carried by sympathetic CSOs in the capital.

Their voices became amplified by allowing the *bakwit* themselves to articulate their plight. MPW initiated a campaign to bring *bakwit* to the halls of power where they spoke for themselves, thus bringing unmediated voices – authentic, intimate, and raw – before policymakers. MPW assisted the *bakwits* by briefing them on the intricacies of power in the capital (Prieto, interview, November 16, 2019). In short, making *bakwits* speak for themselves made the powers cognizant of the problem on the ground.

*Learning from Others*

MPW has articulated the lessons that they learned while responding to humanitarian emergencies and engaging with security forces and rebel units within the country and abroad. Many peace organizations are looking for a model suited to their context. MPW demonstrates the transnational nature of their work. Sri Lanka is trying to emulate the Bantay Ceasefire effort. Burmese women leaders went to Cotabato to learn from its Mindanao counterpart. This development is a case of one transnational social movement (TSM), bringing the experience to the global arena, so that interested networks abroad may tap into its expertise to be duplicated in their home countries.

There is no stopping for MPW. Through IID, it maintains solidarity campaigns for Burma, Thailand, and Timor-Leste. It also shows its presence internationally through the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), which has become a platform for IID to share its experience worldwide and absorb lessons from other countries. This is the advantage of simultaneously engaging the world while maintaining local links. This is a mark of a peace CSO.

This learning, sharing, and linking among TSM keeps the movement alive. It is happening, regardless of territorial boundaries. It is a cross-cultural relationship that continues to nourish relationship in perpetually changing conditions where they are located. One thing is clear -- TSMs tend to relate with one another despite the odds.

### Cautions

Peace CSOs are not perfect. They can be affected by existing dynamics among themselves. For example, the MOA-AD disturbed the harmony inside the organization as one of its organizations pushed for the adoption of the MOA-AD, expecting the entire MPW network to support it. The president at that time was losing credibility and legitimacy, while local leaders in Mindanao cried of a sell-out by the GPH to the MILF. When things return to normalcy, and the MILF returned to Kuala Lumpur to negotiate, the member organization resumed its relationship with the MPW.

MPW should continue to expand its peace constituency. In every peace agreement, there are spoilers—the Zamboanga crisis of 2013 points to the difficulty of bringing everybody on board for peace. The Misuari faction of the MNLF occupied Zamboanga and battled with security forces resulting in the displacement of more than 110,000 people. This incident should not happen again, and TSMs can help by bridging the Moro factionalism to protect the gains at the negotiating table. The government also has to be watched by CSOs because in the previous agreement with the MNLF (1996 Final Peace Agreement),

the government failed to implement the provisions religiously. If another Zamboanga is to be averted, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) must be given priority. Even if the MILF considers BIFF as an internal problem, it needs to be dealt with by combining dialogue and international pressure.

Moreover, the peace agreement has silenced the guns, but conditions that breed violence may continue to exist, such as discrimination, poverty, physical insecurity, absence of opportunity, intolerance, and others. Government compliance with the agreement is important. It requires constant monitoring by CSOs (Martin and Tuminez, 2010,17). Big peace coalitions, by their transnational character, can participate in the post-conflict reconstruction of communities. The post-conflict reconstruction in Ireland, El Salvador, South Africa, and Indonesia had CSOs assisting in the integration of former combatants into society (Rood 2005, 30).

To sustain peace, the parties must be reminded of their commitment to the peace agreement. The lessons of the Tripoli Agreement (1976) and the Final Peace Agreement (1996) between the MNLF and the GRP are instructive, and are good reminders for the parties to honor their agreements. The MPW, for that matter, can mobilize and pressure the international community to remind parties to honor their commitments based on the agreed provisions.

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# Anatomy of Political Participation and Retrospective View on May 2019 Elections: The Davao City Experience

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## Research Questions

This paper sought to present the anatomy of political participation of Davaoenos and their retrospective views on the May 2019 elections.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the anatomy of political participation of Davaoenos in terms of the following:

   a. Reasons for voting

   b. Process of decision making

   c. Top three considerations for voting

   d. Factors that influenced voting decision

2. What are the retrospective views of Davaoenos on the May 2019 elections in terms of the following:

   a. Perceptions on May 2019 elections

   b. Hopes and aspirations after the May 2019 elections

## Methodology

The research design is quantitative using the survey research approach. Quantitative research involves measuring variables (Leavy, 2017). Survey research provides a

quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Surveys rely on asking people standardized questions that can be analyzed statistically. They allow researchers to collect a breadth of data from large samples and generalize to the larger population from which the sample was drawn. Surveys are typically used for ascertaining individuals' attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or for reporting of their experiences and/or behaviors (Leavy, 2017).

In this study, stratified random sampling was used to gather empiric data using a $\pm4$ margin of error. A survey questionnaire was utilized to gather data from 630 respondents through face-to-face interviews. The respondents were household heads, at least 18 years old, and residents of the barangay for at least 6 months. Data collection was done in Davao City on June 21 to 23, 2019 and June 28 to 30, 2019.

Descriptive statistics were used in the treatment of data. Descriptive statistics describe and summarize the data (Babbie, 2013; Fallon, 2016). The responses were processed using SPSS and data were presented in tabular form through percentages. As Leavy(2017) asserts, in quantitative research, the analysis process leads to a statistical rendering of the data generally represented in a set of tables or charts along with a discussion.

## Results and Discussion

This section of the paper is divided into two. The first chunk discusses the anatomy of political participation of the Davaoenos. The discussion elucidates the respondents' reasons for voting, process of decision making, top three considerations for voting, and the factors that influenced their voting decision. The second chunk discusses the retrospective views of respondents on the May 2019 elections. This segment of the

analysis explicates their perceptions on the said election and their hopes and aspirations thereafter.

### *Anatomy of Political Participation of Davaoenos*

Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives (WHO, 2010). In a democracy, political participation plays a key role. It is located "at the center of the concept of democratic state" (Kaase and Marsh, 1979 in van Deth, 2001). Definitions of political participation abound. Norris (2001) defines political participation as "... dimensions of activity that are designed either directly to influence government agencies and the policy process, or indirectly to impact civil society, or to alter systematic patterns of social behavior". Milbrath and Goel (1977) define it as "... those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics". Verba and Nie (1972) point out that political participation refers to "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take". Furthermore, Verba et al (1995) stress that political participation provides a great opportunity for citizens in a democracy to communicate their concerns and pressure government officials to act on those.

A better way to appreciate political participation is to examine closely how it goes in more specific and grounded settings.

In this research one inquiry domain covered is the anatomy of political participation of Davaoenos and the driving forces behind it. How is it exhibited? Do Davaoenos have a robust voting history as gleaned from the May 2019 election?  How do they participate and prepare for an election? The May 2019 election is a good opportunity to assay these issues.

A minutely detailed anatomy of political participation can heighten the understanding of local political narratives and celebrate the significance of citizen's involvement. According to van Deth (2001), "democracy cannot function without some minimum level of political involvement and a lack of political involvement is considered destructive for democracy".

What drives people to vote? Anatomizing or breaking down into minute parts the concept of voting participation will provide insights as to how political participation can be understood and nurtured, it being one of the hallmarks of democracy.

**Reasons for Voting**

In the survey, the respondents were asked if they registered during the May 2019 election. The act of registration is a manifestation of interest to participate as a voter. It is a symbol of readiness for serious political activity. The anatomy of political participation of Davaoenos can be gleaned from their voting history. Based on the findings, 87.5% of the respondents registered for the May 2019 elections. In order to participate in voting, citizens must be registered to satisfy the eligibility requirements (Boundless Political Science, 2020). However, being a registered voter is not enough because what truly counts is the actual act of voting. As revealed in the study, among those who registered, 86.2% were able to cast their votes.

There are varied reasons why people vote. Munsey (2008) emphasizes that voting can be a form of altruism, self-expression, and affirmative act that underscores membership in a larger group. It can be a habitual behavior or a means to fit in or a form of social admonition. He points out too that egocentrism can be a motivation for voting since there are voters who think that other voters like them will also do the same which is a psychological mechanism called "voter's illusion". The belief that voting will make a

difference also comes out as a motivation according to the study of Acevedo and Krueger (cited in Munsey, 2008).

There are fascinating explanations why people vote. What would account for the decision of the respondents to cast their vote? Those who voted gave varied reasons: (i) they assert that their vote is important for the country's progress; (ii) they want to exercise the right of suffrage; and, (iii) they want to support their preferred candidates and fulfill their civic duty. Table 1 on Reasons for Voting shows such claims:

**Table 1.**

| Reasons for Voting multiple response | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| My vote is important for the country's progress | 47.2 |
| To exercise the right of suffrage | 42.9 |
| To support preferred candidates | 37.9 |
| Civic duty | 32.4 |

The reason most was that the vote is the advancement of the country. The respondents viewed voting as their contribution in charting the country's development. Davaoenos nurture their faith in electoral participation because they believe in the power of their vote and the electoral victors will meet the expectation of that the respondents are exhibiting political efficacy at the personal level. The power of the vote in constituents who trust that these elected officials will perform their functions so that the country can move forward. Acevedo and Krueger (in Munsey, 2008) assert that some people vote because they believe that their vote will make a difference.

The second motivation for voting is that the act of voting is an exercise of the right of suffrage. The right of suffrage is not a mere right. Right of suffrage is not just the possession of right to vote but the exercise or the practice of it. The finding corroborates the idea of van Deth (2001) that voting is the universal form of political participation for every citizen in democratic societies and a mode of political participation on its own.

The third reason expresses the voter's support for preferred candidates. The support for the candidate does not end with the campaign. To cast the vote is to fulfill one's civic duty. According to Blais and Daoust (2020),

> "*Quite a few people want to vote even though they are not interested in politics. The reason is their belief that they ought to vote, no matter how they feel about politics, elections, parties, or candidates. They believe that they have a moral obligation to vote, that is, they have a civic duty to participate in an election.*"

Kanazawa (2009) echoed the claim by saying that voting is a civic duty of every citizen in a democratic country. It is not about trying to affect the electoral outcome, but it is about doing the civic duty as a democratic citizen. For Brennan (2016), voters vote in order to express themselves. The act of voting is private. Voting through is a way to demonstrate and express one's commitment to their political team.

The reasons for voting clarify the meaning behind the respondents 'way of showing political participation. As Ali and Lin (2013) suggest, "understanding why people vote is fundamental to the theory and practice of democracy".

**Process of Decision Making**

The process of decision-making is important. Democracy offers great opportunities for independent thinking, choice making, and articulation of preferences which are very evident during elections. While there are numerous forms of political participation, election is one solid ground for the expression of the freedom of choice especially when it comes to the selection of leaders. Craig, Martinez, and Kane (2006) assert that elections are seen as legitimizing institutions that allow citizens to have input in the political process.

What about the process of decision making exhibited by Davaoenos during the May 2019 election? The crucial decisions made by the voters as to their candidate preferences were made at significant periods. The chronology of decision making when examined in detail can reveal how and when decisions are shaped during the entire election period. When are initial voting decisions formed? When are final voting decisions made? Those questions can provide appreciation of the many facets of decision-making and political participation.

The findings in the survey reveal that during the nascent shaping of respondents 'initial voting decision, there were two crucial decision periods: (i) the period of candidates ' filing of candidacy; and (ii) the week before the election.

The period of the candidate's filing of candidacy shapes the voter's initial preferences.  It gives voters an initial appreciation of potential leaders that will govern the country in the future. Likewise, it helps the political parties 'know how their endorsement will turn out. This initial period of voting decision-making, even if not final, can provide the candidates the leeway to assess and reassess how they fare in the eyes of their voters. This crucial point in decision-making may be subject to change as the campaign kicks off and as events unfold and create impact on the candidates 'standing in an election.

The week before the election is the time in which some voters start making their choice. One week is a time close to the actual election date. The findings in the survey affirm that the voters were only observing at the start and made their initial decision just the week before the election. Table 2 shows the period the respondents made their initial voting decision:

**Table 2.**

| When did you make your INITIAL voting decision? n=475 multiple response | |
| --- | --- |
| | percent |
| During candidate's filing of candidacy | 25.5 |
| 1 week before election | 20.2 |
| 2 months before election | 13.7 |
| 3 weeks before election | 11.8 |
| 3 months before election | 10.3 |
| 2 weeks before election | 8.4 |
| Election day, outside voting precinct | 4.6 |
| Night before the election | 3.2 |
| Election day, inside voting precinct | 2.3 |

Those periods for initial voting decision are still temporary as other considerations may affect the choice of the voters. Earlier choices may remain stable or unstable. The decision-making process must be examined in terms not only of the initial voting decision but also of the period when the final voting decision was done.

The survey indicates two decision periods that were crucial for most Davaoenos in their final voting decision: (i) one week before election; and (ii) during the candidates 'filing of candidacy. Table 3 shows two other periods of decision making. Some people made their final voting decision on the election day, or at the time when they were outside the voting precinct, while others decided the night before the election.

**Table 3.**

| When did you make your FINAL voting decision? n=475 multiple response | |
|---|---|
| | percent |
| 1 week before election | 27.4 |
| During candidate's filing of candidacy | 17.7 |
| Election day, outside voting precinct | 14.3 |
| Night before the election | 12.4 |
| 3 weeks before election | 6.9 |
| 2 weeks before election | 6.1 |
| 3 months before election | 5.3 |
| Election day, inside voting precinct | 5.3 |
| 2 months before election | 4.6 |

There were respondents who concluded their political choice on the time closest to the actual election day. It is possible that they might have spent more time reflecting on their decision's definitive end or were still undecided even before they entered the polling precinct. The undecided voters are crucial to candidates competing neck-and-neck. Final decision votes firmed up during the hindmost time can provide an edge to some candidates while to others these can result in a drop their winnability in the electoral race.

The temporality of the vote reveals both the decision and indecision of the voters at a specific period. It is not a just a question of where the voting happened, whether or not the right to vote was maximized, but at what juncture the voting decisions were formed. The temporality of the vote supports the idea that voting behavior cannot be plausibly considered as a continuous phenomenon. The occasions with which this behavior is linked up, i.e., elections, are held at certain intervals (Visser, 1998).

**Top three considerations for final voting decision**

Aside from the temporality of the vote, a glimpse on the factors that influence the deliberation process of the voters during election is also important.

A question was raised in the survey regarding the respondents 'considerations in their voting decision. Asked what they considered greatly in making their final voting decision, the voters selected their top three considerations as follows: (i) personal perception on the candidate; (ii) candidate's leadership abilities; and (iii) President Rodrigo Duterte's endorsement. The data manifest the personal take of the respondents in the final selection of their candidates.

Impressions about the candidates matter a lot. Such supports what Kenny (1993) claims as voters 'ingenuity in forming impressions of where candidates stand on issues and evoke their own issue positions to assume candidates agree with them. First impressions affect voters 'decision making and in the absence of verbal information, they prefer political candidates they perceive as having personality traits they value in themselves (Koppensteiner and Stephan, 2014).

The second aspect that respondents weighed is the leadership ability of the candidates. The winnability of candidates whose leadership background does not approximate the

ideal may be affected. However, the candidate's leadership abilities shown from previous leadership portfolio would amplify his/her chance to win the election.

The voters also considered seriously the endorsement of President Duterte who has a huge following. There are other points for deliberation in voting such as party affiliation, family and peer influence, candidate's chance of winning, voter's region or province, and church influence.  However, those do not matter much from the vantage point of Davaoenos. The graph on the consideration in final voting decision manifests what mattered most to the respondents.

**Table 4.**

| Voters' considerations in final voting decision<br>n=475          multiple response | |
| --- | --- |
| | percent |
| Perceptions on the candidate | 53.5 |
| Candidate's leadership abilities | 37.3 |
| Pres. Duterte's endorsement | 33.9 |
| People's perception of the candidate | 29.1 |
| Candidate promotes voters' priority issues | 28.6 |
| Candidate's stand on issues | 25.1 |
| Party affiliation | 19.8 |
| Family/peer influence | 13.3 |
| Candidate's better chance of winning | 9.1 |
| Voter's region/province | 8.0 |
| Church endorsement | 5.7 |

**Factors that influence voting decision**

The electoral landscape is suffused with various elements that could influence voters. When the respondents were asked what influenced their final voting decision, the top three factors identified were the following: (i) President Rodrigo Duterte's endorsement; (ii) family; and (iii) television.

The data point out that President Rodrigo Duterte's endorsement affected the voters in a significant way. It would indicate his power to sway votes as well as the need of endorsees to be linked with him.

Another influential factor revealed in the survey is the influence of the family on the voting decision of the respondents. The family is seen here as a potential political socialization agent.

The third most influential factor in the respondents 'final voting was the television. The television from the vantage of the respondents serves as a medium of political communication from which viewers would have the chance to know the platforms of candidates through political campaign ads and televised debates. Tailing behind the top three influential factors is political education. Interestingly, as shown in the survey, celebrity's endorsement of candidates surfaces as the least influential factor that could affect the final decision-making of the voters. Table 5 reveals the factors that influenced the respondents 'final voting decision:

**Table 5.**

| "What influenced your final voting decision?"<br>n=475          multiple response | |
| --- | --- |
| | percent |
| Pres. Duterte's endorsement | 25.7 |
| Family | 25.1 |
| Television | 13.1 |
| Political education | 11.8 |
| Campaign sorties | 8.6 |
| Friends | 8.2 |
| Campaign flyers | 5.7 |
| Local talk/"tsismis" | 5.5 |
| Political surveys | 5.3 |
| Debate | 4.6 |
| Political advertisements | 4.4 |
| Social media | 4.4 |
| Church | 4.2 |
| Miting de Avance | 4.0 |
| Celebrity endorsements | 1.9 |

*Retrospective Views on the May 2019 Elections*

**Perceptions on the May 2019 elections**

The survey proceeded further by inquiring about respondents 'perceptions on the May 2019 election. According to van Ham et al. (2017) in Norris (2019), it is important to establish how the public evaluates the performance of elections and, in particular, whether or not perceived problems with elections contribute to more general dissatisfaction with the state of democracy. The perception parameters in the study covered key areas of the election such as the overall conduct of the election, as well as the performance of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), Board of Elections Inspectors (BEIs), and the citizens arm poll watcher, including the efficiency of the process of voting using the Vote Counting Machine (VCM).

Davaoenos had positive perceptions of the May 2019 election. One way to ascertain the success of an election is to know if it was conducted peacefully. A peaceful election can be a good barometer that a healthy democratic process was followed in the selection of the people's representatives. A peaceful election would show that the structures and the mechanisms are functioning. It ascertains that the election will not be tainted by violence which can affect the people's right of suffrage. As shown in Table 6, the respondents claimed that the election in Davao city as well as in Mindanao were generally peaceful although the extent of strong agreement was much more evident in the case of Davao city.

**Table 6.**

| "The election in Davao City was peaceful." | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 1.1 |
| Refused to answer | 0.3 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.2 |
| Disagree | 0.5 |
| Agree | 21.9 |
| Strongly agree | 76.0 |

**Table 7.**

| "The election in Mindanao was peaceful." | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 3.7 |
| Refused to answer | 0.5 |
| Strongly disagree | 5.9 |
| Disagree | 15.4 |
| Agree | 27.5 |
| Strongly agree | 47.1 |

Elections may be seen as peaceful but such can be overshadowed if the conduct of the election is not orderly. In the survey, a question was raised on how the respondents regarded the election in both Davao city and Mindanao context in terms of orderliness. The respondents affirmed that the May 2019 election in Mindanao and Davao city were both orderly. A comparison on election orderliness can be seen in Table 8 and Table 9:

**Table 8.**

| "The election in Davao City was orderly." | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 1.7 |
| Refused to answer | 0.5 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.3 |
| Disagree | 2.1 |
| Agree | 26.2 |
| Strongly agree | 69.2 |

**Table 9.**

| "The election in Mindanao was orderly." | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 4.0 |
| Refused to answer | 1.0 |
| Strongly disagree | 5.6 |
| Disagree | 14.0 |
| Agree | 28.7 |
| Strongly agree | 46.8 |

How do respondents judge the performance of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC)? The inquiry touched two contexts – the Davao City context and the Mindanao context. Based on the survey, majority of Davaoenos agreed that the COMELEC exhibited credibility and competence during the election, adding to the

integrity of the election and showing that there was a healthy competition for political power through a democratic process. There may have been minor glitches during elections, but with the COMELEC's quality performance or status of being perceived as true, real, and honest, the voters would value and accept the election results as reflective of their genuine voice in choosing their leaders. Likewise, the competence of the COMELEC earns the trust of people in the electoral system and processes. Electoral integrity matters and such should not be marred by election malpractice which can distort the quality of representation and will have implications for political, social, and economic outcomes (Bishop and Hoeffler, 2016).

The perceptions of the respondents on the COMELEC can be a good lesson to value in the forthcoming election in the Philippines. The trust of the people in its ability to conduct free, fair, honest, and orderly election points to its credibility and competence. These are shown in Table 10 and Table 11:

**Table 10.**

| "The COMELEC in Davao City was credible." | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 3.7 |
| Refused to answer | 0.6 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.6 |
| Disagree | 4.4 |
| Agree | 32.2 |
| Strongly agree | 58.4 |

**Table 11.**

| "The COMELEC in Davao City was competent." | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 3.7 |
| Refused to answer | 0.8 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.8 |
| Disagree | 4.6 |
| Agree | 32.7 |
| Strongly agree | 57.5 |

The Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) was assigned to supervise the election in the polling places. Other than the COMELEC in general, the BEIs were the ones who ensured the sanctity of the ballot. Along with the BEIs are the poll watchers. According to Davaoenos, the BEIs were very helpful during the election and the poll watchers (watchers of the citizen's arm) were effective in performing their duties. Such positive appraisal is shown in Table 12 and Table 13:

**Table 12.**

| "BEIs were very helpful during the election." | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| No opinion | .02 |
| Don't know | 7.8 |
| Refused to answer | 0.6 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.5 |
| Disagree | 3.8 |
| Agree | 29.7 |
| Strongly agree | 57.5 |

**Table 13.**

| "Poll watchers were effective in their duty." | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 5.1 |
| Refused to answer | 0.5 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.8 |
| Disagree | 4.3 |
| Agree | 30.6 |
| Strongly agree | 58.7 |

The counting of the votes cast in precincts is extremely important because the victory of the candidate will be determined by the number of votes garnered. Vote count is a barometer of the candidates 'political bid. How voting will happen, how it will be counted, and what technology will be utilized are other important issues. The Vote Counting Machine (VCM) is a mechanism that guarantees the speedy and timely release of election results. When asked what they thought of the role of the VCM, majority affirmed that the VCM made the voting process efficient and the election results were released in a timely manner. Such claims are noted in Table 14 and Table 15:

**Table 14**

| "The VCM made the voting process efficient." | |
| --- | --- |
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 5.2 |
| Refused to answer | 0.8 |
| Strongly disagree | 3.5 |
| Disagree | 9.2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Agree | 29.5 |
| Strongly agree | 51.7 |

**Table 15**

| "The election results were released in a timely manner." | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 3.3 |
| Refused to answer | 0.5 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.4 |
| Disagree | 6.3 |
| Agree | 31.1 |
| Strongly agree | 57.3 |

Overall, perceptions on the May 2019 mid-year election were positive. The respondents could check what worked well, what did not work well, and get the assurance that the conduct of free, honest, peaceful, and orderly elections is possible in the future. Furthermore, fair election promotes the notion of electoral integrity which, according to Norris (2014, p. 21) as cited in Mauk (2020), is the "agreed upon international conventions and universal standards about elections reflecting global norms applying to all countries worldwide throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-electoral period, the campaign, on polling day, and its aftermath". Electoral integrity lies at the core of democratic procedures (Mauk, 2020). Linde and Ekman (2003) in Norris (2019) in the same vein assert that free and fair elections, meeting international standards of electoral integrity and leading to the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, are likely to strengthen public assessment of democratic performance in general.

**Hopes and aspirations after the May 2019 elections**

The survey also sought to determine the respondents 'hopes and aspirations after the mid-year election. What comes next? What will be the shape of the future after participating in the political realm as voters? Based on the survey, the respondents were not expecting a bleak future. Respondents say that the election results reflect the will of the Filipinos. They have high hopes that the candidates they supported and elected would value their precious vote. They wish that electoral victors would perform well their tasks as representatives of the people. Such assertions can be gleaned from Table 16 and Table 17:

**Table 16.**

| "The election results truly reflected the will of the Filipinos." | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 2.1 |
| Refused to answer | 1.0 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.5 |
| Disagree | 3.5 |
| Agree | 30.5 |
| Strongly agree | 62.5 |

**Table 17**

| "I believe the newly elected officials will value my vote." | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 3.2 |
| Refused to answer | 1.3 |
| No opinion | 0.8 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 0.3 |
| Disagree | 4.8 |
| Agree | 27.8 |
| Strongly agree | 61.9 |

The Davaoeno respondents 'expression of high hopes after the May 2019 election can inspire elected government officials to do well. Webb, Gibbins, et al., (2020) assert that democratic government in modern societies must be conducted through representatives because of the impracticality of direct democracy. Elections enable voters to hold the representatives accountable for their performance in office. In the survey, the respondents 'hopes are also their visions of the years to come. This is revealed in Table 18:

**Table 18.**

| "I am more hopeful after the May 2019 Elections" | |
|---|---|
| | percentage |
| Don't know | 1.6 |
| Refused to answer | 1.4 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.2 |
| Disagree | 1.6 |
| Agree | 28.4 |
| Strongly agree | 66.8 |

## Synthesis and Implications

This paper presented the anatomy of political participation of Davaoenos and their perceptions of the May 2019 election. It gave a glimpse of the important elements of decision-making processes.

The anatomy of political participation was analyzed by looking at the respondents 'voting history, reasons, and motivations for casting their vote. In a robust display of commitment, the respondents participation in the mid-year election as they believed that their vote could contribute to the progress of the country. The right of suffrage was seen not simply as a right but one that should be exercised. It was also perceived as an opportunity to show support to the preferred candidates and a means to fulfill civic duty.

The temporal dimension of the vote could be seen in two episodes, namely, initial voting decision period and final voting decision period. The time of the filing of the candidacy and the week before the elections were found to be crucial in shaping the voters 'initial vote decision. The last week before the election day was the period in which most of the final choices were made. Those undecided made up their minds on the day of the election or while they were in the polling place. The voting decision when juxtaposed with the time element can yield a lot of opportunities for discourse.

Important considerations for final voting decision were the voters 'perception of the candidate and his/her leadership abilities. Noted also was that the endorser with a great following could shape voters 'choice of candidate. The endorsement of President Duterte was a top influential factor in molding voting decisions, followed by the influence of family and the television

The respondents perceived the overall conduct of the election positively. Based on their experience as voters, the subject election was seen to be peaceful and orderly. This was strengthened by the observation that those running the elections, such as the COMELEC,

the Board of Election Inspectors, and the citizens 'arm poll watchers carried out their functions well and were seen as credible and competent.

The positive perceptions on the mid-year election by the respondents resonated with what they anticipated. They held on to the power of their vote, and kept the stern belief that the electoral victors they supported would value their vote. The votes were signs of hope and prospects for a better future. Such was their sentiment as they robustly participated in the election. What the future would hold seemed unsure but what was clear was that they participated and exercised the right of suffrage and stood by their hopes and aspirations for the years following.

Through the study on the anatomy of political participation, the specificity of the voting dimensions can be seen at the local level. A magnified view of local politics brings out the finer elements of voting process, driving forces, and influential factors in decision making and political participation.

The retrospective views on the May 2019 election as products of the actual experiences of the local political actors reveals the peculiarities of grassroot politics. Understanding further the retrospective views on elections can help enrich the present, value the prospects, and plan the future.

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# WP SERIES 3

# WHERE WATER FLOWS:
## CHARACTERIZING DOMESTIC WATER AND THE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROVISIONING AND ACCESS IN TWO VISAYAS ISLAND-SETTINGS

# Politics of Water: The Case of Leyte, Philippines

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## Introduction

Water security and access to potable water are basic human rights. Water of satisfactory quality is the fundamental indicator of the health and well-being of a society (Dinca 2018). Domestic water, including drinking water, not only ensures human survival but serves as a key to hygiene, sanitation, and overall health. Along this line, the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" and includes targets for universal access to safe drinking water (6.1) for member countries. However, pressures from a reduced water quantity (or an increased water demand) due to population growth, and declining water quality caused by pollution and degradation of watersheds are inhibiting many countries from achieving this target (Dinca 2018; Rola and Francisco 2004). Gaps in water governance and insufficient investments in water systems for a basic and large system drinking water supply (compared to agricultural water resource and river development) are serious roadblocks (UN Water 2013).

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The Philippines has seen steady improvements in SDG 6 measures over the years.[54] National access to at least basic improved sources has reached 94% in 2017, up from 86% in 2000, with those having access to unimproved water sources reduced from 8% in 2000 to 5% in 2017 (United Nations Children's Fund and World Health Organization 2019, 100). Urban areas have seen modest improvements, from 93% in 2000 to 98% improved access in 2017. Of these, figures from 2008 indicate that over 1/3 (38%) of urban households have piped in water access (into dwelling or yard) while 14% access through tube wells or boreholes (World Bank Group Water and Sanitation Program 2015, 22). While these figures are high, they have barely kept pace with population growth in cities. Urban population growth is exacerbated by climate change-induced relocations to cities and the rise of new settlements, hence increasing water demand. Outside Metro Manila, cities are largely reliant on quasi-public water districts for piped-in water supply, which at their end are also facing serious supply shortages. Despite explicit resilience objectives in the SDGs, people are still becoming vulnerable to water shortage (CGIAR, 2019).

This paper takes the case of Tacloban City, a rapidly urbanizing city faced with increasing water demand, due to the rise of new relocation settlements following Category 4 typhoon Haiyan in 2013. This paper 1) describes the state of the supply and demand of water in Tacloban City; 2) describes the perceptions of users on water access; 3) analyzes the institutional dynamics of water access and provisioning, where possible conflict among competing users, present and potential cross boundary issues and water rights in relation to the existing institutional arrangements are presented; and finally, 4) identifies issues and challenges.

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[54] SDG access to improved water sources is categorized as follows: improved to include piped in (located in dwelling, yard or plot) , public standpoints and non-piped sources such as boreholes, tube wells, protected well and spring, rainwater, packaged water, and delivered water; unimproved sources include non-piped unprotected wells and springs; and no facilities as surface water. United Nations Children's Fund and World Health Organization 2019, 82.

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## Water and Urban Politics: Use and Access

As cities grow in size and density, urban water provisioning becomes a challenge. For many cities, piped-in water is provided by the government or quasi-public entities on subsidized terms, limiting their revenue base and, accordingly, their ability to invest in adequate infrastructure, and maintenance and repair (Hunter et al. 2020). In many cities of developing countries, water distribution systems are aging and no adequate investments have been made into pipe repair and replacement leading to substantial water losses (Moe & Rheingans 2006, 43). Many of these urban water systems have also been established decades ago and have not been expanded to accommodate new settlements or site developments. The increasing demand on existing water systems and illegal connections have compromised the financial operations of many formal urban water departments. Some city water departments have tried to address the problem by improving water sources— public tap, protected springs, hand pumps— and instituting better access to these water sources through communal distribution systems. But even investments in an improved water supply are hampered by the consumers' resistance to paying for water; the mindset that water is free prevails.

In areas not serviced by formal water distribution systems, households resort to self-provisioning by fetching water from wells or buying from informal providers such as private water vendors. This trend has been cited in cases examining Harare, Zimbabwe (Manzungu and Mabiza 2004, 1171) and Sao Paolo, Brazil (Hunter et al. 2020). Thompson et al. (2020, 40) point out that the urban households 'ability to obtain water from piped-in supply is compromised because the supply is unreliable as many of the physical water distribution infrastructures are no longer functional. Households make do by tapping secondary sources like fire hydrants, wells, and unprotected sources, e.g., open springs, and increasing to water kiosks and vendors, especially in middle income neighborhoods. The collapse of many municipal water systems in many urban areas in Sub Saharan Africa has been particularly hard for lower income households without piped water because

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they have to pay a high cost of vended/tankered water (Thompson et al. 2020, 49). Informal settlers or new settlers in unplanned sites in many Sub Saharan African cities have private water faucets for which households can buy or community taps run by water associations or water boards (Adams 2018, 36).

Having public taps does not guarantee access. The lack of access to water by urban residents is argued by authors as having political roots. Water is not taken seriously and generally treated by decision makers as a supply problem (Moe & Rheingans 2006, 52). In the case of Harare, Zimbabwe, the ability of new residents to connect to the City water network rests with politician, rather than the City water department. (Manzungu and Mabiza 2004, 1171). As formal water decision making bodies invariably do not include residents or households as members, the new residents are left out (Manzungu and Mabiza 2004, 1170). In Sao Paolo, Brazil, reforms in the 1990s allowed for the creation of local water councils, which included civil society organizations, water users, and local government agencies. Despite decentralized water governance (e.g., local water councils can come up with their own water and sanitation plans), the system remains state-controlled as the national government regulates which types of companies are allowed to supply water in municipalities (Empinotti et al. 2019, 151). These companies act as monopolies, exacting profit from water as a public resource but not delivering on the goals of equity and access particularly for poor and marginalized neighborhoods. In the case of Lima, Peru, the transfer of water from another basin to the City has deprived those in the city periphery, who primarily need water for their agricultural livelihood. The legal framework allowing such water transfer has also made it politically difficult for those in the Lima periphery to contest such inequitable water distribution schemes. The national government's preference towards downstream household users is manifest in the grant of water licenses, disadvantaging upstream communities who do not have such water rights (Hommes and Boelens 2017, 76).

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## Methodology

The paper draws from the results of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)-funded research project "Where Water Flows: Characterizing Domestic Water and the Institutional Arrangements for Provisioning and Access in Two Visayas Island-Settings." The qualitative data were gathered through Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and household surveys.

### Site Description

Tacloban City is located in the northeastern part of the Island of Leyte, one of the islands in Eastern Visayas. The land area of 201 square kilometers extends from south to north, comprising the mountainous side along the western part of the City (Tacloban City CLUP Vol. III, 2017: 34/54). It is composed of mini watersheds that drain toward the City to the seashore. The climate in Tacloban City is classified by PAGASA as falling between the boundary of Type II and Type IV, which indicates that there is no dry season and no pronounced period for maximum rainfall which normally runs from July to December, but that rainfall is more or less evenly distributed throughout the year except on adverse periods where there is La Niña or El Niño (PAGASA, 2011).

The City of Tacloban has 138 barangays divided into ten political subdivisions or areas. Natural siltation and man-made obstructions affect rivers, creeks, and other natural drainage channels, causing the regular flooding of low-lying areas. Without regard to the zoning regulation of the City Government of Tacloban, residential areas in pocket, spots, and "purok" settlements, have mushroomed indiscriminately all over this urban landscape. Of the 138 barangays, 28 barangays have coasts and lowlands considered as danger zones. These danger zones are mostly occupied by informal settler families.

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Tacloban City illustrates an emerging trend among Philippine cities to shift from domestic water-reliance on a quasi-public single water service provider (water district) to a more diverse number of private sector players. The case also depicts the inherent institutional problems in domestic water provisioning, e.g., numerous service providers with varying levels of operational capability, weak oversight for the more numerous LGU-operated and community-based utilities, inchoate assignation and local user grounding on property rights to water, and local government competing claims on water supply sources (Hall et al., 2015; Rola et al., 2016, De Veyra and Hall, 2018). Tacloban City's location in the typhoon-prone Eastern Visayas and its relative distance from big freshwater water sources make it highly vulnerable, even as it projects itself to grow in importance as the Region's commercial center.

Super Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as S.T. Yolanda) has caused major damage to shelter and livelihood in Tacloban City. Of the 28,734 totally damaged houses, 90% are along the coast. The number of partially damaged houses is 17,643. Of houses totally damaged, about 10,000 belong to the urban poor. These 10,000 totally damaged houses are being resettled to the north, the new safe housing site away from the danger zone (City of Tacloban RRP, 2014). Tacloban City, the only highly urbanized city in the Region, posted a population of 242,000 based on the 2015 census (NSO 2016). It is a fast expanding City in terms of population while its land area remains the same (Tacloban City CLUP Vol. 1. 2017: iv/6).

After typhoon Haiyan, Tacloban City faces severe water supply constraints, particularly in the relocation sites that are expected to accommodate 40% of Tacloban's population by 2018 (Marteleira, 2018, 13). Seventy-six percent (76%) of households in Tacloban have a good access to safe water supply, of which a little over half (55.4%) are Level 2 water connections with only about 34% of households having Level 3 connection. The Leyte Metropolitan Water District has about 33,832 Level 3 service connections covering eight

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municipalities and Tacloban City, majority of which are residential households (UP Los Banos College of Forestry and Natural Resources 2019: 173/192-175/194). According to the LMWD Manager Mr. Pastor Homerez, (personal communications, October 2019), only about 62%-65% of households have connections by LWMD.

### Data Collection

Data were derived from the subset of survey data (30 households and business enterprises), three (3) key informant interviews of water managers, one (1) FGD with water stakeholders (including the City Government representatives) and reports from the Leyte Metropolitan Water District, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region 8, and Tacloban City Government. The data were collected from October 2018 to March 2020.

## Results and Discussion

### State of Supply and Demand for Water in Tacloban

Cities are more privileged in terms of Level 3 connections— 85% of those living in the National Capital Region and 50%-65% in cities outside the capital. Urban areas also have water services within premises (87%) compared to those in rural areas (63%). Overall, 97% of those living in urban areas have access to improved sources of drinking water (Philippine Statistical Authority, 29 March 2019). Despite institutional diversity, there remains a substantial proportion of households without formal access to piped-in (Level 3) or communally distributed (Level 2) domestic water. For these households, the only options are self-provisioning by getting water from open water sources (Level 1 wells, springs, or creek) or through manual pumps, or by purchasing from informal providers such as neighborhood vendors and water tankers (Rola, Pulhin and Hall 2018, 7).

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Those living in urban informal communities in particular are not reached as service areas of Level 3 providers and are especially vulnerable to drinking water contamination from unprotected sources compounded by poor waste disposal and lack of septic storage on site (Sia Su 2007, 53). There are some water-district and private concessionaires also delivering on this equity metric by providing public faucets (Level 2) or, in the case of the Manila Water Tubig sa Barangay Program, bulk water was provided to a set of households with a mother meter (Rola et al. 2016, 46). These, however, are seen as token subsidies for the poor (Singh 2007, 113).

The water supply used for cooking and drinking is usually sourced from shared faucets or a community-based water system. About 31.6% and 22% of the households tap water from their own faucet for cooking and drinking, respectively. About 13% of the households are already using bottled water for drinking (UP Los Banos College of Forestry and Natural Resources 2019: 173/192). Not all water reaches its intended users. The Leyte Metropolitan Water District registered that non-revenue water ranges 46% (Mr. Pastor Homerez, personal communications, October 2019) to a high 53.50% (UP Los Banos College of Forestry and Natural Resources, 2019: 175/194), which is an indication of a highly inefficient service.

Due to political disputes, the LMWD does not intend to increase its service area within the City of Tacloban (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2015) as cited in Marteleira, et. al. (2018, 15). Likewise, the relatively low proportion of Level 3 water connection through LWMD is a consequence of a *"one subdivision - one meter"* policy during the water district's administration by the Provincial Government from 1975 up to 22 February 2018. The LMWD provides only a one-meter connection to the subdivision developer, which is then subsequently tasked to distribute to various households. Many subdivisions also have spring or deep well water sources and have their own storage tanks. LMWD does not provide Level 3 service to northern barangays. People in these areas use deep wells or shallow wells for their water needs. Others have

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their water supply delivered in bulk by LMWD while some residents resort to the use of electric motor-powered deep wells in order to draw water. Given the insufficient Level 3 coverage by LMWD, the City Government of Tacloban is trying to look for ways to improve the situation and the possibility of providing for its own water system (Tacloban City CLUP 2017, Volume3: 315).

The Level 3 connections of LMWD are concentrated in the City's commercial center. Despite being connected to a main water pipe, the mandated standard requirement of 100-110 liters per capita per day that LWMD is mandated to deliver is not being met. Those located in lower elevations and close to major lines get water on a 24/7 basis. However, those in higher elevations have intermittent supply and are available only when those in lower elevations are not using them. Most water consumers in the elevated northern part of Tacloban City experience the latter. Individual households also use electric pumps to draw water from the pipes to store in tanks (Tacloban City CLUP 2017, Volume 3: 315).

On the demand side, Tacloban City's rapid urbanization as a central hub for the Eastern Visayas Region has put more pressure on already scarce water resources. With an average population growth rate of **2.13**, its registered population of 242,809 (56,988 households) in 2015 (NSO 2015) is projected to increase to 272,282 (63,321 households) in 2020 and further to 302,542 (70,359) households in 2025 (Tacloban City CLUP 2017, Volume 3: pp. 1-2). The current LWMD backbone for Tacloban City cannot meet this projected demand. As indicated in the Tacloban City CLUP Volume 1 (2017: 200/226), the development initiative of the City Government of Tacloban will require an inflow of funds to finance a mega infrastructure to supply potable water with a capacity of 22,500 cu.m. per day. The Joint Venture arrangement between the LWMD and Prime Water is expected to provide the financial requirement for a better water infrastructure in Tacloban City (Gabiet & Amazona, 2019). LWMD also projects parallel increase in population in other municipalities within its service area. The projected 2030 total domestic, municipal, and

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industrial water demand is 9.67 million cubic meters and is expected to grow further to 11.85 million cubic meters per year in 2050 (UP Los Banos College of Forestry and Natural Resources 2019: 245/264 – 246/265). Urbanization pressures exist both in Tacloban City and the peri-urban areas.

According to the LMWD Manager (October 2019), the water supply in Tacloban City is adequate with two plants operating that can service 55,000 to 60,000 connections. However, given the high water loss from dilapidated pipes and pilferage, only half the water is available to 38,000 concessionaires. Recall further that the majority of these concessionaires (62%-65%) are in Tacloban City. With an estimated demand of 22,500 cubic meters from Level 3 connection, only a portion is served in Tacloban City. This is compounded by the fact that Tacloban City lies at the end of the water pipeline from LMWD's lone source which is Binahaan river. Tacloban City is outside the Binahaan watershed where it gets its water. The Binahaan watershed covers 125 *barangays* of the municipalities of Palo, Tanauan, Tabon-tabon, Pastrana, Dagami, Jaro, Burauen and Ormoc City as shown in Figure 1.

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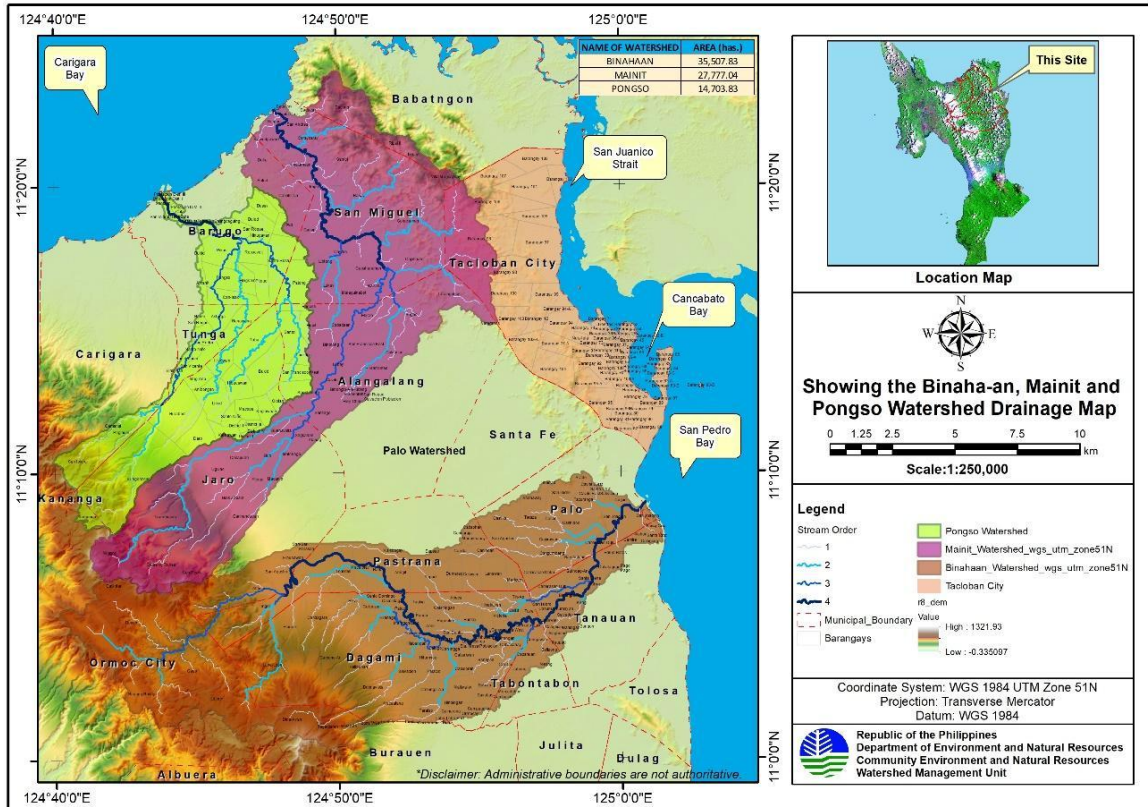
**Figure 1.** Map of Tacloban City water sources, Binahaan watershed (current), Mainit and Pongso Watershed (Future reserve).

In 2018, the Tacloban City Government acquired water rights from two other rivers, namely, Pongso and Mainit. But the headwaters of these rivers are also outside the Tacloban City boundary and lie in the municipality of Jaro as depicted in Figure 1. Based on the map, Pongso and Mainit Rivers have an estimated watershed area of 31 sq.km. and 43 sq.km, respectively.

## 1. Water Supply and Demand

The future of water security in Tacloban City hinges of the challenge on how the present management can sufficiently provide, given a myriad of supply and demand interactions. The most prevalent and potent challenges are the health of the watershed, the number of watershed sources, and the ever-increasing population growth compounded by the

rapidly urbanizing/industrializing mode of Tacloban City. It should be noted that Palo and adjoining municipalities depending on the Binahaan watershed for their water supply are also developing.

In 2025, the City population will have reached 305,995 inhabitants. And at the end of year 2050, the base population will have more than doubled to 493,327. These projections of the water requirements for the entire Tacloban City were done based on the population projection released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (2015), using a 1.99% annual average growth rate. In its study on bulk water supply, USAID Be Secure (2015) projected a total average day demand volume of water in Tacloban to 47.10 MLD in 2030 to 57.20 MLD in 2040. This is based on the projected population with the water service of 294,360 and 357,320 in 2030 and 2040, respectively. To provide supply to the projected water demand, other possible alternative sources of water are being tapped. This includes the mapping of the groundwater sources in Tacloban City and the newly acquired water rights of the Pongso and Mainit rivers. However, both are located approximately 30.0 kilometers west of Tacloban (USAID Be Secure 2016; CLUP 2017 Volume III: 408/428).

## 2. Projection

A separate area-based projection was also conducted for the Eastern Visayas Regional Growth Center (EVRGC) on which the resettlement and relocation site is located. The initial target population in 2014 was 20,000 inhabitants. In 2025, the population in EVRGC will have reached 49,069 inhabitants. And at the end of 2050, the base population of EVRGC will about double to 88,001. This projection in Tacloban North is already reflected in the overall population projection of the City (CLUP 2017 Volume III: 416/436).

In computing for the water demand in Tacloban for domestic uses, the following were considered: 1) base year used was 2014; 2) served population was used as baseline data;

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3) 125.20 liters per capita per day (LPCD) was used; and 4) the non-revenue water (NRW) was at 20%. In 2025, the City will need 40 millions of liters per day (MLD) to serve a population of 266,220 or an equivalent of 59,160 households. By year 2050, the City will require 64.50 MLD to serve a population of 429,200 or an equivalent of 95,380 households. USAID Be Secure (2016) also computed the maximum day demand volume for key areas with scarce water, specifically in Tacloban North, Resettlement Areas, and the V&G Subdivision. It showed that the resettlement areas will have the highest demand for water by 2025 at 10.50 MLD (Tacloban City CLUP 2017 Volume III: 420/440). Given this scenario, it is indeed necessary and urgent for the City to vigorously explore strategies on how this projected water demand can be addressed in the future. Thus, the Tacloban City LGU's priority is to ensure water security for the City. The strategy involved looking at multiple options for water security purposes such as rainwater, bulk water, and LGU-operated waterworks.

### Perception of Users on the State of Water in Tacloban City

Despite the proliferation of water service providers in the City, there clearly are pronounced disparities in supply and access in different areas. The study also probed how users perceive these supply and access deficiencies. Based on the survey results (N=30), Level 3 users perceive water provisioning in their area as generally satisfactory. Although the entire City does not have 24/7 water access and despite the frequent low pressure supply experiences in many areas of the City, they found the provisioning fair enough at reasonable monthly consumption price rates being imposed among household and business consumers. Although most of these consumers buy water from refilling stations for drinking, the bulk of what they get from the water district is applied for cleaning, hygiene, washing, and business purposes. In cases, however, where the supply of water from those mentioned commercial water providers become inaccessible, users drink water from the faucet. Moreover, it was noted during the Focused Group

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Discussion (FGD) that the proliferation of water refilling stations in the different parts of the City indicated mistrust in the water quality from the tap.

Water users, however, in elevated areas such as in Upper Nulatula said that they experience an inadequate/intermittent supply during the day time. Those households and business establishments that can afford to install water tanks are constrained to do so to be able to pump during daybreak and store water for daytime use. The perception of Level 3 water consumers in the City was that the difficulty of water access is attributed to the political conflict between the Provincial and City leaderships.

Although the supply is enough during the wet season, Level 2 water users in the higher grounds of Abucay as well as Upper Nulatula experience an intermittent/absence supply of water during prolonged dry periods. These users have to find deep wells or artesian wells to source out water for cleaning and washing purposes. Although some households from these areas drink boiled water from Level 2 sources, there are, however, some that are compelled to buy from commercial water refilling stations, if not from nearby households, with Level 3 faucets. Level 2 water users in the City felt they were helpless as promises to alleviate their basic living conditions, including water provision during election periods, just stayed as promises.

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**A Tale of Two Governments and Privatization**

*Tacloban City illustrates the inherent tension arising from the ambiguity in the law, Presidential Decree 198 creating water districts, and how it is used as loci of competing claims for power by various local governments. PD 198 sets a 75% of concessionaire threshold for City LGUs to appoint water district board members; lower than that the appointing authority is the Governor as was the case for LWMD, given that Tacloban City-based concessionaires were only between 62%-65%. The recent Supreme Court ruling on the Metro Cebu Case, Rama vs Moises (G.R. No. 197146) lowered the threshold to 50% or more for a Highly Urbanized City (HUC) serviced by the water district, thus making the Mayor the appointing authority.*

*The application of the Supreme Court ruling became contentious because the rival political clans controlling the City and Province refused to talk. The City Mayor insisted on the appointment of five new Board Of Directors (BOD) replacing the Governor-appointed members, all concurred by the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA). Beyond the appointing powers, the issue precipitated into a management crisis with attempts to seize the office by holding hostage key officials and stealing office documents. Given the management row between the Province and the City, two separate offices were established for billing and payment collection: the old one in Nulatula, Tacloban where City-appointed BOD are holding office and the newly opened "main" office at the Leyte Academic Center in the neighboring town of Palo managed by Province-appointed BOD (Sunstar Philippines, 2018, April 17).*

*Concessionaires were faced with a dilemma on where to pay their water bills. In the intervening time, out of 35,000 concessionaires, 30,000 paid to LMWD Tacloban Payment Centers while 2,000 paid at the Leyte Payment Center. Out of 409 employees, only 20 went to Leyte while 389 employees remained with the City. Throughout the episode, the City-*

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*backed LMWD BOD continues to assure of the water services in the resettlement areas in the northern barangays of Tacloban along with the rest of the municipalities covered by the water district. (SunStar Philippines, 2018, April 17).*

*At the operational level, the political bickering impacted the volume of water supply to Tacloban City. According to the LWMD water manager, a control valve was installed in Palo to deliberately reduce water flow to Tacloban to 50%. The drastic reduction in supply caused several water concessionaires in Tacloban City to stage a rally against LMWD (LMWD, 2019). Another example of this politically motivated water connection decision is shared by the Barangay Chairman of Barangay Abucay during the FGD. He said that his political affiliation with the Mayor is one reason for the water district to not provide his constituents with water connections. Barangay Abucay is a business center and has eight housing subdivisions; however, only two of these have LMWD water connections.*

*To inject more life into the LWMD's fledgling operations, it entered into a usufruct agreement with the Prime Water for services in Tacloban City. Prime Water took over the management of LMWD and provided financing on the improvement of infrastructure. LMWD keeps the "supervisory and regulatory" functions while Prime Water was assigned to do the daily operations of the facility (Gabiet & Amazona, 2019). Now called Prime Water Leyte Metro, a unit of the Villar Group, it is eyeing an estimated PHP6.14 billion investments to overhaul the water system in this city and nearby towns through a 25-year public-private partnership (PPP) with the Leyte Metropolitan Water District (LMWD).*

*The new investments are expected to rehabilitate and expand water treatment plants, replace old pipes, install new pipes, set up septage management, and rehabilitate the entire water system to address water losses. It will also develop surface water sources in the first 10 years. On 01 September 2019, Prime Water took over the operation of the water district and leased some of LMWD's PHP 1 billion worth of assets after a month-long transition period (Meniano. et al. 2019, September 10).*

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*Institutional Dynamics*

The institutional landscape of domestic water provisioning in Philippine cities reflects the shifts in policy focus towards decentralization and private sector participation in the market economy. Water districts dating back to the Marcos-era have been placed under closer supervision of the Local Water Utilities Authority (LWUA), their operations presumably more insulated from local politics (Rola et al., 2016, 233). Faced with supply problems and inability to extend coverage, other water service providers began to fill in gaps. Under Supreme Court GR 168914 (Metropolitan Cebu Water District vs Adala), private entities can now be issued certificates of compliance to provide water locally (Hall et al. 2015, 45). As concessionaires, bulk water suppliers, small scale independent providers or under public-private partnership with water districts, private sector footprint increased considerably.[55] Alongside this, the Local Government Code tasked *barangay*, City and Municipal LGUs to directly operate water facilities. Programs such as *Salin Tubig* and Bottom-up Budgeting provided more for small-scale water systems at the *barangay* level (Hall et al., 2018, 46). Community-based organizations have also proliferated including rural/barangay water and sanitation associations (RWSA, BWSA) and cooperatives. The LGU operated and CBOs comprise the most numerous category of water service providers (De Vera and Hall 2018, 67).

Given the local government involvement in domestic water service provisioning, diversity of institutional actors (private sector, CBO, national government agency regulators), as well as multi-scale decision making with respect to water permits, franchise and license, there is plenty of politics surrounding this sector. LGU-run utilities are considered the worst performing of all WSPs as decisions are mainly politically motivated, based on dole out, and with revenues not ring-fenced (De Veyra and Hall 2018, 67). There is little

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[55] There is an increasing trend for private water companies to take over City-based water districts through public-private partnerships or joint ventures. This is the case for Iloilo City with the merger of Metro Iloilo Water District and Metro Pacific Water. The Iloilo City Government also issued a franchise to Prime Water, a company under the Villar Group as a WSP for the City. (Segundo Romero, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 25 November 2019.)

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grounding on the legal requirements such as the need for a water permit and applicable ordinances among water managers especially the CBOs and LGU-operated (Rola et al. 2016).

The incoherent assignment of property rights to surface water, especially the exclusive right to access and withdraw versus managerial rights, has resulted in rigidities that do not allow for effective problem solving (Lizada et al. 2019, 304). The privatization of water utilities in Manila has been met with skepticism over the adversarial relationships between concessionaires and regulators and the government relegation of this crucial public good to the profit-motives of private contractors (Neville 2011, 252). Different governance schemes among WSPs and price determination mechanisms (water is free or highly subsidized), particularly among CBOs and LGUs, have resulted in failures (Rola et al., 2016, 241). The competition for sources of water and accessing them has led to conflicts between private sector providers eager to turn in a profit and LGUs attempting to safeguard this vital resource within their administrative jurisdiction for the benefit of their own constituents. The lack of sufficiently decentralized monitoring mechanisms on water extraction activities, especially deep wells (the NWRB, a water apex organization is located only in Manila and has no local bureaucratic presence) pushes informality and inequitable access.

The dynamics of domestic water provisioning in Tacloban City depict the gaps and tensions emanating from the spatial disconnect between users and providers, competing management rights claims by the City and Provincial Governments, and the ambiguity of government oversight on the numerous private water service providers. In Tacloban City, large access disparities remain between areas with middle income households served by small-scale independent providers and those in resettlement communities reliant upon government support (tankered water) or self-provisioning. In localities without piped-in connections, problems of contamination and limited availability are noteworthy.

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Anticipating water scarcity and preventing water hostage due to a single source, the Tacloban City LGU acquired water rights on two additional watersheds outside its jurisdiction with the long-term goal of becoming a service provider itself. Crafting a cohesive water strategy to meet the City's current and projected need is imperative given this institutional landscape. The mechanism and platforms of agreements or contracting among LGUs and other stakeholders for water access to harmonize the initiatives toward water sustainability must be considered and developed.

## 1. From One to Many: The Institutional History of Water Access and Provisioning in Tacloban City

Tacloban City was served by the Leyte Metropolitan Waterworks Supply System (LMWSS) and the Tolosa Water Supply System (TWSS) from 1939 to 1974. During the same period, the service providers also served three (3) other municipalities, namely, Dagami, Tanauan, and Tolosa. The two (2) local water utilities were under the supervision and direct control of the National Waterworks and Sewerage Authority (NAWASA). (Tacloban City CLUP 2017, Volume III: 402/422). In 1975, the LMWSS and the TWSS were dissolved, and the operation of the water systems was taken over by the Leyte Metropolitan Water District (LMWD) in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 198. Since 1975, Tacloban City's main water supply has been provided by the LMWD. It has since extended its services to seven (7) other local government units: the municipalities of Dagami, Palo, Pastrana, Sta. Fe, Tabontabon, Tanauan, and Tolosa. A new water source was tapped by the LMWD in 1975. Located in the Binahaan River in *Barangay* Tingib in the Pastrana municipality, this eventually became the main source of water of LMWD. In 1977, LMWD embarked on a Comprehensive Expansion Project designed to serve a projection of 14,000 water service connections by the end of 1988. However, water interruptions were immediately felt by 1989. In 1991, a feasibility study for a proposed expansion program was completed to address water shortage. All rehabilitation works were completed in 1995 (Tacloban City CLUP 2017, Volume III: 403/423).

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Based on the Provincial Water Supply, Sewerage and Sanitation Sector Plan for the Province of Leyte (2000), LMWD is one of the 22 Level 3 systems in the Province of Leyte. It initially served 3,365 water concessionaires covering the municipalities of Dagami, Tolosa, Tanauan, Palo, and the city of Tacloban. As of December 2016, the total active number of service connections of LMWD is pegged at 33,832 to include the municipalities of Tabon-Tabon, Sta. Fe, and Pastrana. Approximately 60,000 cubic meters of potable water is delivered to the LMWD service areas every day with the main bulk of supply coming from Plant 1 & Plant 2 located at *Barangay* Hibunawon, Jaro, Leyte and *Barangay* Tingib, Pastrana, Leyte, respectively (LMWD 2017).
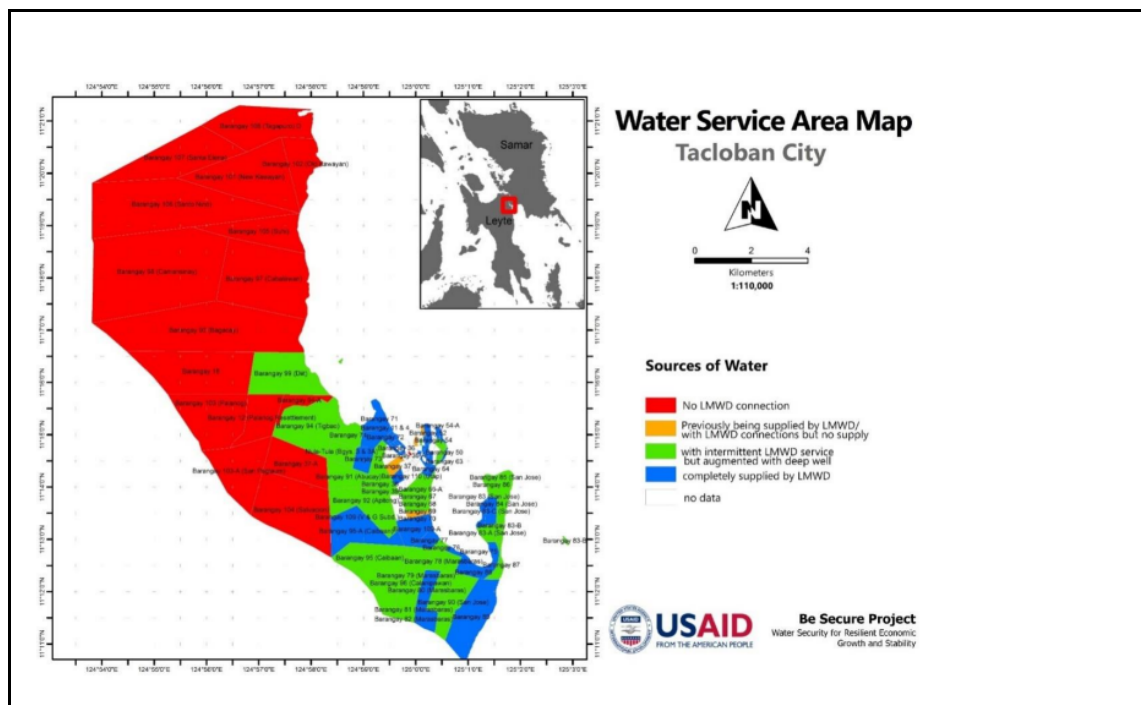


**Figure 2.** Water service area map of the Leyte Metropolitan Water District
(Source: USAID Be Secure, 2015; LMWD, 2017; Tacloban City CLUP Volume III, 2017-2025. p. 404/424).

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Tacloban City is currently the LMWD's largest water concessionaire. As of August 2015, Tacloban City accounts for about 62.50% percent or 20,710 connections of the LMWD's total number of 33,135 active connections (LMWD 2017). However, City water connections from LMWD are concentrated in the urban area. In the northern *barangays* where there is no piped water service, people use deep wells or shallow wells for their daily water needs. Others have their water supply delivered in tanks by LMWD while some residents resort to the use of electric motor-driven deep wells. As shown in Figure 3, sixteen (16) northern *barangays* have no supply from LMWD particularly from *Barangay* 108-Tagpuro up to *Barangay* 12–Palanog while other areas such as in Naga-naga, Utap, Abucay, Calanipawan, and Sagkahan experience a scarce water supply. Water shortage is a prevalent issue even in the central business district where business establishments are compelled to install water pumps (CLUP Volume III 2017: 403/423). To augment the City's water supply, the City Government gave Mactan Rock Industries, Incorporated a franchise. MRII is a Cebu-based private bulk water supplier and was mainly intended to supply 50% to 60% of the V & G Subdivision. It also supplies a portion of a subdivision in *Barangay* New Kawayan in Tacloban North (Tacloban City CLUP Volume III 2017: 404/424).

Tacloban North where about forty percent (40%) of its population is being relocated after typhoon Haiyan demands more water supply service. Although part of the LWMD's service area, the water district does not have service connections there. Part of the strategy adopted is to initially allow the DPWH to supply bulk water to the North. This new opening gives an opportunity for private entities to provide competing service in the LMWD's service area. Pursuant to the Supreme Court Decision in the Rama vs Moises case (G.R. No. 197146), which allows private entities to operate on areas where the water district cannot serve, LWMD lost its exclusive franchise for Tacloban City.

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Currently, at least six (6) private entities providing bulk water services are in Tacloban City (See Table 1). The main WSP (Level 3 connection) remains the LMWD but in new settlements like Tacloban North, the City LGU arranged with the DPWH project contractor initially and then later contracted private sector concessionaire Mactan Rock to provide tankered water. Mactan Rock, which also has franchise for one subdivision, has put up a water treatment facility at *Barangay* Suhi. The company has about 900 consumers and the water supply is from the Suhi Creek.

There are other small-scale independent providers providing water to subdivisions. For instance, San Juanico Spring provides bulk water services to *Barangay* Cabalawan while Esperas bulk water has clients all over the City, preferably to the north settlements. Where LWMD has no distribution pipeline, *barangay* LGUs have set up their own water system. Moreover, residents/consumers request LMWD for bulk water delivery to remote areas at a rate of about two hundred pesos (P200) per ton. Based on the study, there were also some NGO-donated tanks (Level 2) and distribution pipelines established in some communities as part of the post-Haiyan rehabilitation. In these communities, there is no formal organization managing the water system.

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**Table 1.**

*Tacloban City Water Service Providers; Institutions, Sources and Service Area.*

*(Source: *DENR Region 8. Water Resources Utilization Section. Supplemented with interviews of WSPs)*

| Institutions with linkage | Water service provider* | Sources | Location of Intake site/Deep well* | Service Area* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| LWUA Provincial Government City Government Municipal Government | LMWD/Prime water (water district) | Binahaan River | Municipalities of Pastrana & Dagami | Seven Municipalities & Tacloban City |
| City Government (1939-1974) initially invited Mactan Rock (2012) to serve V & G subdivision, source deep well; distribution system contested by LWMD; ceased to operate in V&G) | Mactan Rock Industries, Inc. (private concessionaire) | Deep well | Near *Barangay* hall of *Barangay* 109 | V&G Subdivision but later contested by LMWD |
| | Mactan Rock Industries, Inc. (private concessionaire) | River; bulk water delivery | *Barangay* 94, Basper, Tacloban City | *Barangay* Basper |
| | Mactan Rock Industries, Inc (private concessionaire) | River; bulkwater delivery | *Barangay* 106, Sto. Nino, Tacloban City | *Barangay* Sto Nino |
| Facility support for new subdivision sites (post-Haiyan rehabilitation program) | DPWH Region (public national agency) | River; bulk water delivery | LMWD sources | Tacloban North resettlement sites |

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| Institutions with linkage | Water service provider* | Sources | Location of Intake site/Deep well* | Service Area* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bulk water supplier for households because LWMD has no distribution pipeline in their area | San Juanico Spring Water (private concessionaire) | Buruguan River; bulk water delivery | *Barangay* Camansihay | *Barangay* Cabalawan |
| | Esperas BW (private concessionaire) | River, bulk water | *Barangay* Tigbao | Tacloban North resettlement |
| Subdivision developer supplies water (bulk water supplier) for subdivision because LWMD has no distribution pipeline in their area | Peerless (private concessionaire) | Buruguan River; bulk water delivery | *Barangay* Cabalawan | *Barangay* Cabalawan |
| | San Gerardo Green Meadows (private concessionaire) | Groundwater | *Barangay* Nula-tula | *Barangay* Nula-tula |
| NGO- Good Samaritan donated tank and distribution line for *barangay* in 2013 after super typhoon Haiyan | For *Barangay* Abucay | Spring water | *Barangay* Abucay | *Barangay* Abucay |
| NGO- IOM constructed a water plant in 2013 after super typhoon Haiyan | For the Northern *Barangays* | Groundwater | Northern *Barangays* | Northern *Barangays* |

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| Institutions with linkage | Water service provider* | Sources | Location of Intake site/Deep well* | Service Area* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Barangay* LGU where LWMD has no distribution pipeline in their area | Barangay LGU (Nula Tula, and mostly norther *barangays*) | Spring and deep wells | Brgy. Nula Tula and other respective *barangays* | Within their respective *barangays* |

### Issues and Challenges

Tacloban City is a prime example of an urban unit whose institutional arrangements for domestic water provisioning have not kept up with increasing demands and future growth requirements. Its long-term reliance on an inefficient Level 3 service provider (water district) beset with water losses, insufficient capital to expand services, and dependence on a single water source has only been recently changed with the entry of private providers which mainly are servicing middle income subdivisions. Poorer settlements in the City periphery, including those in resettlement sites, are intermittently served by the City Government but many remain outside the ambit of formal institutions— households relying on protected wells, tubes, and springs which are either loosely managed by their *barangay* or without any collective organization. The privatization of LWMD and the entry of Mactan Rock and other bulk water providers may ease pent-up water demand, but disparities in access remain a sore point. There is also a nagging concern that privatization inevitably will lead to an increase in water price.

Given the City's current settlement pattern (new ones sprouting in the North area), a centralized Level 3 distribution system is likely not going to be feasible. A decentralized system where Level 2 water service provisioning is provided in upland *barangays*, as well as support for improved water sources (protected springs, wells) would greatly matter in

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closing the access gap. *Barangays* without connection to LMWD or located on higher elevation may be assisted by providing rainwater-harvesting facilities, including storage tanks from which community members may access water through public taps. To support this initiative, it is strongly recommended that rainwater-harvesting facilities should be a standard requirement for the issuance of building permits in Tacloban City. Likewise, public buildings such as government offices, schools, basketball courts, and the like must have a rainwater harvesting system.

Meeting the targets of having reliable water at least 12 hours a day and uncontaminated water for the funder-served populations are key. To this end, the City Government must convince new private sector entrants into the Tacloban City water market to commit to these equitable access goals. The City LGU stepping in to provide tankered water for the resettlement area during periods of shortage is acceptable as a stop gap measure but should not be made a permanent fiscal feature.

Tacloban City water users have long been at the short end, putting up with low water pressure and intermittent supply interruptions from their water providers. Rather than demand for better service, users strategize by diversifying their sources (supplementing unreliable Level 3 collection with Level 1 pumps and artesian wells) and differentiating between uses (drinking water is bought). Self-provisioning, however, when carried out on a large scale may lead to all sorts of health dangers as the quality of the water extracted is unchecked. There is also a strong perception that inequitable access to water is a result of political impasse, which they as ordinary voters can't do anything about.

Beyond provisioning, a more serious concern for the City Government is the water supply. Because Tacloban City lies outside a major river system and big watersheds, the city LGU

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anticipates that it could have problems moving forward securing water supply for the City. Anticipating even a higher demand in the future, the City LGU obtained permits for 2 water sources and have entered into informal talks with the LGUs where these sources are located for future plans to develop them for the City's domestic water requirements. In the absence of formal mechanisms for these inter-LGU water transfer, early planning initiatives can be a good start. Competition from Palo as regional center and population growth in nearby Leyte suburbs may stymie plans, but planning across these administrative jurisdictions (e.g., Metropolitan-wide) may help assuage future tensions. An institutional framework addressing the broad spectrum of stakeholders insofar as shared access to water resources and management is concerned may be the key.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Water security and access to potable water are basic human rights and the fundamental indicator of health and well-being of a society. Domestic water for drinking not only ensures human survival but also serves as a key to hygiene, sanitation, and overall health. Conversely, water supply for domestic use is affected by climate change, rapid urbanization are aggravated by poor water governance, and insufficient investments in water systems. Tacloban City as a rapidly urbanizing city with increasing population is facing serious water scarcity compounded by the fact that its water source is located from distant watersheds outside its administrative jurisdiction. This problem is exacerbated due to the massive movement of population of about 10,000 households to the north as a response to relocating residents in dangerous coastal zones (no built zones) to safer grounds. Moreover, its governance has been chaotic due to political squabbling between LGUs – Tacloban City vs Province of Leyte – which resulted in deliberate poor services to its concessioners in the City.

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The case of Tacloban City illustrates an emerging trend among Philippine cities to shift from domestic water-reliance on a quasi-public single water service provider (water district) to a more diverse number of private sector players. The case also depicts the inherent institutional problems in domestic water provisioning, e.g., numerous service providers with varying levels of operational capability, weak oversight for the more numerous LGU-operated and community-based utilities, inchoate assignation and local user grounding on property rights to water, and local government competing claims on water supply sources. It is a prime example of an urban unit whose institutional arrangements for domestic water provisioning have not kept up with increasing demands and future growth requirements. Its long-term reliance on an inefficient Level 3 service provider (water district) beset with water losses, insufficient capital to expand services, and dependence on a single water source has only been recently changed with the entry of private providers which mainly service middle income subdivisions. Crafting a cohesive water strategy to meet the city's current and projected need is imperative given this institutional landscape.

Anticipating even a higher demand in the future and preventing a water hostage due to a single source, the City LGU obtained permits for two water sources and have entered into informal talks with the LGUs where these sources are located for future plans to develop them for the City's domestic water requirements. In the absence of formal mechanisms for these inter-LGU water transfer, early planning initiatives can be a good start. Competition from Palo as regional center and population growth in nearby Leyte suburbs may stymie plans, but planning across these administrative jurisdictions (e.g., Metropolitan-wide) may help assuage future tensions. An institutional framework addressing the broad spectrum of stakeholders insofar as shared access to water resources and management is concerned may be the key.

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The dynamics of domestic water provisioning in Tacloban City represent the gaps and tensions emanating from the spatial disconnect between users and providers, competing management rights claims by the City and Provincial Governments, and the ambiguity of government oversight on the numerous private water service providers. In Tacloban City, large access disparities remain between areas with middle income households served by small-scale independent providers and those in resettlement communities reliant upon government support (tankered water) or self-provisioning. In localities without piped-in connections, problems of contamination and limited availability are noteworthy. A decentralized system where Level 2 water service provisioning is provided in upland *barangays*, as well as support for improved water sources, e.g., protected springs, wells, etc., would greatly matter in closing the access gap. *Barangays* without a connection to LMWD or located on a higher elevation may be assisted by providing rainwater-harvesting facilities, including storage tanks from which community members may access water through public taps. To support this initiative, it is strongly recommended that rainwater-harvesting facilities should be a standard requirement for the issuance of building permits in Tacloban City. Likewise, public buildings such as government offices, schools, basketball courts, and the like must have a rainwater-harvesting system.

Beyond provisioning, a more serious concern for the City Government is water supply. Because Tacloban City lies outside a major river system and big watersheds, the City LGU anticipates that it could have problems moving forward securing water supply for the City. Since water is sourced from outside its jurisdiction, potential problems of access and water-way rights may arise. Thus, significant effort is needed to ensure that cooperation is operational in all transboundary basins. Timely and feasible institutional arrangements should be forged among the seven water-way municipalities.

Currently, Tacloban City (a highly urbanized City and regional center) has taken over the control of the LMWD. As a consequence, water services have dramatically improved. To

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address the problem of inefficiency, LMWD has entered into a PPP with Prime Water Leyte Metro, a private institution taking over its operation to provide financing on the improvement of infrastructure. The partnership aimed to actively expand its water sources in order to meet the increasing demands of its growing population and the adjoining municipalities. However, the challenge remained on how to supply the growing demand of water in the north where about 40% of the population is being resettled due to the impact of Super Typhoon Haiyan. The privatization of the LWMD, and the entry of Mactan Rock and other bulk water providers may ease pent-up water demand, but disparities in access remain a sore point. There is also a nagging concern that privatization may inevitably lead to increase in water prices.

To address the problem of water scarcity, coordination among competing water uses and service providers is imperative in order to meet the water demand for domestic use of Tacloban City. An institutional framework addressing the broad spectrum of stakeholders 'alliances insofar as shared access to water resources and management is concerned may be the key. A platform of agreements or contracting among LGUs and other stakeholders for water access must be considered and developed to harmonize the initiatives toward water sustainability. A decision support system (DSS) tool could help guide decision-bearers for better proactive decisions and actions towards water security in Tacloban City.

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# Level 3 System Domestic Water Quality and Use Pattern in Selected Communities in Guimaras Island, Philippines

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## Introduction

The provision of safe water is one of the principal environmental control measures against the transmission of most waterborne diseases, which often constitute the major public-health problem in rural areas. In most residential settings, water is used for a wide range of daily activities, which include cooking, cleaning and bathing, small-scale irrigation for gardens or municipal landscapes, waste disposal, and commercial and industrial activities. Water is also used as a component of food or an ingredient of the component of food. It acts as a medium through which food can be preserved, stored, and consumed by humans. Fruit juices, jams, jellies, pickles, soups, and many other forms of food products, have water as an ingredient. Other times, water is simply used to clean, cool, or operate machinery.

In 2012, WHO & UNICEF reported that there has been a remarkable improvement in water supply systems even among rural residents world-wide. Chowdhury and Al-Zahrani (2015) cited that improvement in the water distribution networks is one of the emerging approaches to secure water supply. It is in keeping with the UN MDG target of providing a sustainable access to water in order to attain a robust health condition and livelihood among developing communities.

Water quality is a priority in the selection of a water source regardless of whether the water will be treated or not, most especially because water is used for many different

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purposes throughout our economies and natural ecosystems. Gadgil (1998) has enumerated flaws in the distribution process that can create conditions favorable for microbial growth resulting in poor water quality. The commonly known cases are interruptive service, negative hydraulic pressure, leakage in the network, improper disinfection, natural aging, and corrosion of infrastructures. The aging distribution systems are vulnerable to main breaks or damages in pipes as well as repairs and pressure related losses which may lead to pathogen intrusion cases. Such can happen even with well-operated drinking water treatment systems (Ebacher G, et al., 2012 and Lambertini et al., 2012) and can result in induced dirty water events and promote waterborne gastrointestinal disease outbreak (Beaudeau, et al., 2014).

The impact that distribution networks have on reducing water quality has been inadequately addressed due to the limited information available on the magnitude of the public health problem. The importance of water quality continues to be emphasized by its being a significant factor in epidemics and endemic disease from pathogens (WHO, 2017).

The WHO and Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water provide standard values of the physical and chemical parameters to assure acceptability of water for domestic use. These include pH, temperature, turbidity, Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), chloride and hardness. pH in particular can determine the extent of corrosion or bacterial growth in the distribution network. Turbidity can be used for operational monitoring of control measures included in water safety plans (WSPs). It can be used as basis for choosing between alternative source waters and for assessing the performance of a number of control measures like filtration, disinfection, and management of distribution systems. The TDS is a measure of all of the minerals present in the water supply. Most often, dissolved solids are minerals like calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, bicarbonates, chlorides, and sulfates. According to Bhagwat (2019), water hardness is generally due to

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calcium and magnesium ions in water that may deposit in pipes, valves, and process equipment surfaces. Some food products may not dissolve well in hard water. In addition, water hardness may affect flavor, aroma, and palatability of foods. Likewise, water hardness greatly affects the efficiency of cleaning and sanitizing chemicals.

The test for water quality on specific bacteria like fecal coliform and total coliform is a useful tool in determining whether the water is contaminated. The coliform standard has stood the test of time as the primary indicator for health risk associated with water for drinking and domestic uses. A number of organisms are emerging as potential waterborne pathogens and some are recognized as significant pathogens that usually give rise to detectable waterborne outbreaks of infection (Fawell & Nieuwenhuijsen, 2003). HPC measurements are used to indicate the effectiveness of water treatment or monitor performance of disinfection processes and to measure the number of regrowth organisms that may or may not have sanitary significance (Bartram, 2003).

The aim of this study is to determine the physico-chemical and microbiological qualities of the water collected at the point of consumption. It also aims to  document the water use of households and business establishments across coastal, lowland, and upland locations and to develop  a spot map. The results can serve as basis or consideration for future distribution and the design of water safety plan.

## Methodology

### Study Area

The study was conducted in the island province of Guimaras, Western Visayas. Guimaras is composed of five coastal municipalities and covers a land area of 60,547 hectares. Its topography varies from level to steeply sloping with land elevation ranging from 0 to nearly 300 meters above sea level. Mt. Dinalman, located in Millan, Sibunag, has the highest elevation of 267 meters above mean sea level. The island's topography shows

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quite steep slopes on the western side  with plateaus and peaks above 200 m in the central portion. A large part or 69% of the total land area is within the 0-18% slope, 19.73% is above 18-30% slope, 9.42% is above 30-50% slope and 1.74 percent is above 50% slope. Guimaras is classified as having Corona's Type 1 climate, characterized by two pronounced seasons: the dry season usually between the months of November and April, and the rainy or wet season, which occurs during the rest of the year. A handheld unit of Garmin Etrex Global Positioning System (GPS) was used to capture the geographic coordinates from which the households or business establishments were located. The data obtained were used in creating the map.

*Sampling Scheme*

Water samples were collected in the months of March 2019 (n=15) for the dry season and August 2019 (n=15) for the rainy season. The sample sources were purposely obtained from the point of consumption taps in household and business establishments located at the coastal (n=5), lowland (n= 4) and upland (n= 6) areas that use Levels 2 and 3 facilities as shown in Table 1.0. Selected physico-chemical parameters like pH, temperature, turbidity, chloride and hardness were evaluated while total coliform, fecal coliform, and heterotrophic count were included in the microbiological tests. All procedures were based on the guidelines for water quality evaluation for drinking water.

*Sample Processing*

Two separate containers were prepared to hold the water samples. A polyethylene bottle that can hold about 1 liter of water was reserved for the samples to be subjected to pH, turbidity, total dissolved solid, chloride, and hardness. Samples for the microbiological tests were collected following the recommended procedure (WHO). A sterile bottle that can hold 200 ml served as container.

The samples were immediately kept in a polystyrene box with crushed ice after collection and were later transported to Central Philippine University Laboratory  in Iloilo City. The

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said laboratory follows the recommended procedures for water analyses and has an accreditation from the Department of Health.

*Statistical Tests*

The relationships between the dry and wet seasons were determined using a paired sample t-test while a one sample T-test compared the mean of the results to the PNSDW standard values. Kendall's tau b correlation test determined the level of association between pairs of tests.

## Results

Figure 1.0 is the map of the island province of Guimaras which is situated in Western Visayas. Its five (5) composite coastal municipalities are Jordan, Buenavista, San Lorenzo, Sibunag and Nueva Valencia.
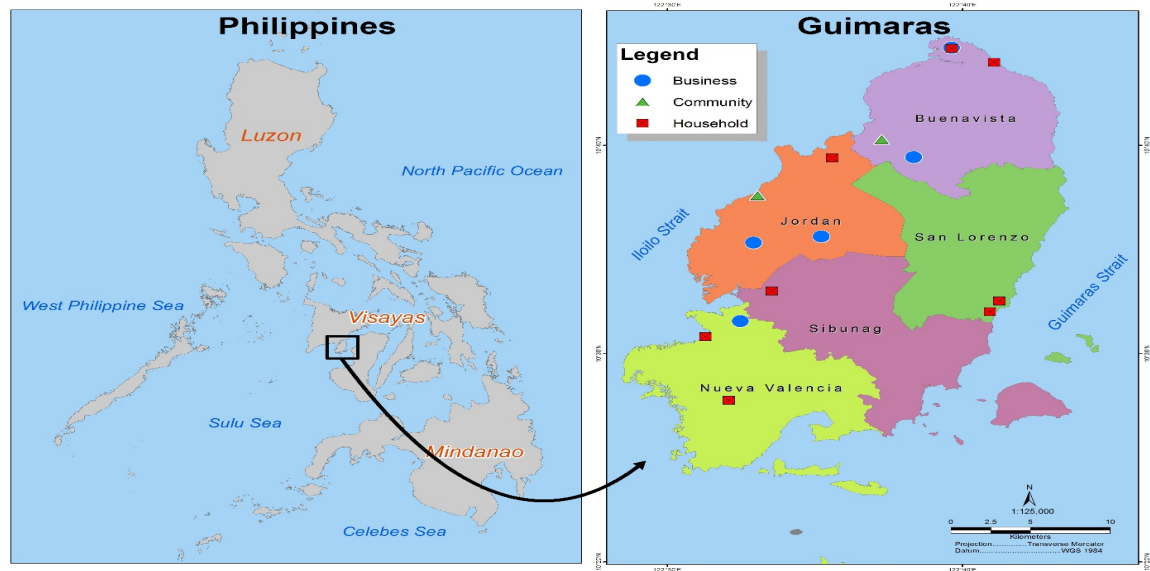


**Figure 1**. Study area and sampling sites

The province of Guimaras has a total land area of 604.57 sq km. Its major agricultural products include mangoes, coconut, palay, livestock and seafood or fishery products. It has a well-developed circumferential road network; thus tourism, fruits and fish processing and other business have been a promising source of livelihood in addition to the traditional enterprise on quarrying, handicraft making, and lime production. Its economy from 2000 to 2017 was dominated by the Services Sector, which included wholesale and retail, transportation, storage, and communication services. This happened as a consequence of the booming tourism industry and tourism support services. The increase in the number of visitors, commuters, and the population has fueled the corresponding increase in demand for goods and services (Guimaras Forest Land Use Plan, 2017-2026)

Guimaras Island is classified as Corona's Type 1 climate, characterized by two pronounced seasons: the dry season usually between the months of November and April, and the rainy or wet season during the rest of the year. The map (Figure 1) indicates the business, communal, and household sample collection sites. There were 15 sources spread across coastal (n=5), lowland (n=4) and upland (n=6) areas.

Across the coastal, lowland and upland areas, a total of 150 household participants were found to avail themselves of distributed water system, and 68% (103) would either have Level 2 or Level 3 water connections (Table 1.0). In the Provincial Health Office report (State of the Coasts of Guimaras Province, 2012), there has been a gradual increase in the access to water supply. This behavior started in 2005 when plans to manage water use for sustainability has been considered.

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**Table 1.**

*Water connections used by household and business operators across coastal, lowland and upland communities in the 5 composite municipalities of Guimaras Island (March - August 2019)   n=150.*

| Household | Coastal | Lowland | Upland |
|-----------|---------|---------|--------|
| Level 2 | 0 | 7 | 5 |
| Level 3 | 34 | 28 | 29 |
| Level 2/3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Business | Coastal | Lowland | Upland |
| Level 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 |
| Level 3 | 12 | 14 | 14 |
| Level 2/3 | 3 | 1 | 0 |

Majority (87%) have level 3 water connections spread across locations. In addition, Level 2 water system is  used among households while the business operators have Level 2 or both Level 2 and 3 particularly during the dry spell. Table 2 shows the frequency of household and business operators in the 5 municipalities with level 3 water connections. Noticeable, though, is the use of combined water source for both sectors. Level 1 would either be a spring or protected well as an alternate water source. The water supply in the island started to become scarce in the last week of February and mostly felt in the areas of Getulio, Navalas, and Sebario.

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**Table 2.**

*Frequency of household and business sectors in 5 municipalities in Guimaras Island with exclusive level 3 water connection and a common alternative source.  March-August 2019. (n = 130)*

| Type of water connections in Guimaras | Household | | Business | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Level 3 | 9 | 9.68 | 14 | 37.84 |
| Level 3 and 1 | 84 | 90.32 | 23 | 62.16 |
| Total | | 100.00 | | 100.00 |

The provision of water is under the supervision of three organizations (Table 3). The Water District is the lead institution that provides convenient supply of water in the community. The rest of the water connections are managed by either the Barangay Water Sanitation Association (BAWASA) or the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU).

**Table 3.**

*Major institutional administrators of water distribution systems in Guimaras Island.*

| Institutional Administrators | Household | | Business | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Water District | 46 | 49.46 | 18 | 48.65 |
| Barangay Water Sanitation Association (BAWASA) | 33 | 35.48 | 11 | 29.73 |
| Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) | 14 | 15.05 | 8 | 21.62 |
| Total | 93 | 100.00 | 37 | 100.00 |

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Table 4 shows that washing, personal hygiene, cleaning, watering, and cooking constitute the topmost utilization of water among households. It is notable that the households do not use water from the water connections for drinking purposes. Instead they purchase from stations that sell purified water. Such practice is similar to the report in major cities like Colombia, India, Mexico, Thailand, Venezuela and Yemen, wherein more people would rely on bottled water because piped water systems do not meet water quality criteria (Fadaei & Sadeghi, 2014). In China, villages with continuous piped water supply exhibited more frequent water usage for personal hygiene, for water appliances like washing machine and solar water heater, and watering vegetable gardens (Fan et al., 2013). For urban areas with distributed water system, Gleick (2003) observed that household would have similar order of usage except for the inclusion of small-scale irrigation for gardens or municipal landscapes, waste disposal, commercial, and industrial activities.

**Table 4.**

*Water use among household and business sectors in Guimaras Island with Level 3 water connections (n=15).*

| Activities with Most Water Used | Household | | Business | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Washing | 93 | 20.76 | 23 | 15.33 |
| Personal Hygiene | 91 | 20.31 | 26 | 17.33 |
| Cleaning | 91 | 20.31 | 35 | 23.33 |
| Watering | 85 | 18.97 | 23 | 15.33 |
| Cooking | 81 | 18.08 | 26 | 17.33 |
| Drinking | 0 | 0 | 17 | 11.33 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raw Materials | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Others (Flush) | 7 | 1.56 | 0 | 0 |

Among business operators, the topmost water use are for cleaning, cooking, and personal hygiene. This must be related to the business activities like production of rice cakes, *sari sari* store, a laundry shop, and water refilling station. When dry season sets in, these operators purchase bulk water delivered and contained in carboys or plastic tanks. Such practice however can introduce hygiene risks by exposing the residents to water-borne diseases in the case of stored water (Sobsey et al., 2003 and Mintz et al. 1995). For those with laundry business, operations are suspended or closed. The water refilling stations have their own source that is protected from contamination to safeguard the quality of water. Shiklomanov, 2000, as cited in Flörke et al., (2013) claimed that data on water use will help water source manager and planners in the future development in water related sectors particularly on the area of consumption.

**Physico-chemical Quality**

The cost of analyses has caused limitations in the samples subjected to test. A total of 15 samples were collected in each sampling period. The samples were drawn from taps with levels 2 and 3 water connections in coastal (n=5), lowland (n=4), and upland (n=6) areas (see Table 5).

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**Table 5.**

*Water connections and elevation of sample sources for water quality evaluation (n=15)*

|  | Coastal | Lowland | Upland |
|---|---|---|---|
| Level 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Level 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Level 2/3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 4 | 6 |

The samples were obtained from the tap inside the house and business facilities except for the communal facilities shown in Figures 2 and 3. The ground level reservoir serves as the bulk storage and balances the supply and demand in the network. The design and materials of the structure are similar to the layout cited in the Manual for Rural Water Supply (2012). These are examples of Level 2 water connection found in the study area. The raw water is from the spring source. The pressure and volume vary considerably during dry seasons. For this particular year, water supply started to decline ahead of the usual dry periods. The reservoir is refilled at night when nobody draws water.

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**Figure 2.** Examples of ground level reservoir that serve as Level 2 water connection system in Brgy. Morobuan, Jordan, Guimaras.
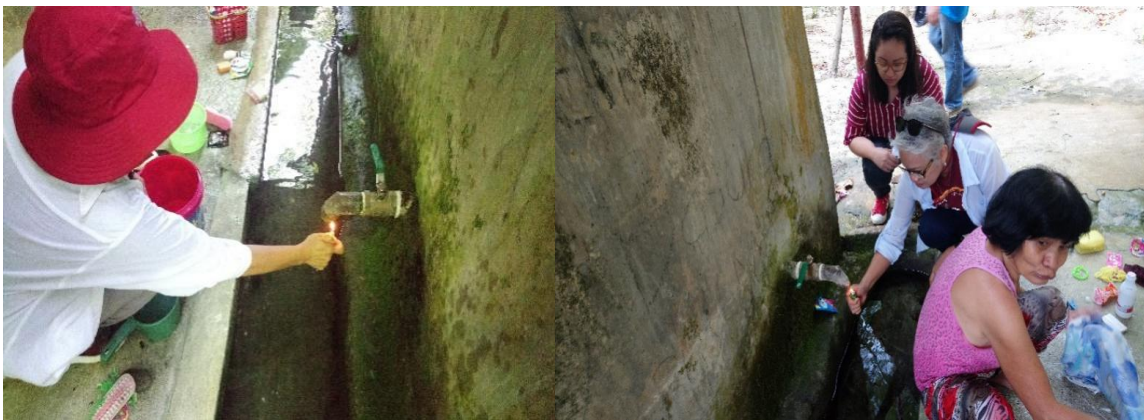


**Figure 3.** Examples of ground level reservoir that serve as Level 2 water onnection system in Brgy. Daragan, Buenavista, Guimaras

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**Table 6.**

*Physico-chemical characteristics of water from household and business sectors (n=15).*

| Sampling Codes | Business Type | Elevation | Institutional Arrangement | Physico-Chemical | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | pH | | Temp | | Turbidity | | TDS | | Chloride | | Hardness | |
| | | | | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet |
| ML1 | Water Source | Coastal | BLGU | 7.55 | 7.24 | 28 | 27.2 | 0.04 | 0.23 | 239 | 274 | 8 | 10 | 112 | 200 |
| HH2 | (Household) | Coastal | Water District | 7.63 | 7.18 | 27.7 | 27.4 | 0.29 | 0.52 | 292 | 268 | 12 | 8 | 236 | 268 |
| HH7 | (Household) | Coastal | Water District | 8.25 | 7.1 | 27.7 | 27.5 | 0.32 | 0.17 | 322 | 280 | 34 | 28 | 176 | 232 |
| HH8 | (Household) | Coastal | Water District | 8.16 | 7.28 | 27.8 | 27.3 | 0.12 | 0.31 | 248 | 277 | 14 | 22 | 152 | 240 |
| HH4 | (Household) | Lowland | Water District | 7.66 | 7.34 | 27.6 | 27.2 | 0.20 | 0.9 | 209 | 216 | 10 | 6 | 232 | 208 |

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| Sampling Codes | Business Type | Elevation | Institutional Arrangement | Physico-Chemical | | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | | pH | | Temp | | Turbidity | | TDS | | Chloride | | Hardness | |
| | | | | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet |
| HH5 | (Household) | Lowland | BAWASA | 7.47 | 7.26 | 27.7 | 27.4 | 0.06 | 0.24 | 509 | 452 | 224 | 174 | 288 | 260 |
| HH1 | (Household) | Upland | BAWASA | 8.16 | 7.51 | 27.6 | 27.4 | 0.2 | 0.04 | 209 | 211 | 10 | 14 | 232 | 220 |
| HH3 | (Household) | Upland | Water District | 7.73 | 7.15 | 27.6 | 27.4 | 0.31 | 4.9 | 274 | 285 | 12 | 12 | 224 | 92 |
| HH6 | (Household) | Upland | BAWASA | 8.31 | 7.54 | 27.7 | 27.4 | 0.22 | 0.41 | 512 | 474 | 192 | 172 | 320 | 320 |
| DL1 | Water Source | Upland | BLGU | 7.47 | 6.92 | 27.7 | 27.4 | 0.05 | 0.6 | 239 | 231 | 10 | 10 | 132 | 180 |
| BIS4 | Sari-Sari Store | Coastal | Water District | 7.6 | 7.42 | 27.8 | 27.4 | 0.45 | 0.77 | 217 | 274 | 16 | 20 | 100 | 96 |

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| Sampling Codes | Business Type | Elevation | Institutional Arrangement | Physico-Chemical | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | pH | | Temp | | Turbidity | | TDS | | Chloride | | Hardness | |
| | | | | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet |
| BIS1 | Producer (rice cake) | Lowland | BAWASA | 7.46 | 7.07 | 27.8 | 26.7 | 0.24 | 0.3 | 217 | 258 | 14 | 16 | 152 | 208 |
| BIS2 | Laundry | Lowland | Water District | 4.32 | 4.66 | 28 | 27.5 | 0.13 | 0.11 | 23.5 | 22.2 | 10 | 10 | 60 | 80 |
| BIS3 | Drinking Water | Upland | Water District | 7.51 | 6.12 | 27.8 | 27.3 | 0.07 | 0.13 | 20.9 | 20.5 | 6 | 4 | 36 | 20 |
| BIS5 | Drinking Water | Upland | BLGU | 7.41 | 7.87 | 27.8 | 27.3 | 0.03 | 0.3 | 10.5 | 4.71 | 8 | 20 | 28 | 56 |

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The One Sample t test did not show any significant difference (α=0.05) in the general acceptability of the water samples (Table 6) when compared with the Philippine National Standard for Drinking Water (2017). These parameters may not be a cause of health problems, but can bring about changes in the quality attributes such as solubility of metals or survival of pathogens (Zabed et al., 2014 as cited by Fadaei, A. & Sadeghi, 2014). The values for the dry and wet seasons did not vary significantly as well.

The pH values ranged from 4.32-8.31. Water from source coded BIS 2 was beyond the acceptable lower limit. It is considered an acidic water which can be due to the presence of metals like iron, lead, zinc, copper and manganese or other heavy chemical pollutants. Metals are more soluble at low pH and turn more toxic. Acidic water can cause premature damage to metal piping and result in "blue-green" color stain on sinks and drains to consequently introduce discoloration on clothing materials during laundry operation. Dirisu (2016) has cited such findings of various researchers and similar observations were indicated in the Citizen's Guide to Understanding and Monitoring Lakes and Streams. In food preparation, especially for food business establishments, pH value influences the discoloration of food, the precipitation, the deterioration of fragrance and the corrosion of metal equipment (Wujei et al, 2011). In bakery products processing, water resources with pH 9.0 - 9.8 can cause poor gas production and a longer baking time due to reduced activity of the yeast, diastasis, and lactic bacteria. Alkaline water has a negative effect on gluten to shape and its plasticity, therefore, it is necessary to use water with a slight acidity (Sinani et al., 2014). Since data were based on two sampling seasons, there is a need to check on the nature of the water source and further investigate on the practices employed by the distribution network management.

On the other hand, a pH > 8.5 could indicate that the water is hard. Hard water does not only pose a health risk, but can also cause aesthetic problems like the alkali taste that gives a bitter taste to beverages like coffee. It also causes the formation of scale deposits

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on dishes, utensils, and laundry basins and the formation of insoluble precipitates on clothing, and difficulty in getting soaps to lather.

The turbidity values of the water samples ranged from 0. 03 to 4.9.NTU (Table 6) and these are acceptable. For a distribution network, values lower than 1 NTU is desired since disinfection is an expected practice. A turbidity value higher than 5 NTU, on the other hand, would mean the presence of soil particulates or other microscopic organisms in addition to organic and inorganic matters. Unexpected turbidity in a distribution system reflects leakage or breaches in protocols. Turbid water can carry nutrients that can support microbial growth in the distribution system. When microbial density is significantly high, it can impede chlorine disinfection or treatment and this indicates the presence of pathogenic microorganisms. For drinking water, turbid water has unacceptable odor and taste (Le Chevalier et al., 1981).

The Total Dissolved Solid (TDS) values of all samples were within acceptable limits. According to the Environmental Protection Agency guidelines, high levels of TDS are associated with water hardness. For domestic use like washing, bathing or cleaning, the efficiency of soaps and detergents is affected by water hardness in the form of less lather formation. High levels of TDS may be due to water pollutants and contaminants like iron, arsenic, bromide, manganese, or sulfate.

According to the WHO and PNSDW standards, the concentration of chloride should not exceed 250 mg/L. In this study, the value ranged from 4 to 224 mg/L. Two samples coded HH5 and HH6 showed high values for chloride but were within the standards. Beyond the set standards for chloride concentration it could indicate contamination by sewage or animal waste. Fadaei et al., (2014) stated that surface water bodies often have low concentration of chloride when compared to ground water. He likewise said that chlorides do not generally cause a problem in laundry. Using Kendals Tau b method,

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Figure 4 shows that hardness has a moderate inverse relationship (r=-0.76) with elevation where the samples were taken. It seems that coastal water sources have more minerals contributing to hardness.
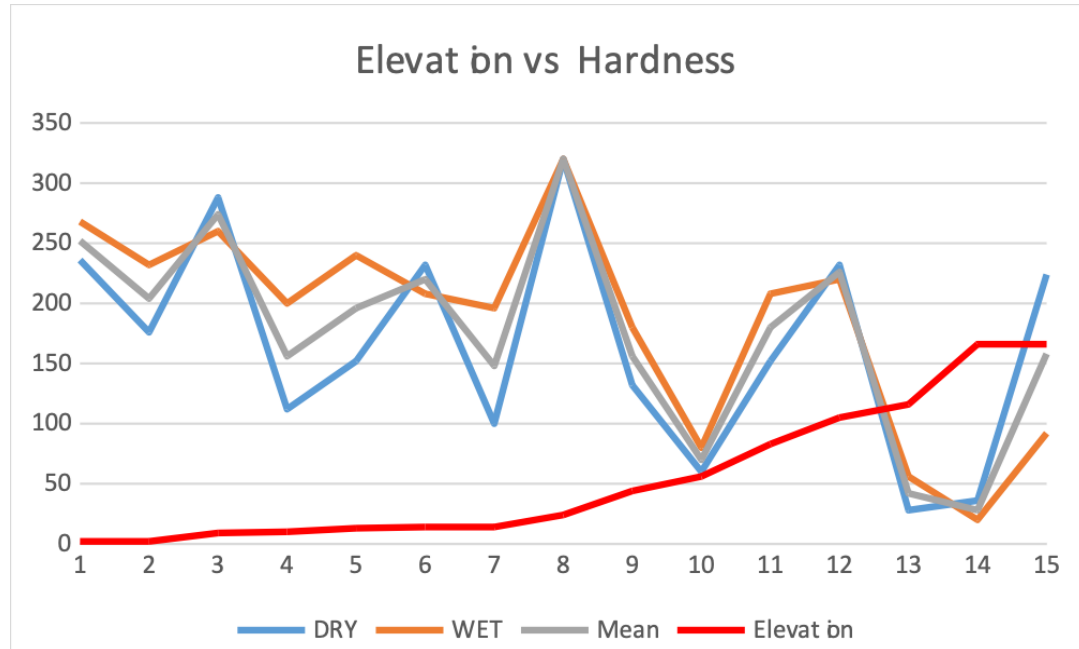


**Figure 4.** Mean value of water hardness from taps with different elevation level during dry and wet seasons.

The total hardness values of the samples (Table 6) varied from 92 to 320mg/L. These are classified as moderately hard to hard water and were obtained mostly from the water tap among the household sector. Water hardness is primarily due to calcium and magnesium carbonates which can be removed by boiling. Since hard water makes lathering more difficult, it would result in increased soap consumption. In boilers, pots and kettles, hardness causes scaling, resulting in the reduction of the heating efficiency and heat flow.

In the same results (Table 6), hardness values from the water tap of business operators coded BIS 2, BIS 3, and BIS 5 for laundry shop and two water processing stations respectively, ranged from 20 to 80. These values suggest that these are classified as soft water.

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## Microbiological Quality

Of the water analyzed for the microbiological characteristics, 60-67 % of the samples failed in terms of total coliform, fecal coliform and HPC. There was no significant difference in the values obtained during the dry and rainy seasons.  It was noted that even if the distribution systems were managed by institutional organizations, there was no consistency in terms of compliance to standards. Values of water samples coded BIS 3 and BIS 5 suggest that they have acceptable microbiological quality. Both were obtained from the establishment that sells processed water.

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STIFTUNG

**Table 7.**
*Microbiological characteristics of water from household and business sectors n=15.*

| Sampling Codes | Business Type | Elevation | Institutional Arrangement | Microbiological/Bacterial | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Total Coliform | | Fecal Coliform | | HPC | | Descriptive Result | |
| | | | | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet |
| ML1 | Water Source | Coastal | BLGU | 8.0 | 8.0 | < 1.1 | <1.1 | 2 | 11 | Failed | Failed |
| HH2 | (Household) | Coastal | Water District | > 8.0 | >8.0 | > 8.0 | >8.0 | 51 | 65 | Failed | Failed |
| HH7 | (Household) | Coastal | Water District | > 8.0 | <1.1 | > 8.0 | <1.1 | 108 | 1 | Failed | Passed |
| HH8 | (Household) | Coastal | Water District | > 8.0 | <1.1 | > 8.0 | <1.1 | 45 | 1 | Failed | Passed |
| HH4 | (Household) | Lowland | Water District | > 8.0 | >8.0 | 2.6 | >8.0 | 3 | 88 | Failed | Failed |
| HH5 | (Household) | Lowland | BAWASA | > 8.0 | >8.0 | > 8.0 | >8.0 | 1 | 28 | Failed | Failed |
| HH1 | (Household) | Upland | BAWASA | < 1.1 | >8.0 | < 1.1 | 4.6 | < 500 | 11 | Passed | Failed |
| HH3 | (Household) | Upland | Water District | < 1.1 | <1.1 | < 1.1 | <1.1 | 21 | 2 | Passed | Passed |

| Sampling Codes | Business Type | Elevation | Institutional Arrangement | Microbiological/Bacterial | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | | Total Coliform | | Fecal Coliform | | HPC | | Descriptive Result | |
| | | | | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet | Dry | Wet |
| HH6 | (Household) | Upland | BAWASA | > 8.0 | >8.0 | > 8.0 | >8.0 | 33 | 31 | Failed | Failed |
| DL1 | Water Source | Upland | BLGU | > 8.0 | >8.0 | 8.0 | >8.0 | 22 | 34 | Failed | Failed |
| BIS4 | Sari-Sari Store | Coastal | Water District | < 1.1 | <1.1 | < 1.1 | <1.1 | 0 | <1.1 | Passed | Passed |
| BIS1 | Producer (rice cake) | Lowland | BAWASA | > 8.0 | >8.0 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 5 | 50 | Failed | Failed |
| BIS2 | Laundry | Lowland | Water District | > 8.0 | 2.6 | > 8.0 | <1.1 | 1 | 21 | Failed | Failed |
| BIS3 | Drinking Water | Upland | Water District | < 1.1 | <1.1 | < 1.1 | <1.1 | < 500 | 4 | Passed | Passed |
| BIS5 | Drinking Water | Upland | BLGU | < 1.1 | <1.1 | < 1.1 | <1.1 | 0 | <1.1 | Passed | Passed |

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One Sample t test did not show significant difference ($\alpha$=0.05) in the total coliform values between the dry and wet sampling periods and between locations. The values were beyond the acceptable standards for potable water. Majority of the samples from the household taps failed in microbial quality while the sample coded BIS 1 that produces rice cake, showed high density of coliform. Coliforms however are heat sensitive hence there is less danger of contamination on the cooked rice cake unless there is contact with the same water after cooking.

The origins of total coliform bacteria include untreated surface water and groundwater, vegetation, soils, insects, and animal and human fecal material. Typical coliform bacteria found in drinking water systems include *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Enterobacter aerogenes*, *Enterobacter cloacae*, and *Citrobacter freundii.* If present in distributed water, it means an external contamination incidence or introduction through water line breaks, cross connections or poorly maintained storage facilities. The density of the total coliform bacteria in distribution systems is used primarily to measure the water treatment effectiveness. Although most coliforms are not pathogenic, they indicate the potential presence of fecal pathogens which is a risk to public health.

The Heterotrophic plate counts (HPC) of almost all the sources were within the acceptable limits for treated water. This particular test is used to validate the potential risk of water borne diseases although some reports cited that it can include non-infectious organisms. This test however is recommended by the WHO to be included in the comprehensive "water safety plan" (WSP) approach in drinking-water supply safety management (Bartram, 2003). Other researches likewise mentioned that inadequately treated sources may permit entrance of pathogens in the distribution system.

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## Conclusion

Majority of the household and business establishments have Level 3 water connections but they would still opt to have alternative sources like levels 2 and 1 water system. This is in anticipation of disruption or reduced water supply during dry season. Water from taps was primarily used for washing, personal hygiene, and cleaning. The physico-chemical characteristics were within regulatory standards but the microbiological characteristics, particularly the total coliform and fecal coliform counts were high and fell short of standards for potable water. The HPC values were acceptable. The high coliform counts could be due to contaminations and the absence of water treatment.  Similarly, it could be a weakness in implementing safe quality measures for distributed water which is a mandate of institutional authorities present in the community.  The interaction between water quality, location, and sampling periods was not demonstrated in the results.

## Recommendation

The inferior microbiological quality of the water in the household taps can promote other forms of waterborne diseases especially when it gets in contact with surfaces for food preparation, personal hygiene, washing and business operations.  It is best to monitor the quality from the source and to the point of consumption to properly assess the cause of water contamination or quality deterioration. An active supervision and involvement of the institutional administrators is necessary in the assessment process. A comprehensive design to secure supply in terms of quantity and quality will consequently promote more economic activity in the area. A more conclusive data will be generated if sampling points will be increased with a regular schedule for the characterization of water quality. The results have to be disseminated to household and business establishment owners for their respective corrective actions.

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# To Drink or Not to Drink: Perceived versus Actual Water Quality in Selected Leyte Island Communities

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## Introduction

Drinking water is a basic and important commodity for every household. Humans can survive without water for only up to a week. Thus, access to drinking water is crucial for the survival of a person and the community. Recent reports showed improvement in access to safe and clean drinking water under the Millennium Development Goals. Globally, about 2.6 billion people are gaining access to improved drinking water source since 1990, about 96% of which, are the global urban population and 84% are the rural population (Mkwate, Chidya, & Wanda, 2017). On the other hand, about one billion people still have difficulty in accessing improved water source (Amit & Sasidharan, 2019). Thus, authorities, water providers, and water sector organizations face a big challenge of ensuring adequate supply of good quality drinking water (Abubakar, 2019). This includes improvement and maintenance of existing services, and establishing future water infrastructure in order to reach the currently unserved populations (Hoque et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, there are three different levels of water distribution systems that may be present in a community as defined by the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (Department of Health, 2007). Level 1, also known as point source, refers to "*protected well or a developed spring with an outlet but without distribution system, generally adaptable for rural areas where the houses are thinly scattered.*" This level can cater to small-size community of 15 to 25 households. Level 2, also referred to as communal faucet system, is "*a system composed of source, a reservoir, piped distribution*

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*network and communal faucets, located no more than 25 meters from the farthest house, and is generally suitable for rural and urban areas where houses are clustered densely to justify a simple pipe system.*" This level serves a larger community size of about 100 households. Level 3, also referred to as waterworks system or individual house connections, is "*a system with a source, a reservoir, a piped distribution network and household taps and generally suited for densely populated areas.*" In this level, water providers are required to provide means of water disinfection. Among these distribution systems, Level 3 can provide tap water that is treated to meet standards for drinking water. Thus, water providers for Level 3 systems need to invest significant amount of resources to be able to provide good quality water right into the households.

The quality of drinking water is critical for every household's health and well-being. Maintaining supply of good quality drinking water ensures that diseases associated with water quality is prevented. Among the diseases caused by drinking water with poor quality are water-borne diseases, such as hepatitis A, dysentery, cholera, diarrhea, and typhoid (Rowles et al., 2018). For instance, in 2014 over half a million deaths from diarrheal diseases were due to unsafe drinking water (Burt et al., 2017). Thus, authorities, like the Philippine Department of Health, have set drinking water quality standards to prevent diseases caused by poor quality drinking water.

People have an interesting perception with regards to drinking water quality. Preference for bottled water, as well as drinking water purchased from refilling stations or water vendors, over tap water is prevalent in all regions throughout the world. For consumers, there is a certain level of confidence with regards to the quality of bottled drinking water, while tap water is somewhat taken for granted. Some of the reasons for underutilization of tap water include organoleptic properties like taste, odor, and color (Weisner, Root, Harris, Mitsova, & Liu, 2020), health risks associated with tap water such as presence of chemicals, chlorine, sediments, etc. (Geerts et al., 2020), and trust (or mistrust) on water service provider (Ochoo, Valcour, & Sarkar, 2017). Cultural perspective also plays a big

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role in determining the quality of water that is acceptable for human consumption, and this level of understanding based on cultural terms affects how people deal with health problems associated with water quality (Morales et al., 2020).

Dangers arise when perception on drinking water quality and the actual quality do not agree. On the part of the water providers, there is huge waste of resources when a treated water that passes drinking water quality standards are perceived to be of low quality and is not used as originally intended. However, when consumers presume that tap water is potable, there is tendency to be lax in the observance of precautions, such as boiling for disinfection (Gerhard, Choi, Houck, & Stewart, 2017). Since the possibility of water quality deterioration during transport from treatment to point-of-use cannot be ruled out, the risk of catching water-borne diseases is high when poor quality drinking water is perceived as acceptable for consumption.

In this study, the association between consumer preference and actual water quality was assessed in selected households in Leyte island municipalities. Leyte is the eighth largest island in the Philippines, and is part of the Visayas region. This island is in the eastern-most part of the country and faces the Pacific ocean. Communities in islands like Leyte have diverse sources of water for drinking and other uses. For this study, physico-chemical and microbiological tests were conducted at the household level (point-of-use) in order to determine the actual water quality status. End-user preference and water use practices in these municipalities were also investigated.

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## Methodology

### *Study area*

Scoping was conducted prior to the survey and water sampling. Three barangays from five Leyte municipalities were identified: Baybay City (Plaridel, Zone 10, and Makinhas), Abuyog (Balinsasayaw, Balocawehay, and Loyonsawang), Ormoc City (Alta Vista, Cogon, and Naungan), Capoocan (Lemon, Pinamopooan, and Zone 1), and Tacloban City (Nula-tula, Abucay, and Brgy 88). Local authorities from each of the municipalities and barangays were visited to establish communication and solicit support for the smooth execution and completion of the surveys and water sampling. For each household, connectivity to Level 2 or 3 water distribution system, as well as elevation, were checked to ensure that all selected households qualify within the water distribution system scope, and that each elevation type is represented. **Table 1** presents the type of water distribution system for each of the selected barangays and its corresponding location and elevation.

### *Water quality*

Water samples from 15 selected communities/sites in the municipalities of Leyte, shown in **Fig. 1**, were collected and laboratory-tested. Selection of sampling location, sampling methods, and preservation of samples were carried out in accordance with the procedure stated in the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water 2017 (Department of Health, 2017). Before sample collection, the tap was cleaned and attachments were removed. It was then fully opened with water allowed to waste for a sufficient time to permit the flushing/clearing of the service lines. For the samples for physico-chemical analyses, the 1000 mL PET sample containers were filled with the desired amount of sample, leaving adequate space for expansion of the liquid. For samples for microbiological analyses, 100 mL clear glass sterilized bottles were used, with a thin aluminum foil cover to protect both the stopper and neck of the bottle. The container was filled without rinsing, and ample space was left to facilitate mixing by shaking. Sample

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containers were properly labeled with information suggested in the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water 2017. During transport, ice coolers were used for storage of water samples. Samples were submitted to the Leyte Metropolitan Water District Laboratory for analysis of turbidity (turbidimetry), total dissolved solids (gravimetric), chloride (Argentometric method), iron and manganese (atomic absorption spectroscopy), heterotropic plate count (Pour Plate, Spread Plate, or Membrane Filter Technique), and total coliform and fecal coliform (Multiple Tube Fermentation Technique).



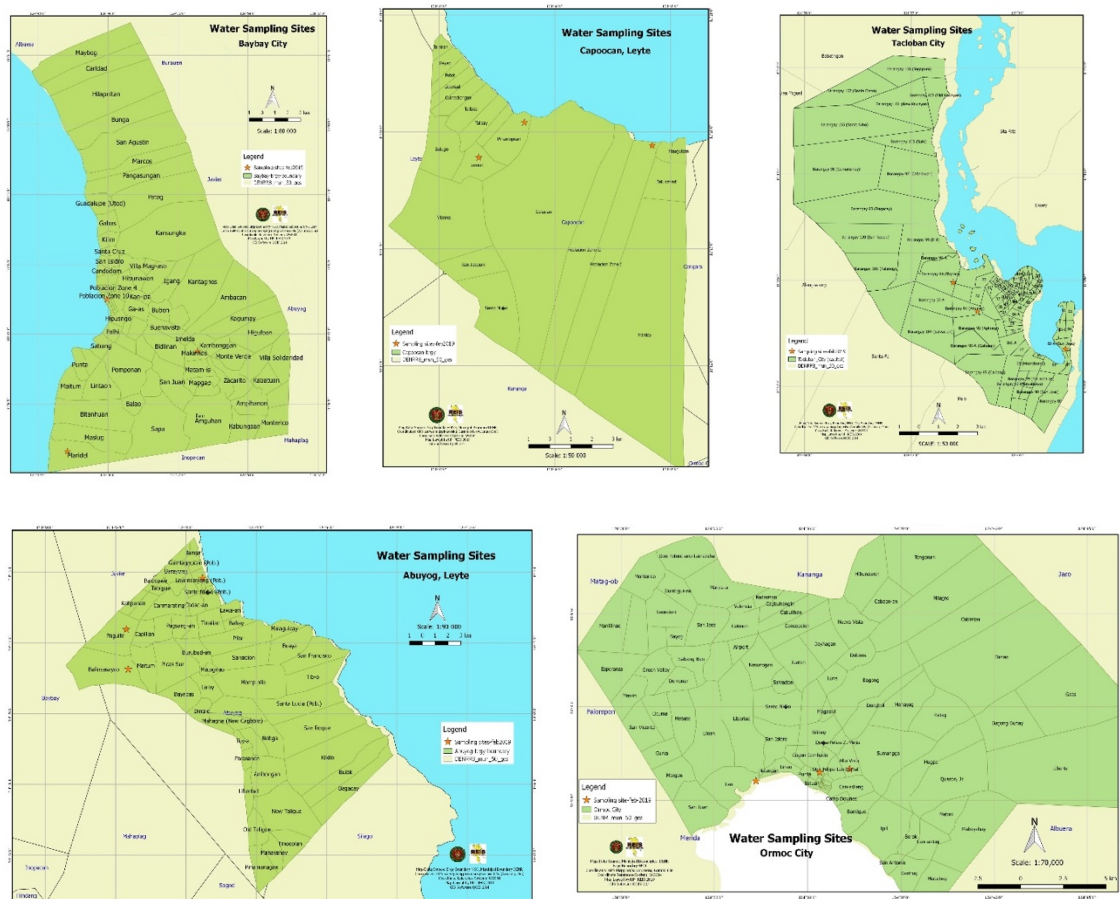**Figure 1**. Sampling points at the selected municipalities in Leyte Province.

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*Consumer preference*

For the household survey on the drinking water preference, information on the types of distribution system present, water allocation per type of household activity, and sources of drinking water were collected. Prior to commencement of the survey, concerned local government officials (Mayor or Barangay Captain) were visited and informed of the purpose of the research, the topics being covered, and how the results will be used. Household respondents were also informed that participation in the survey was voluntary and that information collected will be treated with confidentiality.

## Results and discussion

*Water quality results*

The communities that were included in the study were selected based on their elevation which can be any of the following: (1) upland, (2) midland, and (3) coastal. **Table 1** presents the classification of each selected barangay, along with the actual elevation. Based on the same table, most of the households (9 out of 15) are connected to a Level 3 water distribution system, while the rest are communal faucets classified as Level 2. However, only 7 of these households with Level 3 connection are connected to water districts where treatment process is implemented prior to distribution. These are Zone 10 of Baybay City, Zone 1 of Capoocan, Loyonsawang of Abuyog, Barangay 88 of Tacloban City, and all the three selected barangays (Alta Vista, Naungan, and Cogon) of Ormoc City. The other two are barangay-based distribution systems that utilize untreated spring water as their source. **Table 1** also shows that, except for Ormoc City, upland and midland barangays rely on spring water as their main water source. This reflects the abundance and availability of spring waters in elevated areas for consumption by the nearby communities.

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**Table 1**.

*Type of water distribution system, elevation, and water source of selected households.*

| MUN/CITY | BRGY | CLASS | ELEVATION | SOURCE | SYSTEM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ormoc City | Alta Vista | upland | 85.06 | water district | Level 3 |
| Ormoc City | Cogon | midland | 4.034 | water district | Level 3 |
| Ormoc City | Naungan | coastal | 2.37 | water district | Level 3 |
| Abuyog, Leyte | Balinsasayao | upland | 30.98 | spring water | Level 2 |
| Abuyog, Leyte | Balocawehay | midland | 24.49 | spring water | Level 3 |
| Abuyog, Leyte | Loyonsawang | coastal | 3.27 | water district | Level 3 |
| Baybay City | Plaridel | upland | 84.46 | spring water | Level 3 |
| Baybay City | Makinhas | midland | 37.22 | spring water | Level 2 |
| Baybay City | Zone 10 | coastal | 24.53 | water district | Level 3 |
| Capoocan, Leyte | Lemon | upland | 57.92 | spring water | Level 2 |
| Capoocan, Leyte | Pinamopoan | midland | 11.80 | spring water | Level 2 |
| Capoocan, Leyte | Zone 1 | coastal | 5.97 | water district | Level 3 |
| Tacloban City | Nula-tula | upland | 104.22 | spring water | Level 2 |
| Tacloban City | Abucay Zone 7 | midland | 36.08 | spring water | Level 2 |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tacloban City | Brgy 88 (San Jose) | coastal | 18.74 | water district | Level 3 |

For each barangay, water sampling was done at point-of-use. Physico-chemical characterization of the water samples were conducted to determine the parameters that may contribute to the organoleptic properties of the water available for the households. **Fig. 2** presents the results of the turbidity, TDS, chloride, iron, and manganese analyses from the water samples obtained from the selected barangays. Turbidity is an indicator of presence of suspended contaminants in water such as clay, silt, organic material, and other particulate materials (Department of Health, 2007). In the Philippines, the maximum allowable turbidity level is 5 NTU (Department of Health, 2017). Turbidity results above this level are detectable in a glass of water and are aesthetically unacceptable. Total dissolved solids (TDS) reflects the mineral content of the drinking water, and affects consumer acceptability of the water supply even in the absence of unwanted odors (Devesa & Dietrich, 2018). TDS may come from various sources, such as natural sources, sewage, urban runoff, and industrial wastewater (Department of Health, 2007). Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water 2017 has set a maximum allowable TDS level at 600 mg $L^{-1}$ (Department of Health, 2017). Most waters contain some chloride, and its presence in drinking water can be due to natural sources, sewage and industrial effluents, urban runoff, and seawater intrusion (Department of Health, 2007). Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water 2017 has set a maximum allowable Chloride level at 250 mg $L^{-1}$ (Department of Health, 2017). Iron may be present in drinking water due to corrosion of steel and cast iron pipes during water distribution, or if iron coagulants are used in the water treatment, although it is also naturally-occurring and may come from geologic materials (Department of Health, 2007). Iron needs to be removed from surface or groundwater since it causes organoleptic problems on the product water (Ong, Kan, Pingul-Ong, & de Luna, 2017). The maximum allowable Iron level in the Philippines is 1.0 mg $L^{-1}$ (Department of Health, 2017). Manganese, like iron, is naturally-occurring in many

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surface and groundwater sources (Ong, Pingul-Ong, Kan, & de Luna, 2018), and causes brownish color to water and to cloth that is washed in it (Department of Health, 2007). The maximum allowable manganese level in the Philippines is 0.4 mg $L^{-1}$ (Department of Health, 2017).

All water samples from Abuyog (Loyonsawang, Balocawehay, and Balisasayao), Baybay City (Zone 10, Plaridel, and Makinhas), Capoocan (Lemon, Pinamopoan, and Zone 1), and Ormoc City (Alta Vista, Naungan, and Cogon) passed the drinking water quality standards for the five physico-chemical parameters tested for both wet and dry season, as shown in **Fig. 2**. Loyonsawang and Balocawehay water samples were obtained at the household kitchen faucets, while in Balisasayao, the sample was taken from the communal faucet near the *tanod* outpost. Water samples from Zone 10 and Plaridel were obtained from household kitchen faucets, while in Makinhas, the sample was obtained from the communal faucet near the barangay hall. Water samples from Lemon and Pinamopoan were obtained from communal faucets outside a store and near the barangay hall, respectively, while in Zone 1 the sample was obtained from an outdoor faucet of the selected household. Water samples from Alta Vista and Naungan were taken from the outdoor faucets of the selected households, while in Cogon, the sample was obtained from a food stall kitchen faucet. In Tacloban City, samples from the three barangays (Abucay, Brgy. 88, and Nula-tula) passed the drinking water quality standards for TDS, chloride, iron, and manganese, while Abucay (wet season) and Nula-tula (wet and dry season) samples failed the turbidity test, as shown in **Fig. 2**. Sample from Brgy. 88 was taken from the outdoor faucet of the selected household. Water sample from Abucay was obtained from a communal hose, where the source is a shallow well in which particulate materials from the ground may be agitated and suspended during occasional rainfall. Sample from Nula-tula was obtained from a communal concrete tank that stores spring water. This tank has a hose near the bottom that can agitate the particulate materials inside the tank during water collection.

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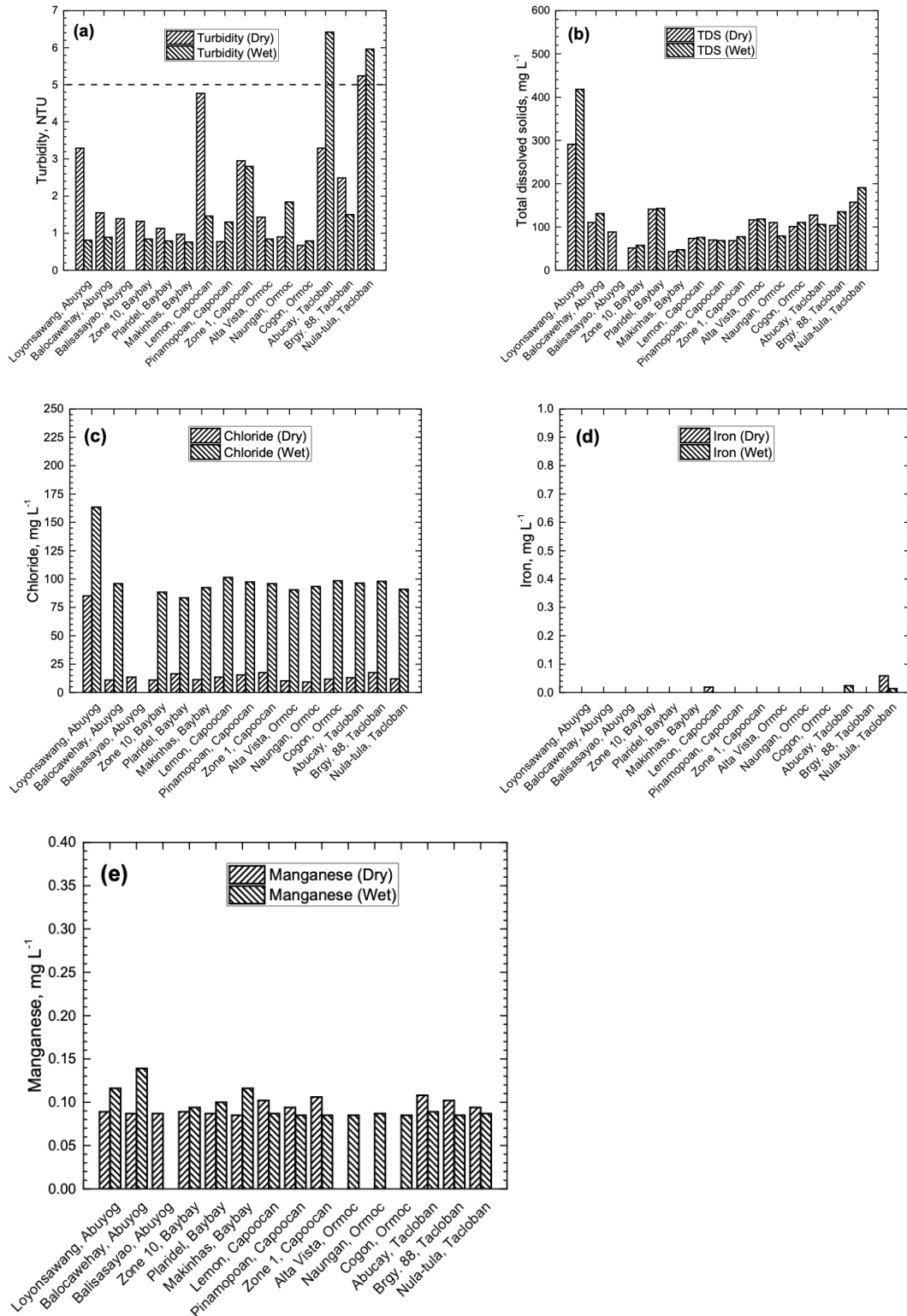**Figure 2**. Physico-chemical analysis results: (a) turbidity, (b) total dissolved solids, (c) chloride, (d) iron, and (e) manganese.

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Bacteriological characterization was conducted to determine the presence of microorganisms that may cause water-borne diseases. **Fig. 3** presents the results of the Heterotrophic Plate Count, Total Coliform, and Fecal Coliform analyses from the water samples obtained from the selected barangays. Heterotrophic Plate Count is attributed to a broad group of bacteria that include pathogens, nonpathogens and opportunistic microorganisms, and is used as indicator of general biological condition of drinking water (Department of Health, 2007). In the Philippines, the allowable HPC level is < 500 CFU/mL (Department of Health, 2017). Total Coliform (TC) could be considered as part of natural aquatic flora because of their regrowth in water. Because of this characteristic, their detection in water supply may mean false positive for fecal contamination. False negatives can also occur when coliforms are present along with high populations of HPC bacteria because  the presence of HPC bacteria may restrict the activities of coliform group bacteria system (Department of Health, 2007). Fecal coliforms (FC) are a subgroup of total coliforms, and can be a more reliable indicator of fecal contamination than total coliforms, with E. coli as the indicator organism of choice for fecal contamination (Department of Health, 2007). The allowable TC and FC level in drinking  water is < 1.1 MPN/100 mL (Department of Health, 2017).

All water samples from Level 2 systems in Abuyog (Balinsasayao), Baybay City (Makinhas), Capoocan (Lemon and Pinamopoan), and Tacloban City (Abucay and Nula-tula) failed the bacteriological analysis, as shown in **Fig. 3**. These Level 2 systems utilize spring water as source and the existing facilities lack disinfection process prior to distribution. As such, the HPC, TC and FC results for these Level 2 systems that were above the allowable limit reflect the effect of the absence of the essential treatment process. Moreover, contamination at the point-of-use is also possible since these sampling points are communal and are exposed to various environmental elements that may encourage bacterial growth. In the case of Balisasayao, the communal faucet is located along the national highway and without any sort of protective cover. In Makinhas, the communal faucet is also along the national highway, and is beside a store that sells various wet and

dry goods. This is similar to that of Lemon, where the communal faucet is also located along the national highway and beside a food stall. In Pinamopoan, the communal faucet is located along a pathway near the barangay hall. On the other hand, in Abucay, the communal faucet is located just outside the selected household, but is almost on the ground. Lastly, in Nula-tula, the hose used to draw water from the storage tank was detachable.

Out of 9 water samples from Level 3 sources, 5 failed the bacteriological analysis, with HPC and TC results for these Level 3 systems that were above the allowable limit. One of these systems, Plaridel, utilized spring water as source and the facilities have no disinfection process. On the other hand, four of the 9 Level 3 sampling points (Loyonsawang, Zone 1, Cogon, and Brgy. 88) were connected to the water district distribution system where the water is treated prior to distribution. The detected failure in water quality can possibly be due to bacterial regrowth or recontamination within the distribution system. Bacterial regrowth can happen even with water that has undergone treatment because of the tendency of some microorganisms to form biofilms on surfaces within the distribution system. This typically occurs in stagnant parts of piped distribution systems, in domestic plumbing, and in plumbed-in devices such as water softeners, carbon filters and vending machines. Increased heterotrophic plate counts (HPC) in water samples can be an indicator of regrowth, and objectionable effects can be observed in the taste, odor, or color of the drinking water.

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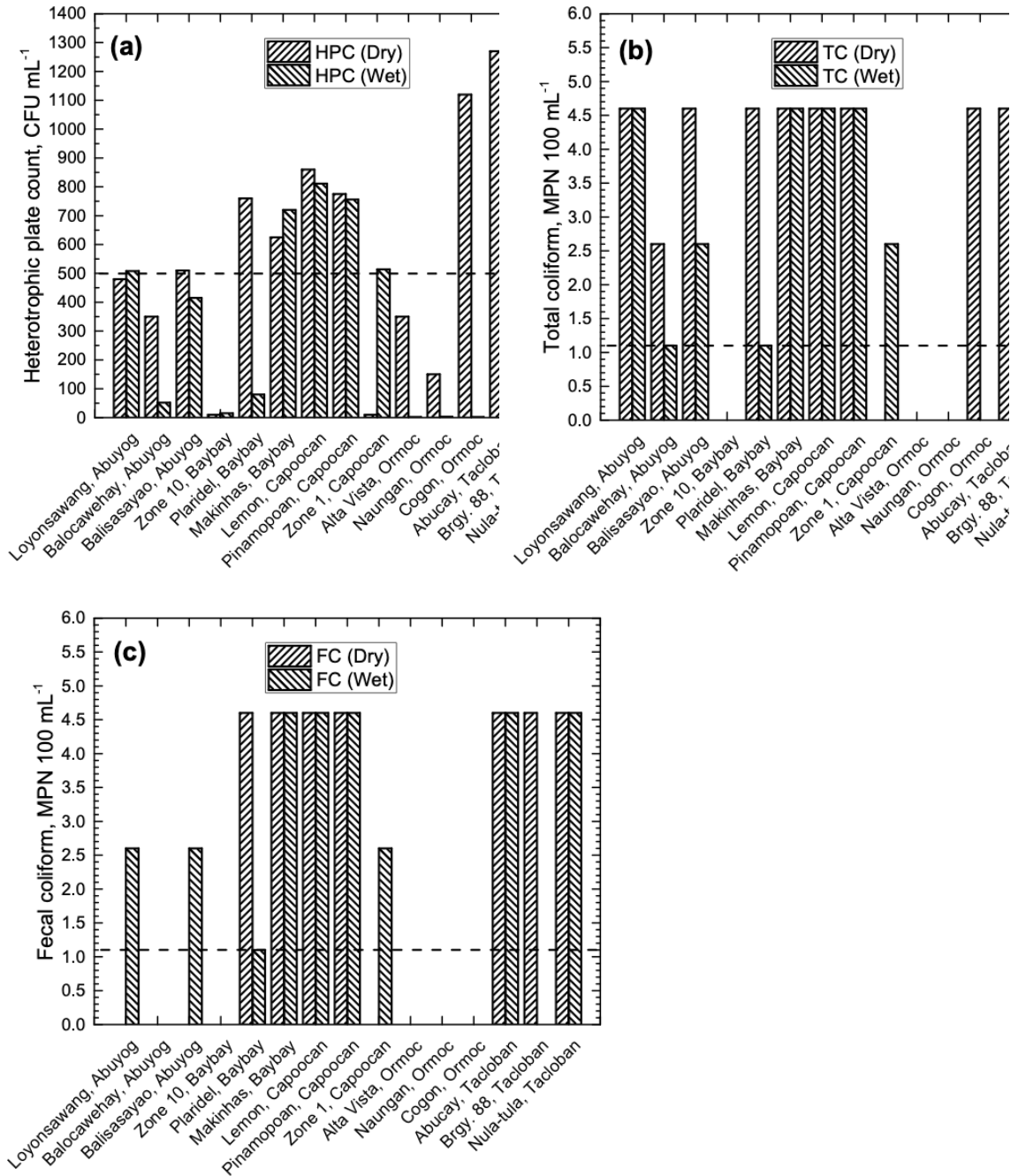for Provisioning and Access in Two Visayas Island-Settings

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**Figure 3**. Seasonal microbiological analysis results: (a) Heterotrophic Plate Count, (b) Total Coliform, and (c) Fecal Coliform.

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## Water supply

**Table 2** presents the households that have access to Level 2 and 3 water distribution systems. It can be observed that, aside from their existing connection to Level 2 or 3 distribution systems, these households also have Level 1 water sources as secondary water supply. The back-up water supplies were also noticeably dependent on the available nearby water source, like deep well, spring, and surface water.

**Table 2**.

*Water access information on the surveyed Leyte communities*

| SAMPLING SITE | ELEVATION | TOTAL NO. OF HH. | WATER LEVEL | OTHER EXISITNG WATER LEVEL | INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ABUYOG** | | | | | |
| Balinsasayao | Upland | 591 | 3 | Level 1 and 2 | Barangay LGU |
| Balocaheway | Lowland | 877 | 3 | Level 1 and 2 | BAWASA |
| Loyonsawang | Coastal | 238 | 3 | Level 1 | Water District |
| **BAYBAY** | | | | | |
| Makinhas | Upland | 263 | 2 | Level 1 | Barangay LGU |
| Plaridel | Lowland | 1,040 | 2 | Level 1 | Barangay LGU |
| Zone 10 | Coastal | 36 | 3 | Level 1 | Water District |
| **CAPOOCAN** | | | | | |
| Lemon | Upland | 598 | 2 | Deep well Spring | Barangay LGU |

| SAMPLING SITE | ELEVATION | TOTAL NO. OF HH. | WATER LEVEL | OTHER EXISITNG WATER LEVEL | INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Zone 1 | Lowland | 1,007 | 3/2 | Deep well Spring Communal Faucet | Water District |
| Pinamopoan | Coastal | 709 | 3/2 | Spring Communal Faucet | Barangay LGU |
| **ORMOC** | | | | | |
| Alta Vista | Upland | 648 | 3 | Spring | Water District |
| | | 1,028 | 3 | Deepwell | |
| Cogon | Lowland | 1,408 | 3 | San Isidro and Cogon deep wells, Ahag surface water | Water District |
| Naungan | Coastal | 1,093 | 3 | Ahag surface water | Water District |
| **TACLOBAN** | | | | | |
| Nula-tula | Upland | 660 | 2 3 | Level 1 | Communal; Water District |
| Abucay Zone 7 | Lowland | 2,523 | 2 3 | Level 1 | Communal; Water District |
| Brgy. 88 (San Jose) | Coastal | 810 | 3 | Level 1 | Water District |

## Drinking water preference

**Table 3** presents the typical activities inside the household that require water use. It is interesting to note that none of the surveyed households responded that drinking requires significant amount of water, while most agree that activities like cooking, cleaning, washing, personal, hygiene and watering plants are allotted the most water usage. If these households were connected to a Level 3 distribution system with disinfection facility, then this implies underutilization of the treated water that already passed the standards for drinking water quality.

**Table 3**.

*Activities with Most Water Used*

| SAMPLING SITE | DRINKING | WASHING | CLEANING | COOKING | WATERING PLANTS | PERSONAL HYGIENE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ABUYOG** | 0 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 20 |
| Balinsasayao | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Balocaheway | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Loyonsawang | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| **BAYBAY** | 0 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Makinhas | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Plaridel | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Zone 10 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| **CAPOOCAN** | 0 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 21 |
| Lemon | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |

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| SAMPLING SITE | DRINKING | WASHING | CLEANING | COOKING | WATERING PLANTS | PERSONAL HYGIENE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Zone 1 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Pinamopoan | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| **ORMOC** | **0** | **22** | **21** | **20** | **19** | **21** |
| Alta Vista | 0 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Cogon | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Naungan | 0 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| **TACLOBAN** | **0** | **21** | **21** | **21** | **14** | **21** |
| Nula-tula | 0 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Abucay Zone 7 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 8 |
| Brgy. 88 (San Jose) | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 6 |

**Table 4** presents the results of the survey on the sources of drinking water for the selected households. As observed, 65.7% of the respondents primarily rely on water purchased from refilling station, water vendors, and bottled water for drinking purposes. This preference is evident in all five selected municipalities in Leyte. In Alta Vista, Balocawehay, Naungan, and Zone 10, from which water samples passed the bacteriological analysis, the number of respondents who preferred drinking water from refilling station, water vendors, and bottled water were 55.6%, 50%, 33.3%, and 40%, respectively. These findings reveal the disconnectedness between drinking water preference and the actual water quality, and undermines the fact that the water being

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distributed by providers are considered potable and passed the quality standards for drinking water.

In the Level 2 systems with failed bacteriological analysis (Balinsasayao, Makinhas, Lemon, Pinamopoan, Abucay and Nula-tula), the number of respondents who preferred to drink water from refilling station, water vendors, and bottled water ranged from 22 to 85 % of the total respondents per barangay. Although the findings reveal that the preference of these households is correct, this also implies that there are members of the community who are at risk of catching water-borne diseases because these Level 2 systems  lack disinfection process.

In the case of Plaridel respondents with "Faucet inside house," there was an observed discrepancy between the drinking water preference and the actual laboratory results. As shown in **Table 4**, these households do not  rely on refilling station, water vendors, and bottled water for their drinking water. Rather, they use the water supplied to them from the distribution system. Since Plaridel utilizes spring water without prior treatment, these households may be at risk of waterborne diseases. This highlights the importance of disinfection process in ensuring good water quality. In the case of Loyonsawang, Zone 1, Cogon, and Brgy. 88, the number of the respondents who preferred to purchase drinking water from refilling stations and water vendor were 60%, 62.5%, 75%, and 62.5%, respectively. Since samples from these barangays failed the bacteriological analysis, these survey results reveal that the preference of these households is on the safe side, although  other members of the community are at risk of catching water-borne diseases. As Level 3 distribution systems, these water providers have treatment facilities that would ensure good water quality prior to distribution, thus, deterioration of the water quality along the distribution system needs to be given attention. Overall, these study areas with bacteriological analyses results that indicate presence of fecal coliforms at the point-of-use, should be given attention. Interventions should be done to address this possible health risk.

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**Table 4.**

*Sources of drinking water*

| SAMPLING SITE | FETCH WATER FROM WELL/SPRING/CREEK OUTSIDE HOUSE | COLLECT WATER FROM TANK OUTSIDE HOUSE | FAUCET INSIDE HOUSE | REFILLING STATION | WATER VENDOR | BOTTLED WATER | FAUCET OUTSIDE HOUSE | NO RESPONSE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ABUYOG** | **1** | **1** | **15** | **1** | **11** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Balinsasayao | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Balocaheway | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Loyonsawang | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **BAYBAY** | **1** | **0** | **8** | **3** | **5** | **0** | **5** | **0** |
| Makinhas | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Plaridel | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

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|  | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Zone 10 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **CAPOOCAN** | **3** | **0** | **7** | **0** | **17** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Lemon | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pinamopoan | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **ORMOC** | **0** | **2** | **10** | **2** | **12** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Alta Vista | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cogon | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Naungan | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TACLOBAN** | **0** | **3** | **6** | **5** | **13** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Nula-tula | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Abucay | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brgy. 88 (San Jose) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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## Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the association between consumer preference on water for drinking purpose and the actual quality of public water supplies in five selected municipalities of Leyte. Survey on drinking water preferences was conducted in 150 households with connectivity to Level 2 or 3 water distribution systems. Water samples from 15 households in the selected municipalities were collected and laboratory-tested. Results showed that most of the selected sampling sites passed the physico-chemical tests, which implies that the water quality parameters tested did not have detectable effects on the organoleptic properties of the water. Survey results revealed that 65.7% of the total respondents rely on refilling stations, water vendor, and bottled water for their drinking water. Disconnectedness between preference and actual water quality were observed in all sampling sites. In barangays from which water samples passed the bacteriological analysis, a significant number of respondents still preferred drinking water from refilling station, water vendors, and bottled water. On the other hand, in Level 2 and 3 distribution systems with failed bacteriological analysis, households that utilize water supplied from the distribution system are at risk of acquiring water-borne diseases. Based on these findings, it is imperative that interventions be carried out to improve water quality and reduce health risk.

## Acknowledgement

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# Domestic Water Reuse and Conservation in Select Guimaras and Leyte Communities

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## Introduction

In many water scarce locations around the world, water is perceived to be abundantly available and is provided at relatively low costs for domestic users (Koop, et.al, 2019). Even so, the world is projected to experience a 40% fresh water shortage by 2030 (WRG, 2009 as cited by Koop, et.al, 2019 ). Although global diets and consumption patterns place the most pressure on the world's diminishing freshwater resources ( Koop and Van Leeuwen, 2017), households can also make a significant contribution in reducing overall water demands. For instance, average domestic water consumption in liters used per person per day varies from 575 in the United States, 490 in Australia, 360 in Mexico, 322 in Japan, 164 in the Philippines, 131 in China, to 200–300 in most European countries (UNDP, 2006). Daily consumption of 100–200 liters per capita is considered optimal by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011). On a global scale, most domestic water consuming activities are related to hygiene purposes such as showering, bathing, using the toilet, and doing the laundry in washing machines (Gato-Trinidad et al., 2011). Watering lawns and gardens is a water-demanding activity too, particularly in warm and dry conditions (Hurd, 2006).

The Philippines is made up of 7,100 islands, many of which are small. While most of these islands have rich biodiversity, many have fragile ecosystems and very limited fresh water resources. They also face the continuing threat of isolation from the mainland, being located far from political and economic centers. When natural disasters hit the

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Philippines, small islands are usually the most severely affected by the immediate and long-term impacts. They are also the least served given their remoteness. This is compounded by poor transportation and communication networks, the lack of measures for disaster preparedness, and unfavorable physical, social and political conditions. The small islands usually have areas ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 square kilometers; have considerable distance from the mainland; and have high volcanic and low atoll islands. Their soil profiles consist of limestone, corals, bedrock, volcanic mixed, and unconsolidated consisting of sand, silt, and mud (Christian Aid Philippines, 2011). These profile characteristics are among the reasons for the islands' limited fresh water resources.

Water use is the utilization of water for agriculture, industry, energy production and household, including instream uses such as for fishing, recreation, transportation and waste disposal (UN, 1997). As described by Reig (2013) in the World Resources Institute, water use is the total amount of water drawn from its source to be used. Domestic water use (USGS, 2015) is the use of water for indoor and outdoor household purposes: drinking, preparing food, bathing, washing clothes and dishes, brushing one's teeth, watering the garden, and bathing the dog. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), domestic water use refers to the amount of water that is "self-supplied," or water drawn directly by users, such as from a well at a person's home. Commercial water use, on the other hand, refers to 'water used for motels, hotels, restaurants, office buildings, other commercial facilities, and institutions. Water for commercial uses comes both from public-supplied sources, such as a county water department, and self-supplied sources, such as local wells.'

Water reuse (also commonly known as water recycling or water reclamation) refers to the process of reclaiming water from a variety of sources then treating and reusing it for agriculture and irrigation, potable water supplies, groundwater replenishment, industrial

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processes, and environmental restoration.  In this study, water reuse refers to the use of water more than once before it is allowed to move back into the natural water cycle.  For households, this may include the reuse of water after doing the laundry, washing the dishes, and  taking a bath.  For businesses, this may include the use of waste water after water purification or distillation for water refilling stations and the reuse of water after dish/utensils washing for food eateries.

In the Philippines, about 80% of water provided to households becomes wastewater (WB, 2003) and only 10 percent of this, is treated (NEDA and DOH, 2010).  Yet, water reuse can avoid or delay expensive development of new water storage and supply infrastructure required to address growing water scarcity in the country (ARCOWA, 2018).

Water conservation is the practice of using water efficiently to reduce unnecessary water usage (Constellation, 2020). This includes utilizing household water-saving devices (e.g., low-flow shower heads; water efficient washing machine), using the right amount of water, and maintenance of water facilities.

Access to domestic water is taken for granted by many with little regard to its sustainability, and approaching scarcity.  Many countries are vulnerable to water scarcity and have no access to domestic water.  There are shortages and increasing demands for domestic water due to  the continuing increase in population. Availability of a reliable source of water is integral to healthy living.  Unfortunately, on a daily basis, large amounts of water are wasted from normal household activities.  A certain percentage of this daily wastage may be saved if simple measures are implemented to change the way a typical household uses water.  Water wastage does not only affect the availability of wholesome water but also increases expenditure.  Majority of households have common knowledge that in practice, the more water is used, the higher are the payment rates.   Although present needs are being met, measures must be put in place to ensure that the future is

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not compromised if similar needs are to be sustainable.  Water reuse and conservation are necessary and should  be implemented to save this valuable resource.

The effective management practices for the sustainability of water sources for the present and future generations are serious considerations. Water is a very important resource that we cannot live without.  According to Gundo Weiler (WHO, 2019), around one to ten Filipinos are still  left behind in terms of access to improved water sources, especially in rural communities.  Intermittent and inadequate water supplies are still  experienced by those who have access.  However, to cope with these challenges, the World Health Organization (WHO) is working with the Philippine Department of Health and other sector agencies to ensure water supply for all.  Strategies such as the application of improved rain water collection systems and state-of-the-art desalination technologies, coupled with renewable energies, can be used now in the Philippines.

The water districts and municipal-government-administered water works play a key role in the supply, distribution, and management at the local level. Historically, these water institutions have paid less attention to sanitation and have focused more on water provisioning. Insufficient public investments and mismanagement have led to serious gaps in performance. The patterns of water use in the domestic household sector follow the country's demographic distribution where urban and town centers are favored infrastructure-wise over rural and urbanizing areas (De Vera and Hall, 2018).

The World Resources Institute (WRI), through its Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas Tool Projected Country Water Stress Ranking for 2040 under Business-as-Usual Scenario, ranked the Philippines at 57th place with an over-all water stress rating of 3.01 (high) and a rating for the industrial, domestic, and agricultural sector of  2.96 (medium high), 2.92 (medium high) and 3.26 (high), respectively.  It gave Guimaras Island  an Overall Water Risk rating of 3-4 (High Risk) and Leyte Island  a rating of 2-3 (Medium High).  Overall

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water risk measures all water-related risks by aggregating all selected indicators from the Physical Quantity, Quality and Regulatory and Reputational Risk categories. Higher values indicate higher water risk. Physical risks quantity measures risk related to too little or too much water, by aggregating all selected indicators from the Physical Risk Quantity category. Physical risks quality, on the other hand, measures risk related to water that is unfit for use, by aggregating all selected indicators from the Physical Risk Quality category. Regulatory and reputational risks category measures risk related to uncertainty in regulatory change, as well as conflicts with the public regarding water issues. Higher values indicate higher physical quantity, quality, and regulatory and reputational water risks (WRI Aqueduct, 2019). Furthermore, Aqueduct projected that by 2030 and 2040, Guimaras 'Overall Water Risk Rating is medium to high and that of Leyte is high for both 2030 and 2040. Projections of increasing water scarcity in these two island communities in the Philippines provide a scenario which calls for immediate action. There is a need to enable these islands 'economies and populations to grow without exacerbating water stress. Their households and business owners can contribute significantly in solving water scarcity by reducing their water use, in the same way that most water scarce countries reduce water demand by reusing and conserving water. There is, however, a dearth of researches on how island communities in the country manage the use of water in their household and business. Information on the reuse and conservation of water is also wanting.

## Objectives of the Study

This study deals with the practices of household and business owners on water reuse and conservation in small island communities in the Philippines. Specifically, it aims to:

    I.   identify how households and business owners reuse water;

    II.   identify the water conservation practices of households and business owners; and

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III. find out the institutional arrangements that promote or do not promote water reuse and conservation.

## Methods

### *Description of the Study Sites*

The Province of Guimaras is composed of a mainland which comprises about 98% of the total provincial area and clusters of small islands and 42 islets.  It is an island surrounded by bodies of water, the largest of which, is the Guimaras Strait, which is considered very essential for navigation and other economic activities.  It has two major watershed areas, the western and eastern watershed, and  has three major river systems namely, Mantangingi, Sibunag, and Cabano (Guimaras Province, n.d.).

Guimaras has Corona's Type I climate characterized by two pronounced seasons: the dry season between the months of November and April, and the rainy or wet season during the rest of the year. As of 2018, 93.82% of the households in Guimaras have access to safe water supply (NEDA, 2018).

The Province of Leyte is located in the Eastern Visayas Region.  It is situated west of Samar Island, north of Southern Leyte, south of Biliran and east of the Camotes Sea.  It consists of 40 municipalities and 1,393 barangays.  It is the site of the largest geothermal plant in Asia, making it one of the resource-rich provinces of the Philippines. It has  two types of climate.  The eastern part has Type II climate characterized by  a very pronounced rainfall from November to January.  The Western portion   has Type IV climate with a rainfall that is more or less distributed throughout the year (Leyte Province, n.d.).

As of 2014, the proportion of households with access to safe water supply in Eastern Visayas was quite sizeable at 84 percent which is equivalent to 646,349 households. However, looking at the type of source, only around one-third of the households had individual  connections (Level 3). For the Province of Leyte, 32.77%, 31.07% and 36.165%

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of households had Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 water sources, respectively. The current dominant water sourcing is still the communal type (Levels 1 and 2), which is usually shared by three or more households at the water outlet. Accessing water from this source is more inconvenient, especially for women users. On the other hand, cities and municipalities with Level 3 water source still suffer from problems like insufficient quantity and unsafe quality due to old and outdated piping system. The potable water supply situation of the region is thus in great need of improvement (NEDA, 2017).

### Sampling Design and Procedure

The study was conducted following the purposive cluster sampling method which involved creating a cluster of sample communities and purposively selecting respondents within a sample. There were a total of 300 respondents equally divided to the two provinces of Leyte and Guimaras. There were 15 sample communities for each province and there were a total of 10 respondents per sample community. These respondents were purposively selected to comprise 7 household owners and 3 business owners.

### Selection of Respondents

The respondents who answered the self-administered survey were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The household and business owners must be residents of the identified sample communities in the two Provinces (Guimaras and Leyte).
2. The household owner respondent must be of legal age (18 years old and above).
3. The household owner respondent must preferably be the head of the family or someone having knowledge on the household's practices on water reuse and conservation.

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4. The business owner respondent must be of legal age (18 years old and above) and operating a small-and-medium enterprise and local business establishments on the harvest, and protection system.

5. The business owner respondent must preferably be the owner or the head or manager of the business.

### *Research Methods and Design*

The study was conducted from October 2018 to March 2019. The descriptive method was employed using several methodologies including self-administered survey, focus group discussion, key informant interview, and secondary data collection.

1. Self-administered survey

Two types of questionnaires were used: one for the household owner and one for the business owner. The questionnaires for both included the following information: the source of water, volume of water used per day, age and condition of the water system, maintenance, water treatment, incentives that promote better water management, and measures to conserve and reuse water.

2. Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD was conducted with stakeholders to bring into the surface, the socio-behavioral dynamics of water use, access and wastewater discharge. The stakeholders included 10 to 12 participants representing the households, sectors, the water manager, SMEs, local business establishments, the non-government organization (NGO), and the local government unit (LGU).

3. Key Informant Interview

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The interviewed key informants represented the water organization manager and the water infrastructure funders.

a. The  Key Informants (KIs) were selected based on the following criteria:

   1. Must be management level officers of the water organization (Local Water Districts, Water Providers) and fund sources for water infrastructures like the LGUsand Government Agencies.

   2. Must have first-hand knowledge about the community, its residents, and issues or problems on water management of the community under survey.

b. Questions asked from the Key Informants covered the following parameters:

   1. Extent of service area in terms of water users (number of household for HH users and businesses for commercial users) and quantity of water being supplied.

   2. Source of water  and the environmental programs for its protection.

   3. Data on water balance  (quantity and source capacity of water vis-a-vis withdrawal capacity and distribution)

   4. Types and status of existing infrastructure in water distribution (pipes, wells, treatment facilities, dams)

   5. Water sampling schedules and parameters of water quality monitoring (secondary data collection from Key Informants to include data on results of BOD, DO, Fecal Coliform, TSS and other water quality tests required for potable water tests).

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6. Pricing mechanism for water users (minimum cost, incentives for lower consumption, others), pricing categories for business compared to households, payment systems and options for water users.

7. Policies on water reuse.

8. Policies on water conservation.

9. Wastewater infrastructure and plans- to include existing or on the pipeline projects for sewerage and septage facilities.

10. Policy recommendations for government permit processors on water extraction permits.

11. Recommendations for HH and business water users in terms of reuse and conservation practices.

4. Secondary Data Review

Secondary data were gathered from the water organization budget and accomplishment reports, related local ordinances, contracts, memorandum of agreements (MOA), and barangay government documents of the sample communities per province.

*Data Collection and Analysis*

The data gathered included the types of water connections or sources, perception on whether there is enough water to use; the water reuse practices; water conservation practice, and the institutional arrangements that promote or do not promote water conservation and reuse. These data were compared between households and business owners. The data gathered were analyzed using means, frequencies and percentages.

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Figure 1 shows the methodological framework of the study.
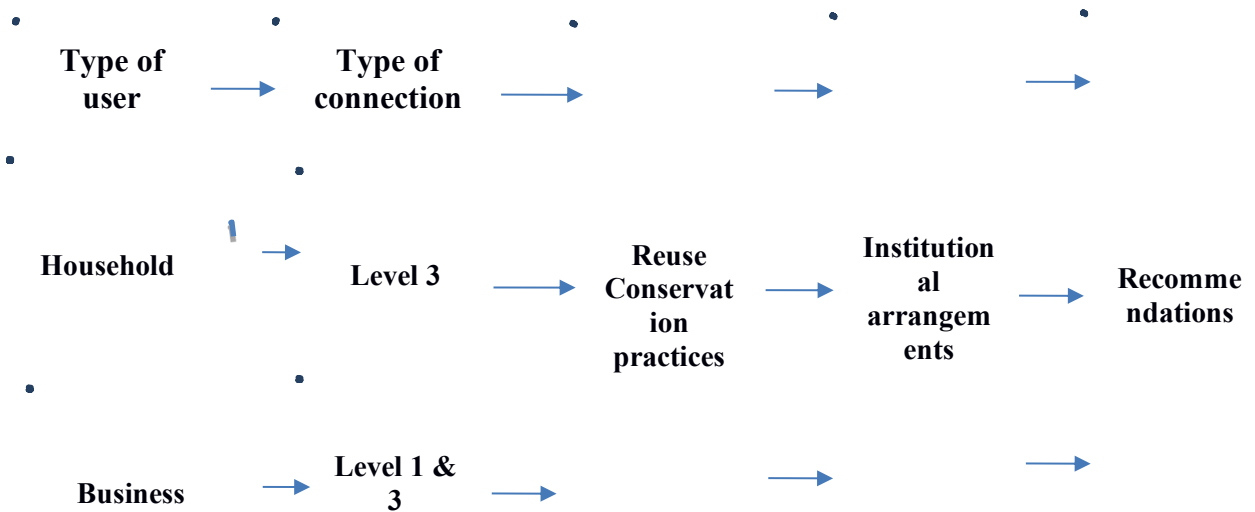


**Figure 1.** Methodological framework of the study.

## Results and Discussion

### *Type of water connections and perception as to its availability*

Thirty percent of the households and 40% of the business owners have Level 3 connections. Most, however, have a combination of Level 3 and 1 connection as reported by 59.5% of the households and 38.9% of the businesses (Table 1). The combined connections provide assurance of water availability especially when there is shortage of water during the dry season. This further ensures that the households have improved source of drinking water. According to the results of the 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS), 94% of the 24 million Filipino families in the urban (97%) and rural (91%) areas have improved source of drinking water. Residents in rural areas are more likely to have unimproved source of drinking water than those in urban areas (9.1% vs 2.6%). Almost four in every five families (77%) do not practice any method or treatment in ensuring that their drinking water is safe to drink. On the sufficiency and accessibility of drinking water, majority (88%) of the families reported that drinking water is sufficient

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while four percent of families claimed that they are unable to obtain sufficient water because it is not available from source. Three in every four families (75%) obtain their drinking water within the premises or within their yard/plot. Families in urban areas have their water sources within their premises (87%) compared with families in rural areas (63%) (PSA, 2019). Despite the availability of tap water, households have different sources of water for drinking and non-drinking purposes (Jiang & Rohendi, 2018).

**Table 1.**

*Types of water connections by household and business owner in Guimaras and Leyte.*

| Connection | Household | | Business Owner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | % of total respondents N= 210 | Frequency | % of total respondents N= 90 |
| Level 3 only | 63 | 30.0 | 36 | 40.0 |
| Level 3 and Level 1 | 125 | 59.5 | 35 | 38.9 |
| Total | 168 | | 71 | |

Majority of households (86.70%) and business owners (84.51%) think that there is enough water to use (Table 2).

**Table 2.**

*Perception on whether there is enough water to use.*

| Is there enough water to use? | Household | | Business Owner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Yes | 163 | 86.70 | 60 | 84.51 |
| No | 25 | 13.30 | 11 | 15.49 |

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*Water reuse by household and business*

It is anticipated that climate change will decrease the reliability of water supplies, due to reductions in rainfall, and the increasing variability of rainfall events (IPCC, 2007).  Water reuse can avoid or delay the need for expensive development of new water storage and supply infrastructure  to address the growing water scarcity in the Philippines (ARCOWA, 2018). The reuse and conservation of water resources is therefore becoming increasingly important.

Majority (73.0%) of those who said that there is enough water to use or are satisfied with the volume available,  say they reuse.

While majority (63.3%) of the households reuse water, only 45.1% of business owners do so.).  There is a marked difference in the water reuse between Guimaras and Leyte for both households and businesses. The data show that business owners  are less inclined to reuse compared to households (Table 3).

The water service providers (water districts and LGU) do not provide wastewater collection and disposal facilities for households in the study sites due to financial constraints; their priority is to extend coverage of Level 3 connections.  This is despite the provision in the Clean Water Act (RA 9275) of  2004, Sec. 20) that LGUs shall share the responsibility in the management and improvement of water quality within their territorial jurisdiction (Sec. 20) and shall appropriate necessary land for the construction of the sewage and/or septage treatment facilities in accordance with the Local Government Code.  In the case of highly urbanized cities (HUCs) non-HUCs and LGUs where water districts, water utilities and LGU water works have been constituted and operational, the water supply utility provider shall be responsible for the sewerage facilities and the main lines pursuant to P.D. No. 198 and other relevant laws.  The results of this study corroborate with the findings of another research that while Local

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Government Units (LGUs) recognize the need to develop wastewater treatment, they are constrained by high investment and operating costs. Unaware of the benefits of proper wastewater treatment, the citizens are largely unwilling to pay for sanitation and wastewater treatment services. Also, the limited availability of space for sewer lines and wastewater treatment facilities especially in densely populated, low-income areas, result in sewage being disposed of indiscriminately. In addition, most of the government budget available for water services is directed towards the provision of water supply services (97 %), leading to a lack of financing available for sewerage and sanitation (WB, 2003).

**Table 3.**

*Water reuse by household and business owner.*

| Response | Household | | Business Owner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | % | F | % |
| Yes | 119 | 63.3 | 32 | 45.1 |
| No | 69 | 36.7 | 37 | 52.1 |
| No response | | | 2 | 2.8 |
| Total | 188 | 100.0 | 71 | 100.0 |

***Water reuse practices by households and business owners***

Water reuse refers to the use of water more than once before it is allowed to move back into the natural water cycle.  For households, this may include the reuse of water after doing the laundry, washing the dishes, and taking a bath.  For businesses, this may include reuse of waste water after water purification or distillation for water refilling stations and reuse of water after dish/utensils washing for food establishments.  Table 4 shows the water reuse practices by households and business owners.  Households reuse water mainly for flushing the toilet (78.2%), watering plants (63%) and cleaning floors

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(30.3%). Business owners reuse water mainly for watering plants (75%), flushing the toilet (56.3%) and cleaning floors (31.3%). One LGU is proposing for fire hydrants using wastewater from drinking water bottlers.

**Table 4.**

*Water reuse practices*

| Water Reuse | Household (n = 119) | | Business owner (n = 32) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | % | F | % |
| Watering plants | 75 | 63.0 | 24 | 75.0 |
| Flushing the toilet | 93 | 78.2 | 18 | 56.3 |
| Cleaning floors | 36 | 30.3 | 10 | 31.3 |
| Washing vehicles | 12 | 10.1 | 4 | 12.5 |
| Cleaning animal (chicken, pig, dog etc.) pens | 4 | 3.4 | 1 | 3.1 |
| Others (wetting the road, washing hands, cleaning the toilet) | 1 | 0.8 | 2 | 6.3 |

On a global scale, most domestic water consuming activities are related to hygiene purposes such as showering, bathing, flushing the toilet, and machine laundry washing (Gato-Trinidad et al., 2011). Industries in the Philippines reuse wastewater for cleaning pipes or drainage canals, cleaning toilets, watering plants, and extinguishing fires (JICA, 2008 as cited by ARCOWA, 2018).

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*Water conservation by households and business owners*

Ensuring a nation's long term water supply requires the use of both supply-sided approaches such as water augmentation through water recycling or reuse and demand-sided approaches such as water conservation (Dolnicar, et.al., 2012). Majority of the respondent households (73.9%) and businesses (60.6%) practice water conservation (Table 5).

**Table 5.**

*Water conservation by households and businesses*

| Response | Household | | Business Owner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | % | F | % |
| Yes | 139 | 73.9 | 43 | 60.6 |
| No | 49 | 26.1 | 28 | 39.4 |
| Total | 188 | 100.0 | 71 | 100.0 |

## *Water conservation practices by households and business owners*

Water conservation practices among households and businesses are almost similar (Table 6). All households have containers filled with water to control volume of water used. Most have scheduled washing of clothes in bulk (44.6%) and a considerable percentage (36%) recycle water. Among businesses, almost 50% have containers filled with water to control volume used. Others control water use by turning-off faucets when not in use (41.9%) and over one fourth reuse water. There are some areas in Guimaras island whose residents have acquired Level 3 connections recently and have rainwater storage in their homes. The anticipated decline on water availability during the dry season is one of the reasons for conserving water.

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**Table 6.**

*Water conservation measures by households and business owners.*

| Conservation Measures | Household (n = 139) | | Business Owner (n = 43) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | % | F | % |
| Having a container filled with water to control volume used | 100 | 71.9 | 20 | 46.5 |
| Scheduling the washing of clothes in bulk | 62 | 44.6 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Reusing water | 50 | 36.0 | 12 | 27.9 |
| Having low volume toilets | 13 | 9.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Controlling water use (turning off faucets when not in use) | 2 | 1.4 | 18 | 41.9 |
| Scheduling the washing of dishes | 2 | 1.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Using rainwater | 1 | 0.7 | 1 | 2.3 |

***Institutional arrangements that promote or do not promote water conservation/reuse***

In the two island communities, the payment schemes do not offer incentives to conservation and reuse. This is because only a small amount is paid in cash for the actual volume of water used.

In terms of payment arrangement, the Level 3 water facilities provide a minimum or flat rate for the amount of water used.

Water refilling businesses that extract from ground sources have a considerable wastewater that is not reused and is just disposed in open canals. They have no provision on what to do with wastewater.

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Household conservation of water is limited by storage size since the receptacles used which are mainly plastic or tin, have less than a 10-liter capacity. The households 'ability to conserve water is thus restricted by the capacity of their containers. Households' conservation and reuse of water is not habitual and is done only in times of water scarcity.

Some incentives given by authorities to conserve water include free use of water during fiestas and wakes. Materials to promote conservation are not available to create awareness among stakeholders.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Households and businesses in the small island communities in Guimaras and Leyte practice reuse and conservation measures. Households reuse water for flushing the toilet, watering plants, and cleaning floors. Businesses likewise reuse water for watering plants, flushing the toilet, and cleaning floors.

As to water conservation practices, all households have containers filled with water to control the volume of water used. Most households have scheduled washing of clothes in bulk and a considerable percentage of recycled water. Almost one-half of the businesses have containers filled with water to control volume used. Others control water use by turning-off faucets when not in use. Over one fourth of the businesses reuse water.

The payment schemes do not provide incentives for conservation and reuse. Water refilling businesses that extract from ground sources have a considerable wastewater that is not reused. Household conservation of water is limited by storage size since the receptacles used which are mainly plastic or tin, have less than a 10-liter capacity.

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Based on the results of the study, materials to promote conservation are not available to create awareness among stakeholders. Thus, the local government units (LGUs) may consider launching education campaigns to create or increase awareness. The IEC materials may promote other innovative and effective ways of reusing and conserving water. An unimpressive water reuse and conservation practices in the two island communities can be improved by providing economic incentives, technical improvements, or policy instruments and regulation.

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# WP SERIES 4

# PRESIDENTIAL POWER FROM A PUBLIC LENS
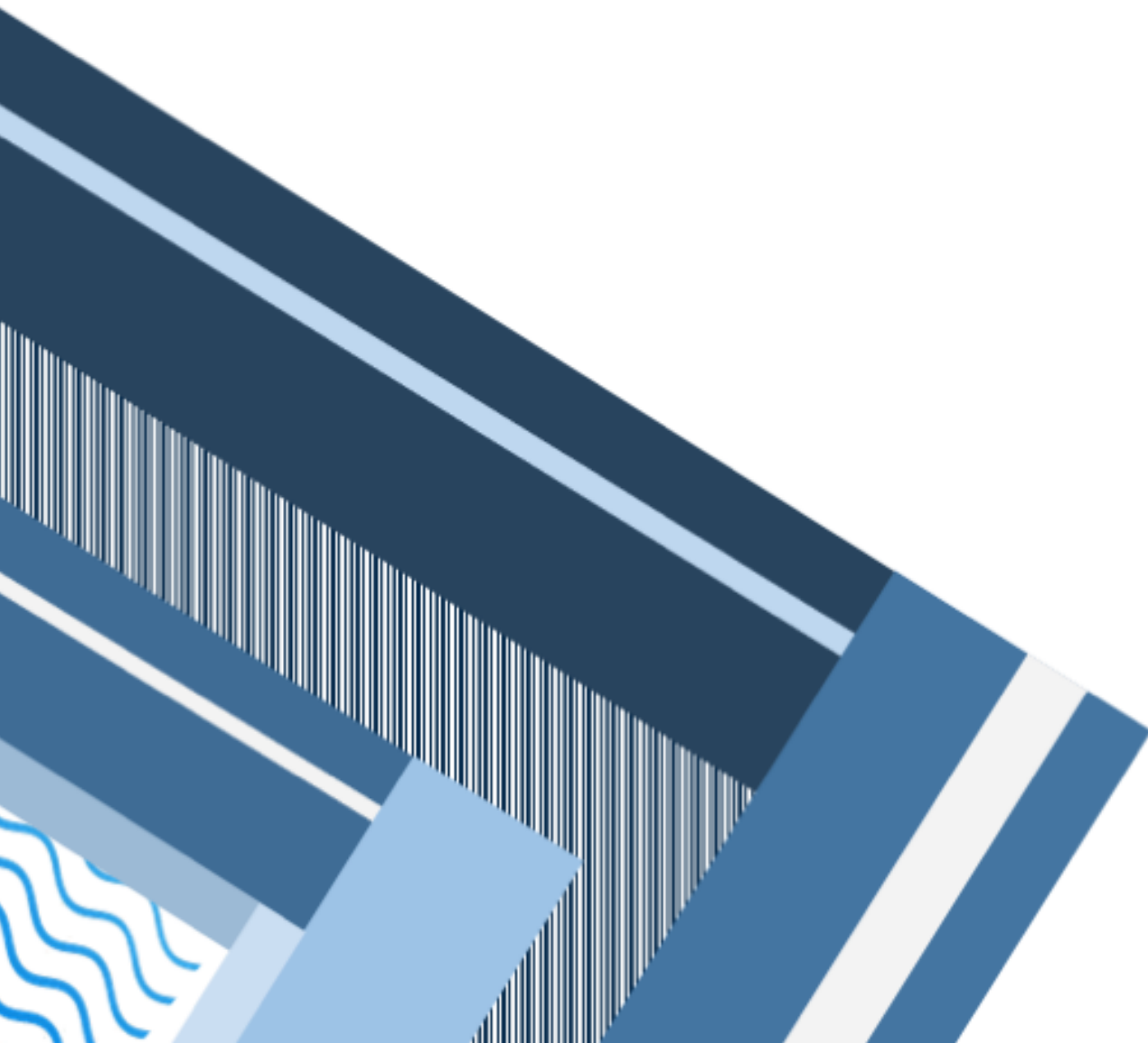
# Press Politics: Presidential Approval and the Production of Media Political Events in the Philippines From 1992-2016

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Mass media act as watchdogs of the government. They keep our leaders in check by lowering the costs of political information for the average citizen and by making abuses of power known to the public. Because of this, a cornerstone for democracy is a free and independent media. Investigative journalism has always thrived in Philippine history due to constitutional guarantees for press freedom, the risk-taking nature of journalists, and the country's unique history of private and nonpartisan media ownership (Coronel, 2010). From the anti-colonial newspapers of the Spanish revolution (Coronel, 2010) to the dissemination of critical news that inspired People Power movements (Pertierra, 2012), Philippine newspapers have become active players in pivotal political events.

Yet mass media have also been criticized as reactionary institutions that privilege the legitimacy claims of elites in a bid to preserve their own interests (Hurrelman et al., 2009). Despite the country's heritage of free press, journalists in the Philippines are constantly at risk of harassment, libel charges, and even media killings (INSI, 2014). Media ownership in the country is also concentrated in a small circle of conglomerates with their own business and political interests in mind (Coronel, 2001). The precarious position of journalists, along with the profit-oriented nature of Philippine broadsheets (Maslog, 2015), makes them susceptible to political and economic pressures. Coined as "envelopmental journalism", it has become common practice for journalists to receive envelopes of cash in exchange for positive portrayals of politicians or face the risk of losing their jobs due to critical reports (Chua & Datinguinoo, 1998).

Because of the inherent vulnerabilities in the profession, Davis (2006) has called today's press a "scandal machine" that produces political scandals and crises for its own gains.

Exclusive coverage of a political event offers an opportunity for profit and career advancement for the journalist (Thompson, 2000; Allern & Pollack, 2012). Journalists also deal with the competition of the 24-hour news cycle and the internet (Davis, 2006). There is then a tendency for the watchdog role of the press to be instrumentalized in what Thompson (2000) calls the "politics of trust". Here, politics is driven by reputation and personality rather than policies and performance. Political competition is not just limited to campaigns that attract voters. Competition can also take place in judicial investigations and media revelations that discredit political opponents. When reported on a national scale, scandals and crises become powerful means for the opposition to hurt the credibility of the incumbent.

The willingness of the press to publish political scandals, however, would depend on the sentiment of the audience. Criticizing a popular president poses the risk of excluding a portion of the audience that is satisfied with the former's performance. Moreover, reporting on critical news that lacks evidence and support could threaten the credibility of the journalist and even the broadsheet that publishes it (Entman, 2010). Thus, members of the press are forced to become strategic in their coverage of political events. Being responsive to the type of news demanded by their audience, journalists may hesitate to publish negatively about a popular president and may tend to be critical of unpopular presidents. Thus, this study asks the question: *Does public approval for the presidency, amidst competing coordinate institutions, affect the production of political events by the Philippine press?*

Political events are scandals or crises that have the potential to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the president. Aside from presidential approval, we examine four other factors that could affect its production. First, political events may be crowded out by more popular reports such as those on natural calamities, celebrity deaths and important national events that demand immediate news coverage. Since news firms deal with limited resources, reports on political events are saved for slow news days whenever spontaneous and popular stories dominate the news agenda (Nyhan, 2014; 2017). Second, national elections often bring heightened interest in politicians and can induce greater demand for reports on political scandals and crises. Third, the news slant of the publishing news firm can also influence the likelihood of political events in being published. Fourth, the president's control over the members of the legislature can affect the willingness of political insiders to speak negatively about the president to the media. The possible sources of information on political events can be compromised when the majority of the legislature belong to the same party as the president.

To test this, we used negative binomial regression analysis on the propensity of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Manila Bulletin to frame political events as scandals or crises from 1992 to 2016. The time frame covered the administrations of Fidel V. Ramos (1992-1998), Joseph Estrada (1998-2000), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010), and Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016). We limited our analysis to the two broadsheets because they are the most widely read broadsheets in the country and arguably represent two contrasting journalistic traditions. Our empirical study suggests that political events are more likely to be published during national elections and whenever the president is less popular than the Congress. Moreover, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, which prides itself in being part of the dissenting press tradition, is more likely to publish political events compared to the Manila Bulletin.

This paper proceeds in five parts. In the first section, we discuss the state of print news in the Philippines and its role in the creation of political events. The second section tackles the relationship between the presidency and the media. Despite being an attractive

target for sensational coverage, popular presidents are insulated from negative news because of the strategic decisions of the press. We expound on other political and economic variables that could affect the production of political events in the third section. In the fourth section, we lay down the case selection, data gathering process, and estimation approach used in the study. The fifth section shows the results of our estimates. Among the variables, we find that presidential approval in relation to Congress approval, the type of broadsheet, and national elections are significant predictors for the production of political events by the press. We then conclude with the implications of the study as well as its limitations and areas for future research.

## The Philippine Press and Political Events

Even though other forms of media receive greater exposure and advertisements, print newspapers stand as a leading source of political information in the Philippines. Citizens tend to subscribe to television and radio as a form of entertainment while newspapers are treated as shortcuts to political events (Pertierra, 2012). Mirandilla (2009) has also shown how, despite social media and online platforms, traditional media still remain as a source for political information among citizens and targets for the campaign strategies of politicians. Indeed, print newspapers have been recognized for their role in mobilizing citizens by infusing political events with symbolic meanings and uniting them under a common narrative (Edelman, 1988). Empirical studies have shown how newspaper framing can affect the citizens' perception of the political event as well as their expectations from those in charge (Maier et al., 2019). The use of controversial language such as 'scandal' (Nyhan, 2014; Puglisi et al., 2011) or 'torture' (Bennet et al., 2006) has also been studied as elite cues that direct the responses of the public. Because of this, scholars have advocated for a media-oriented constructivist approach to studying political events (Kepplinger et al., 2012; Baugut, 2017). This approach argues that, while issues of corruption and government mishaps are a common occurrence in politics, they are only transformed into full-fledged scandals when they are investigated and publicized

by the mass media. By reporting on a political event, the media legitimize the speculation of the public and create a platform for criticisms against those involved.

News coverage of political events can then be an attractive weapon in Thompson's (2000) politics of trust. In this study, we treat political events as elite cues for a scandal or political crises that can potentially delegitimize the incumbent president. Political events are weaponized through the systematic ties between politicians and newspaper firms. The propensity of newspaper firms to publish political scandals can be driven by party orientation. In the United States, Puglisi et al. (2011) find that newspapers that have endorsed candidates under the Democratic party tend to provide greater coverage of scandals involving Republican politicians while Republican-leaning newspapers focus on scandals involving Democratic politicians. Aside from party ties, the rise of media conglomerates has also made it easier for government officials to censor media through bribery and exclusive government deals (McMillan & Zoido, 2004). In countries with an entrenched culture of clientelism such as the Philippines, networks of dependence are fostered between media conglomerates and politicians (Waisbord, 2004).

Yet government encroachment on the media does not always occur at the topmost level of decision making. Journalists on the ground face constraints in investigative reporting. Aside from the threat of violence and libel cases (INSI, 2014), journalists in the Philippines also grapple with much economic insecurity in their field (Tandoc, 2016). There is therefore great competition for breaking stories that have the potential to advance their careers and attract readers (Thompson, 2000). Exclusive coverage of political scandals is also perceived as symbolic capital that shows the journalist and the newspaper firm's commitment to the field (Allern & Pollack, 2012). Furthermore, scandals that are able to trigger political outcomes such as impeachment, the passage of laws, and mass protests reward journalists with recognition in their field and stand as proof of the newspaper firm's power over public opinion. But there are also considerable risks in publishing political scandals. Journalists put their lives and careers on the line when challenging the

reputation of politicians. In addition, high profile news reports that do not have support from political insiders can easily be dismissed as hearsay and hurt the reputation of the newspaper firm (Entman, 2010).

Thus, journalists selectively choose when to broadcast scandals or crises to the public. Publishing a political event becomes more attractive when it is salient enough to attract readership from a wide audience, and when it is backed by credible actors working within the political system. In this paper, we examine how the political context of the country, represented by the five factors below, influence the probability of journalists publishing salient political events.

## The Presidency and the Media

In a presidential system, the president and the legislature are able to stake their own claims to legitimacy due to fixed terms and separate elections (Linz, 1990). Both branches of government, endowed with their own election mandate from the people, could take opposing stances on political issues regardless of their party affiliation (Wiesehomeier & Benoit, 2009). Presidential systems are therefore vulnerable to stalemate and conflict between the executive and legislative branches. To overcome this, Philippine presidents rely on patronage and clientelist networks with the Congress to influence policy decisions and remain in power (Quimpo, 2009). An alternative is provided by Kernell (1997). Presidents can choose to negotiate with the members of Congress by "going public." Here, presidents take advantage of their reputation to gain the support of citizens for a specific policy. Popularity can then be an important bargaining chip for policy positions and even the maintenance of power. Through the politics of trust, the president and Congress actively compete for popularity by exhausting their means to censor negative news and encourage favorable portrayals of themselves.

Despite institutional equality between both branches, the president is granted preferential treatment by the press. News reports often frame the president as the center of national politics (Marshall, 2008). Regardless of the president's involvement with a political event, news would often shed light on the president's possible role in it. Among other types of political news, those that involve the president also receive the greatest amount of coverage from the press (Gilbert, 1989; Eshbaugh-Soha, 2013). These grant the presidency with immediate advantages in any political confrontation. Yet at the same time, these also make the president vulnerable to media attacks and critical news. A frequent target of sensational news, the president is treated as a caricature rather than a political leader (Gilbert, 1989). Assuming that the media is biased against them, it is common for presidents to attempt to spin or alter news stories to their liking (Cohen, 2009).

Presidents take advantage of their privileged position in the press by commanding special coverage strategically in order to cultivate political trust. Empirical studies show that the president can capitalize on press conferences and pseudo-events, such as state visits and updates on his/her life, to orchestrate favorable public opinion. Miles (2013) has shown how presidents can use televised public speeches to divert public attention from negative press. Because the news media typically cite the president in their reportage, presidents have also steered public discussion to their benefit by highlighting their achievements and downplaying negative news (Peake & Parks, 2008). Evidence for this can be found in the Philippines as politicians take advantage of their positions to stage pseudo-events like press releases and interviews to clutter public discourse (Tandoc & Skoric, 2010). According to reports by the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (2005), Philippine presidents have varied strategies in dealing with the press. Ramos tried to appeal to the media by being readily available for press conferences and offering free meals to journalists. In contrast to his predecessor, Estrada limited access to the media by refusing to attend press conferences throughout his term. Arroyo also limited her engagement with the media and tried to control press conferences by

prioritizing the questions of pro-administration journalists and preselecting questions from reporters. She also incentivized journalists to portray her favorably by offering lucrative positions to select pro-administration columnists.

Aside from actions that directly engage the press, the president can also bank on public sentiment to influence news coverage. In the Philippines, the institutionalization of public opinion polls has made them powerful enough to affect the political calculus of key actors. It is believed that politicians with high approval ratings can easily attract funders, gain positive news coverage in the press, and discourage criticism from political opponents (Chua, 2004; Hedman, 2010). Indeed, popular presidents are better able to deflect negative political events through rhetoric (Cohen & Hamman, 2003). When supporting a popular president, citizens also tend to cherry pick information that only reinforces their satisfaction with him/her (Jerit & Barabas, 2012). We can then assume that journalists would avoid publishing negatively about a popular president as it poses the risk of isolating readers as well as drawing criticism from his/her supporters. Moreover, the political event would probably be unable to incite significant political outcomes due to the president's ability to absorb its negative implications through rhetoric and public appeal. Taking into account the competing legitimacies of the executive and the legislature, we then hypothesized that:

> *H1: The press is more likely to publish critical political events when the President's public approval rating is lower than the approval ratings of the Congress.*

## Controlling for Other Determinants in the Production of Political Events

From the literature, we added five additional variables that could affect the production of political events by the press. First, we accounted for the latent characteristics of each administration in power. The relationship of each president with the press is inherently unique due to different political identities, networks of patronage, and strategies when

dealing with media personnel. Empirical studies have shown that some presidents are more affected by political events than others. Women are scrutinized and judged more harshly for corruption (Reyes-Householder, 2019) and sex scandals (Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016) than men. The president's personality and leadership type could also affect the ability to manage public confidence in times of crisis (Hart et al., 2009). Thus, we included fixed effects for each of the president's terms in all models.

Second, we controlled for news congestion. Stories compete with one another for the time and space it would take to publish them. Newspapers would then have to make the decision of how to best allocate their resources in covering different types of news. In doing so, they end up selecting what stories are newsworthy and deserving of public recognition and what stories are not. Previous qualitative studies have shown how important stories compete with political events in drawing attention and demand for more information (Eisensee & Stromberg, 2007; Robinson, 2007). News congestion can therefore inhibit the production of political events. According to Nyhan's (2014; 2017) slow news hypothesis, the production of political events would depend on the amount of competing news stories that need media coverage at the same time as the political event. When another story dominates public discussion, journalists are compelled to give the audience what they want and prioritize that story over the political event. To optimize the attention received by the political event, they may even strategically save information on it for a slow news day.

For an event to be treated as news congestion, it must fulfill two criteria. One, it must be completely exogenous from presidential approval and from political events. This is to ensure that there would be no issues of multicollinearity in the model. News stories that discuss the government and the national economy are therefore not included in this variable. Two, it must be salient enough to generate audience demand on its own. In order to get this, we used Newman & Forcehimes' (2010) criteria for a salient event. An

event can be considered as important if it appears thrice in the front pages of mainstream newspapers in a given month. With this, we hypothesized that:

*H2: An increase in news congestion decreases the likelihood that*

*the press will publish critical political events.*

Third, we took into account the timing considered by journalists when publishing political events. National elections are highly emotional wherein the politics of trust is at its most intense. In delegative democracies such as the Philippines, elections are treated as a zero-sum game for political power among elites (O'Donnell, 1994). It becomes an attractive time for releasing political scandals since these have the potential to alter the outcome of being elected into office (Hernandez & Kriesi, 2016; Pereira & Waterbury, 2018). With politics at the forefront of public discussions, political events that are published during elections are also ensured of broad readership and continued demand. We then hypothesized that:

*H3: There is an increase in the likelihood that critical political*

*events are published during election periods.*

Fourth, we controlled for the type of broadsheet that publishes these political events. Philippine journalism is split in two between those who collaborate with the government and those who give voice to the dissent of the people (Castro, 1967). For Coronel (2001), these contradictory traditions define the character of Philippine journalism today. The Philippine Daily Inquirer takes pride in its role as part of the dissenting press tradition. Compared to other broadsheets, it gives a platform for dissenting voices such as civil society groups and opposition elites (CMFA, 2005; Hoon et al.., 2016). While it has its roots in being a highly critical broadsheet during Martial law, it must also be noted that the Philippine Daily Inquirer has a history of ownership by economic elites like the Prieto-Rufino family and the Pangilinan family. Moreover, it is worth noting that the Inquirer has also been criticized for treating presidents differently. Meanwhile, the Manila Bulletin claims to promote political neutrality. Despite this, its tendency to rely on government officials and political insiders for news coverage may skew its coverage to the opinions

and beliefs that are typically aligned with the administration (Hoon et al.., 2016; Seraca, 2018). This could also mean that the Manila Bulletin is much more conservative in its use of controversial labels for conflict within the government. Thus, we hypothesized that:

> *H4: The Philippine Daily Inquirer is more likely to publish critical*
>
> *political events than the Manila Bulletin.*

Last, we controlled for the willingness of political insiders to support allegations of scandals and crises published by the press. In order to do this, we included the partisan ties of the president to members of the legislature. Party affiliations in the Philippines act as patronage networks that secure the politicians' chances at elections as well as their access to pork barrel (Quimpo, 2009). Politicians belonging to the president's party would then protect the reputation of the president and suppress further investigations into misconduct in order to preserve their interests. News coverage on political events in times when the presidential party dominates the Congress would then have little impact on politics and rarely receive support from other political actors. Moreover, allegations of misconduct may remain as allegations only. When this happens, the credibility of the journalist and the newspaper firm could be compromised. We then hypothesized that:

> *H5: An increase in the percentage of presidential party members*
>
> *in the Senate and House of Representatives decreases the*
>
> *propensity of the press to publish critical political events.*

## Data and Method

In this study, we examined how the publication of political events by the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Manila Bulletin was shaped by political contexts from 1992 to 2016. This time frame covered the administrations of Fidel V. Ramos (1992-1998), Joseph Ejercito Estrada (1998-2001), Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-2010), and Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016). We started with Ramos' victory in the 1992 elections since this marked the first national elections in the country under the new Constitution. An electoral mandate

is a crucial factor in the president's legitimacy in a delegative democracy (O'Donnell, 1984). We ended with Aquino's term because it is the most recently concluded presidential term in the country. We limited our analysis to the front page headlines of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Manila Bulletin. As discussed, these two are the most widely read broadsheets in the country and represent contrasting journalistic traditions. The front page is treated as "the show window" (Fourie, 2001, p. 346) of the newspaper since it contains the most intriguing issues of the day. Meanwhile, headlines are considered as relevance optimizers. They are the most read parts of an article and can often summarize its entirety in a few words (Dor, 2003). With this, we are able to focus on the most salient political events in the country. These events are the ones that journalists believe are of great importance to their audience and the ones in which they have invested their resources.

For news data, we made use of constructed week sampling to maximize efficiency as well as to control for cyclical biases in weekly news patterns. This is a type of stratified random sampling which results in a sample that is able to represent the characteristics of newspapers in all the days of the week (Luke & Caburnay, 2011). In a constructed week sample, all Mondays are identified, one is randomly selected from this set of days, and then this is repeated for all the days of the week. Although one constructed week can already represent a six-month period (Riffe et al., 1993; Riffe et al., 2006; Hester & Dougall, 2007), this could miss important short-term events. Because of this, we relied on two constructed weeks as a representative of a quarter (3 months) of headlines to include these short-term events.

Our empirical model would then be:

$$Political\ Event = B_0 + B_1 presidentialapprovalratio + B_2 newscongestion + B_3 administration + B_4 elections + B_5 broadsheet + B_6 presidentialpartyincongress + u$$

*Political Event* is a discrete count variable that refers to the number of political events successfully produced in a month. For a news story to be considered as a salient political

event, it must directly talk about the president or the government and it must also be labelled as a "scandal" or a "crisis" by the press in a given month. This would be taken from the sample of headlines generated through constructed week sampling. From these headlines, we gathered those that had the keywords "scandal" and "crisis." To expand our observations, we also included close synonyms such as "controversy" and "scam." Afterwards, we disregarded headlines that did not concern the incumbent president. Finally, we coded the political event variable as "1" if there was one or more political events in a given month, and "0" if there were none.

*Presidential approval ratio* is measured as the ratio of presidential approval to Congress approval. Both measures were taken from the quarterly surveys of the Social Weather Station (SWS). For presidential approval, SWS respondents were asked the question: "Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are in the performance of *[name of president]* as President of the Philippines. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, undecided, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?" Afterwards, the percent of dissatisfied responses were subtracted from the percent of satisfied responses. Those who were undecided, did not know, or refused to answer were removed from the computation. For the legislature, respondents were asked the question: "Based on their overall performance, how do you feel about the performance of the following government institutions?" Similar to presidential satisfaction, the percent of dissatisfied responses were subtracted from the percent of satisfied responses and those who were undecided, did not know, or refused to answer were removed from the computation. From these, we computed for the main independent variable of the study which was the proportion of presidential popularity to the popularity of the legislature. This was done by dividing the net satisfaction ratings of the president over the net satisfaction ratings of the legislature. A value greater than one means that the president is more popular than the Congress while a value less than one indicates the opposite. This is then interpolated on a monthly basis and logged by month to reduce the possibility of endogeneity between the media political event and presidential approval.

*News Congestion* refers to the number of events that could compete with media political events for space in newspapers. This is also gathered from data generated through constructed week sampling. Events are considered as news congestion when they are important for the nation and exogenous from politics. To get this, we adapted the selection criteria of Newman & Forcehimes (2010): an event is considered as important if it appears in the front pages of a national newspaper at least three times in a given month. We then restricted our events to those that did not have anything to do with politics, the economy, and the social welfare of the country. The number of competing events was then added on a monthly basis and coded as a continuous variable. A list of news congestion events can be found in Appendix 2.

*Administration* is a dummy categorical variable that controls for the individual impact of each president's term on the likelihood of the production of media events. With this, we coded the administration variable as "1" during Ramos' term, "2" during Estrada's term, "3" during Arroyo's term, and "4" during Aquino's term.

*Elections* is a dummy categorical variable that is coded as "1" during the years of national elections and coded as "0" in the remaining months.

*Broadsheet* is a dummy categorical variable that controls for the broadsheet that publishes these media events. This is coded as "1" if the headline comes from the front pages of the Manila Bulletin and "2" if the headline comes from the front pages of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

*Presidential party in Congress* is a continuous variable that is operationalized as the percentage of members of the Senate and House of Representatives that belongs to the incumbent president's political party. To get this, we simply divided the members of the

presidential party by the total number of members in the Senate and House of Representatives, then multiplied this by 100.

To test this, we made use of a negative binomial regression model which described the probabilities of the occurrence of discrete outcomes. This is the most appropriate estimation approach given that the dependent variable of our study, the presence of political events, is a count variable with over dispersion. The following section shows the results of our study.

## Results and Discussion

A descriptive summary of the variables can be found in Table 1. Through constructed week sampling, we were able to gather 24,483 headlines with 5,277 headlines on political events and 4,520 headlines on news congestion events. A list of political events and news congestion events can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively. With months as our unit of analysis, political events were found in 20.72% of the months under study. The Philippine Daily Inquirer reported 80 political events while the Manila Bulletin reported on only 41 political events. This aligns with our hypothesis that the broadsheet type could affect the production of political events by the press.

For crisis periods, both broadsheets produced more news on economic crises than on political crises. This makes sense given that the time frame of the study included the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2000 global recession. Frequent themes were the unstable power supply, issues on constitutional change, and perceived threats to democracy. To illustrate the variety of scandals observed, we used Perez-Linan's (2007) typology and divided scandals into abuses of power, corruption allegations, and character assaults. This is shown in Figure 1. Both broadsheets published heavily on corruption scandals. Given the rhetoric of good governance in the Philippines (Jaca, 2016), the politics of trust may revolve around politicians throwing allegations of corruption against their opponents

to present themselves as leaders with integrity. Interestingly, the Philippine Daily Inquirer is much more critical of abuses of power by the president than the Manila Bulletin. Again, this could be explained by the news slant of both broadsheets with the Inquirer relying on dissenters for information and the Manila Bulletin relying on government officials. While it has been suggested that the type of political event matters in its potential to delegitimize incumbents (Basinger, 2013), they all depend on media coverage to become known to citizens. Since our study looks into the decisions of journalists in presenting these events and not in its impact on public opinion, all political events are treated similarly. Moreover, disaggregating political events based on their types would lead to too few observations for statistical analysis. Thus, we combined them under the concept of political events.

On average, there were six political events in a year for each administration: Ramos had an average of 5.16, Estrada and Arroyo had the same average at 5.2, and Aquino had 8.33. With Arroyo's term as an exception, media political events can be seen to increase over time. This is consistent with the trends noticed in the United States and may be explained in two ways. On one hand, this trend can indicate declining integrity in politics and the growing attacks politicians plant on each other in the competition over public trust (Davis, 1999). On the other hand, this could also be due to the rising popularity of investigative journalism and developments in communication technology (Garrard & Newell, 2006). In the case of the Philippines, further studies should be conducted to explain this trend. The surprisingly low number of media political events in Arroyo's term also requires further investigation given that she has also received the lowest approval ratings among all the presidents.

**Table 1.**

*Descriptive Summary of the Variables in the Study.*

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dependent Variable** | | | | | |
| Political Event | 584 | .2671233 | .5949023 | 0 | 5 |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | |
| Presidential Approval Ratio | 583 | 1.013088 | 2.429628 | - | 31.617 |
| News Congestion | 584 | | .4956844 | 0 | 2 |
| **Control Variables** | | | | | |
| Administration | 584 | 3.583904 | 1.159559 | 1 | 4 |
| Election Year | 584 | .1643836 | .370941 | 0 | 1 |
| Type of Broadsheet | 584 | 1.5 | .5004286 | 1 | 2 |
| Presidential Party in Congress | 584 | 29.16702 | 11.71079 | 10.28 | 44.64 |
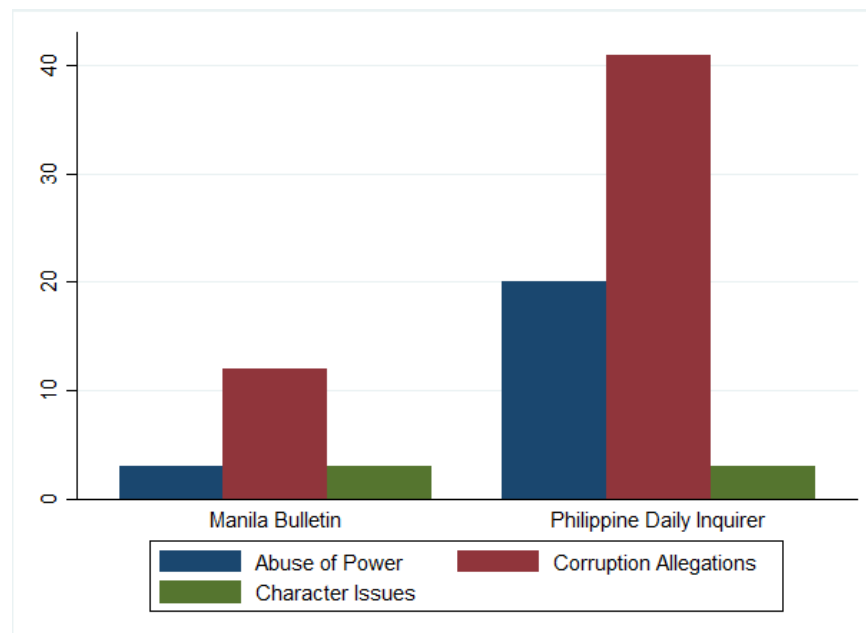


**Figure 1**. Bar Graph of Scandals.

Meanwhile, both the lowest and the highest presidential approval ratio was noted during Arroyo's administration. For presidential party dominance in the Congress, Ramos could be considered as a minority leader with the members of his party taking up only 10.28% of the Congress whereas Estrada enjoyed a leverage in the Congress with his party taking up 44.64%. We were able to gather 121 news congestion events that comprised 18.32% of the months under study. These ranged from natural calamities (Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1992 and typhoon Yolanda in 2014) and accidents (Ozone fire incident in 1996 and the Wowowee stampede in 2006), to celebrity deaths (Pope John Paul II in 2005 and Whitney Houston in 2012).

Table 2 shows four estimation models using negative binomial regression analysis. The first model tested for the effect of presidential approval on the production of political events while the second model tested for the impact of presidential approval as a ratio to the Congress' public approval. Model 3 tested for the effects of our control variables. The final model tested for the robustness of presidential approval ratio on the production of political events with the controls variables included.

**Table 2.**

*Determinants of the Production of Political Events.*

|  | (1) Political Event | (2) Political Event | (3) Political Event | (4) Political Event |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Presidential Approval | -0.00135 (-0.42) |  |  |  |
| Lagged Presidential Approval Ratio |  | -0.0971* (-2.03) |  | -0.239** (-2.75) |
| News Congestion |  |  | -0.380 (-1.63) | -0.363 (-1.56) |

|  | (1) Political Event | (2) Political Event | (3) Political Event | (4) Political Event |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ramos |  |  | 1.098 | -0.105 |
|  |  |  | (0.98) | (-0.09) |
| Estrada |  |  | 1.836 | 0.625 |
|  |  |  | (1.64) | (0.52) |
| Arroyo |  |  | 1.208 | -0.582 |
|  |  |  | (1.09) | (-0.45) |
| Aquino |  |  | 1.658 | 0.318 |
|  |  |  | (1.47) | (0.26) |
| Election Year |  |  | 0.732** | 0.831** |
|  |  |  | (2.67) | (2.98) |
| Philippine Daily Inquirer |  |  | 0.861*** | 0.849*** |
|  |  |  | (3.96) | (3.88) |
| Presidential Party in Congress |  |  | 0.0157 | -2.185 |
|  |  |  | (1.49) | (-1.78) |
| _cons | -1.313*** | -1.256*** | -3.684*** | -2.185 |
|  | (-10.73) | (-11.56) | (-3.33) | (-1.78) |
| N | 584 | 583 | 584 | 583 |

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

As seen in Model 1, presidential approval ratings cannot affect the production of political events on its own. Presidential popularity cannot directly influence the publication of negative political news. Instead, the production of political events is influenced by the president's popularity relative to the popularity of the legislature. This is shown in Model 2 wherein presidential approval ratio, which shows the gap in popularity between the

president and the legislature, has a significant inverse relationship with the production of political events. The publication of political events by the press is more likely to happen as the president becomes more popular than the Congress. This confirms our hypothesis that the competition between the executive and legislative branches of government over favorable public opinion affects the press. When the president is less popular than the Congress, members of the legislature are perceived as credible sources of information, and are empowered to support and investigate scandal allegations by the press. Critical news is also easily accepted by an already unsatisfied public. These could then present an opportunity to publish critically against the president with fewer risks involved.

Figure 2 illustrates this using a predicted margins plot. It shows that the probability of political events being reported in a given month exponentially increases as the presidential approval ratio decreases. When the president is more popular than the legislature or when the presidential approval ratio is valued at 10 and above, the chances of producing political events are almost negligible. As the presidential approval ratio drops and the president starts to become less popular than the legislature, the likelihood of producing political events increases with it being at 76% when presidential approval ratio is at -10 and 97% when presidential approval ratio falls further to -20.
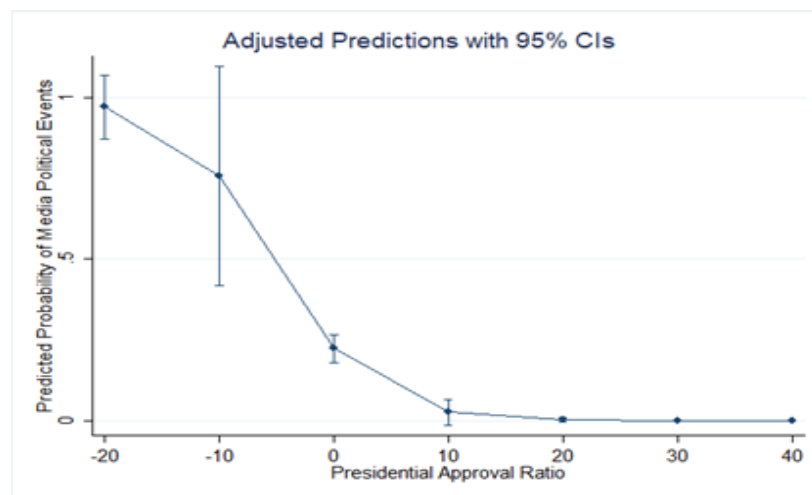


**Figure 2.** Predictive Margins Plot for Presidential Approval Ratio.

Model 3 laid down the initial relationships for our control variables while Model 4 tested for the robustness of presidential approval ratio amidst these controls. Among the controls, news congestion and the presidential party's control in the legislature are unable to have any significant effect on the production of political events. Contrary to the slow news hypothesis developed in the Western press tradition, the production of political events is not compromised by the amount of competing news stories. We also find that the percentage of the legislature that belongs to the president's party is unable to significantly influence the production of political events. This may be explained by the nature of political parties in the Philippines. With no consistent ideological base that binds them together, partisan ties can only last for as long as they are beneficial to politicians. Political parties are only formed for the purpose of winning elections and securing access to pork barrel (Lande, 1967; Quimpo, 2009). Once the president falls out of favor with the public, legislators would not think twice about dropping their allegiance to him.

Meanwhile, national elections and the type of broadsheet are found to significantly affect the production of political events. The predictive plot margins for both can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, respectively. Holding all other variables constant at their means, the production of political events is 129% more likely to occur during election years. This suggests that timing matters. When the ratio of presidential approval to Congress approval drops to -10, there is an 86% probability for media political events to be produced during election years whereas there is only a probability of 73% when there are no elections. Because of the high stakes associated with winning national elections (O'Donnell, 1994), political scandals and crises receive greater attention in public discourse during election years and have the potential to affect political outcomes. We also found instances when news reports on salient political events resurface during national elections. For example, reports regarding the Hello Garci scandal, which occurred in June 2005, and the NBN-ZTE scam, which happened in October 2007, against Arroyo's administration were aired during the 2010 elections despite these events happening years before.
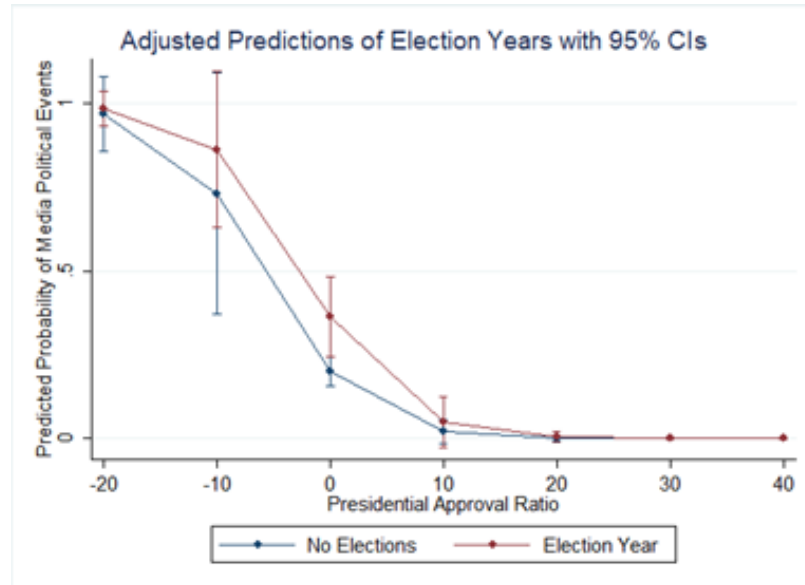
**Figure 3.** Predictive Margins Plot for Election Years.

The type of broadsheet that publishes these political events also matters in their production. Holding all other variables at their means, the Philippine Daily Inquirer is 134% more likely to produce political events compared to the Manila Bulletin. When the ratio of presidential approval to Congress approval falls to -10, there is a 67% probability of a political event to be published by the Manila Bulletin and an 83% probability of a political event to be published by the Philippine Daily Inquirer. The Philippine Daily Inquirer which identifies itself as part of the dissenting press tradition has a higher rate of publishing political events compared to the Manila Bulletin which prides itself in positive news coverage and political neutrality. Thus, the journalistic tradition that the newspaper firm abides by matters in the production of media political events.
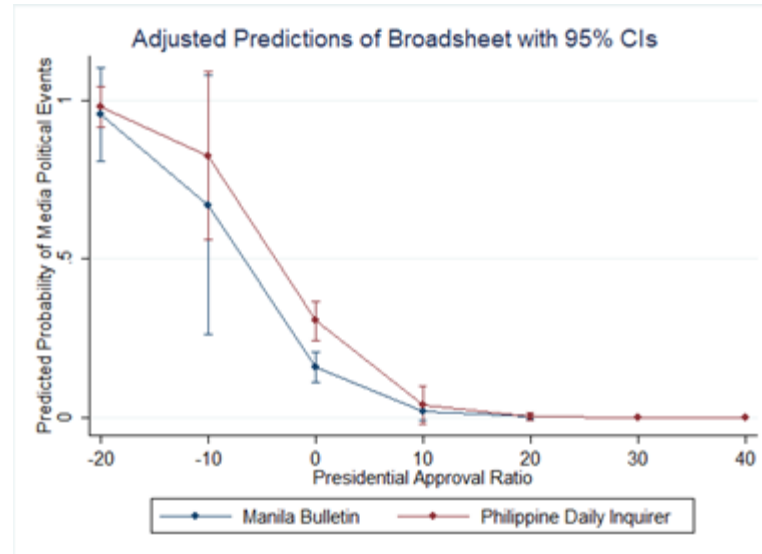
**Figure 4.** Predictive Margins Plot for Broadsheet Type.

## Conclusion

Does public approval for the president, amidst competing coordinate institutions, affect the production of political events by the Philippine press? While transgressions by political leaders are common occurrences in Philippine politics, they only penetrate public discourse when they are publicized and legitimized by mainstream media. Philippine newspapers play a pivotal role in the production of political events as well as in the public's reaction to them. Yet due to the inherent insecurities of their profession, journalists are subjugated to commercial and political pressures in the country. This inhibits their performance as a neutral watchdog that monitors and disciplines the government. Ultimately, their decisions are responsive to the sentiments of the public and the political forces that they face. In this paper, we argue that the production of political events is not just driven by the newsworthiness and credibility of the story, but also shaped by the circumstances presented to journalists.

To test this, we conducted a negative binomial regression on the front-page headlines of the Manila Bulletin and the Philippine Daily Inquirer from 1992 to 2016. Our empirical analysis suggests that the production of media political events is driven by the competing claims of legitimacy between the president and the Congress, the presence of national elections, and the journalistic tradition of the broadsheet. Journalists are able to optimize readership with fewer risks to their careers given these circumstances. Firstly, the president being less popular than the Congress increases demand for critical assessments of the president and reduces his/her ability to persuade political insiders and citizens to disregard the event. Moreover, a more popular Congress empowers the members of the legislature to reveal misconduct by the president since they receive greater support from the public. Secondly, national elections are opportunities to take advantage of the country's interest in politics by publishing political events as well as reviving the past transgressions of the president. Finally, there are fewer obstacles in publishing critical news when journalists work under the dissenting press tradition.

We acknowledge that this study still has a lot of room for improvement. The reliance on headlines instead of the entire article limits the scope of the analysis to a small portion of the journalist's voice. Future studies must take into account the actual text of the article instead of relying on headlines alone. The study can also be expanded to examine the success of political events in generating audience demand over time. By examining how long a political event can occupy public discourse, we can study the tendency of public attention towards political events to "cascade" over time (Entman, 2012). Even though Rodrigo Duterte has been in power for over four years, his term is excluded from the current study since it is yet to finish. His popularity, with him receiving the highest approval ratings among post-Marcos presidents, and his blatant attacks on press freedom may provide valuable insights in future studies. Our focus on broadsheets also limits the study to the journalistic traditions of Manila-based news firms with a middle class audience. Further studies can then be made to expand the timeframe of the study to

include the Duterte administration as well as test for the relevance of the theory to other platforms of the press such as tabloids and television.

Nevertheless, this study shows that the Philippine press, despite its heritage of press freedom and investigative journalism, remains selective in exercising its role as a watchdog of the government. Popular presidents do not just enjoy a significant leverage in policymaking through negotiations with the legislature. This study shows that they are also insulated from negative publicity and are given room to maneuver around the press. Meanwhile, unpopular presidents are an attractive and vulnerable target for negative news. Due to the responsive nature of the press, popular presidents are given more leeway for mistakes while unpopular ones, who already face the risk of political instability and government gridlock, are compromised by constant criticism. To become a true pillar of Philippine democracy, press freedom in our country should go deeper than the mere absence of government encroachment and move towards the provision of safeguards and incentives that motivate truth-seeking in the country.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1.

*Political Events from 1992-2016.*

| Political Event | Year | Month | Political Event | Year | Month |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PCA Fund Scandal | 1992 | Mar | GMA Hello Garci Tape | 2005 | Jun |
| Jueteng Scandal | 1992 | Nov | Abu Sayyaf | 2005 | Jun |
| Radio Scam | 1993 | Feb | GMA won't resign (Political Crisis) | 2005 | Jul |
| PNP Scandal | 1993 | Mar | GMA Crisis | 2005 | Aug |
| SC Court Scandal | 1993 | May | Medical Crisis | 2005 | Nov |
| Birth Controls in Program | 1993 | Jul | Democratic Crisis | 2006 | Feb |
| Petron Shares Controversy | 1994 | Aug | Fertilizer Scandal | 2006 | Mar |
| Money Laundering | 1994 | Oct | Jobs Deficit of Crisis Proportions | 2006 | Mar |
| Religion Tax | 1995 | Feb | Democratic Crisis | 2006 | Dec |
| Controversial Sacking of Judge | 1995 | Feb | Fertilizer Scandal, "Hello Garci" | 2006 | Dec |
| LTO Executives under FVR | 1995 | Mar | Democratic Crisis | 2007 | May |
| PNP Scandal And Martial Law | 1995 | Sep | Education Crisis | 2007 | Jun |
| Jueteng Scandal | 1995 | Nov | Debt Crisis | 2007 | Nov |
| Sugar Crisis | 1995 | Nov | GMA vs. Lozada | 2008 | Feb |
| Crame Loan Scam | 1995 | Dec | NBN ZTE Controversy | 2008 | Feb |
| Burial Costs Scandalous | 1996 | Mar | Rice Crisis | 2008 | May |

| Political Event | Year | Month | Political Event | Year | Month |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gag Try by Sarmiento | 1996 | Mar | Humanitarian Crisis | 2008 | Aug |
| Comelec Crisis | 1996 | Jun | Politicized Corruption Scandal | 2008 | Aug |
| Constitutional Crisis | 1997 | Feb | Credit Crisis | 2008 | Oct |
| Land Scandal Lakas Party | 1997 | Mar | Economic Crisis | 2008 | Oct |
| Tax Payments | 1997 | Apr | Fertilizer Scam | 2008 | Nov |
| Monte Fiasco in BSP | 1997 | May | Economic Crisis | 2008 | Dec |
| BIR Agents Scam | 1997 | Aug | Gonzales Drug Controversy | 2009 | Jan |
| Economic Crisis | 1997 | Aug | LPG Supply Crisis | 2009 | Feb |
| Economic Crisis | 1998 | Jan | Economic Crisis | 2009 | May |
| Employment | 1998 | Jan | Power Supply Crisis | 2010 | Feb |
| Money Crisis | 1998 | Jan | Stocks Scandal Rap | 2010 | Apr |
| Food Crisis in Mindanao | 1998 | Apr | Hello Garci Scandal, ZTE | 2010 | May |
| Marai Scam | 1998 | May | Metro Water Crisis | 2010 | Jul |
| Marcos Libingan ng mga Bayani | 1998 | Jun | Power Crisis | 2010 | Jul |
| Radio Scam | 1998 | Jul | Text Scam | 2010 | Jul |
| Security and Financial Crisis | 1998 | Jul | Water Crisis | 2010 | Jul |
| Subic Controversy (PNP) | 1998 | Jul | Emoluments | 2010 | Aug |
| Tax Scandal | 1998 | Jul | Power Crisis | 2010 | Sep |
| Crisis Powers for Erap | 1998 | Sep | Power Crisis | 2011 | Apr |

| Political Event | Year | Month | Political Event | Year | Month |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aviation Crisis | 1998 | Oct | Controversy on Customs Chief | 2011 | May |
| Textbook Fund Scandal | 1999 | Mar | Fertilizer Scam | 2011 | Jul |
| PSCO Controversy | 1999 | May | Pork Scam | 2011 | Aug |
| Text Credit Scandal | 1999 | Nov | FG Chopper Scam | 2012 | Jun |
| Asian Crisis | 2000 | Feb | Sabah Crisis | 2013 | Mar |
| Economic Crisis Grips Market | 2000 | Mar | Pork Scam | 2013 | Jul |
| Payola Scandal | 2000 | Apr | BIR Scandal | 2013 | Aug |
| Power Crisis | 2000 | Apr | Fertilizer Scam | 2013 | Aug |
| Diokno and Dela Serna Scam | 2000 | May | PDAF Scandal | 2013 | Aug |
| Hostage Crisis | 2000 | May | Malampaya Scam | 2013 | Oct |
| Erap Luxury Car Scandal | 2000 | Sep | Pork Scam | 2013 | Dec |
| Telecom Scandal | 2001 | Aug | Investigation of PDAF Scam | 2013 | Dec |
| Bribe Scandal | 2001 | Nov | Controversial SC Funds | 2014 | Jan |
| Tax Fraud | 2002 | Jan | PNoy Eyes Emergency Powers | 2014 | Jan |
| Political Crisis | 2002 | Mar | ATM Scam | 2014 | Feb |
| GMA Scam | 2002 | Sep | PDAF Scam | 2014 | Feb |
| Landbank Scam | 2002 | Sep | PSG Man Linked to ATM Scam | 2014 | Feb |
| MILF | 2003 | Feb | Pork Scam | 2014 | Mar |
| Makati Crisis | 2003 | Jul | Maritime Crisis | 2014 | Apr |

| Political Event | Year | Month | Political Event | Year | Month |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fiscal Crisis | 2003 | Dec | Scandal Delayed MRT Purchase | 2014 | Apr |
| Tax Scam | 2004 | Feb | PDAF Scam | 2014 | Jun |
| Power Supply Crisis | 2004 | Apr | Fertilizer Scandal | 2014 | Aug |
| Textbook Scandal | 2004 | May | Pork Scam | 2014 | Aug |
| Power Supply Crisis | 2004 | Jun | Power Crisis | 2014 | Sep |
| Charter Change Crisis Meet | 2004 | Jul | Airasia Crisis | 2015 | Jan |
| Tax Scandal | 2004 | Aug | Pork Barrel Scam | 2015 | May |
| Controversial Bill (Tax on Church) | 2004 | Sep | Laglag Bala Airport | 2015 | Sep |
| AFP Scandal | 2004 | Oct | Pork Scam | 2015 | Sep |
| Corpus Controversial AFP Stint | 2004 | Oct | The Avoidable Crisis (Democratic Deficit) | 2016 | Jan |

**Appendix 2.**

*News Congestion from 1992-2016.*

| News Congestion | Year | Month | News Congestion | Year | Month |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Red Tide | 1992 | Jun-Jul | Asian Tsunami Relief | 2005 | Jan |
| Mt. Pinatubo Eruption | 1992 | Aug-Oct | Death of Pope John Paul II | 2005 | Mar |
| Mt. Mayon Eruption | 1993 | Feb-Apr | Selection of New Pope | 2005 | Apr |
| Sanchez UPLB Murder Case | 1993 | Jul-Sep | Typhoon Jolina and Labuyo | 2005 | Sep |
| MMFF Awards Scandal | 1994 | Jun | Wowowee Stampede | 2006 | Feb |
| Typhoon Ritang and Typhoon Susang | 1994 | Aug | First Filipino in Mt Everest | 2006 | May |
| Pope Visit | 1995 | Jan | Mt. Mayon Eruption | 2006 | Jul-Aug |
| Flor Contemplacion Death Trial | 1995 | Mar | Typhoon Milenyo | 2006 | Oct |
| Kuratong Baleleng Shootout | 1995 | May-Jun | ASEAN Summit in the Philippines | 2007 | Jan |
| Vizconde Massacre | 1995 | Jun-Aug | MV Princess of the Stars Accident | 2008 | Jun |
| Ozone Fire Accident | 1996 | Mar | H1N1 Virus | 2009 | May-Jul |
| APEC in Cebu | 1996 | Nov | Cory Aquino Death and Burial | 2009 | Jul-Aug |
| Cebu Pacific Plane Crash | 1998 | Feb | Typhoon Ondoy | 2009 | Sep-Oct |

| News Congestion | Year | Month | News Congestion | Year | Month |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dengue Fever Outbreak | 1998 | Sep | Dengue Fever Outbreak | 2010 | Sep |
| Mt Mayon False Alarm | 1999 | Jun-Jul | Typhoon Season | 2010 | Oct-Nov |
| Cherry Hills Landslide | 1999 | Aug | Whitney Houston Death | 2012 | Feb |
| Asian Spirit Plane Crash | 1999 | Dec | Jesse Robredo Plane Crash | 2012 | Aug-Sep |
| Earthquake | 1999 | Dec | Typhoon Pablo | 2012 | Dec |
| Mt Mayon Eruption | 2000 | Feb-Mar | Cebu Pacific Plane Crash | 2013 | Jun |
| Iloveyou Computer Virus | 2000 | May | Bohol Earthquake | 2013 | Oct-Nov |
| Payatas Landslide | 2000 | Jul | Typhoon Yolanda | 2013 | Nov-Dec |
| SARS Outbreak | 2003 | Apr-Sep | Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 Plane Crash | 2014 | Jul |
| Superferry14 Fire | 2004 | Feb | Pope Francis Visits the Philippines | 2015 | Jan |
| South Asia Floods | 2004 | Jul-Aug | Mary Jane Veloso Death Trial | 2015 | Apr |
| Typhoon Unding | 2004 | Nov-Dec | Pacquiao vs. Mayweather | 2015 | Apr-May |
| FPJ Funeral | 2004 | Dec | | | |

# Spectacularization of Crisis: Duterte and the War on Drugs

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## Introduction

Immediately after his election in 2016, President Duterte launched a hardline campaign against "illegal drug personalities" in the country which has led to the deaths of more than 8,000 suspected drug users and dealers (Robertson, 2020). The large scale extrajudicial killings are framed as a "crime solution" to the increasing cases of violent crimes in the country. Although some crimes are linked to illicit drug use, the Philippines is still far from collapsing into a "narco-state" since there are no drug gangs that directly challenge the authority of the state, which is contrary to what Duterte has asserted (Thompson, 2016; Gita, 2017; Curato, 2018).

A research study conducted by the Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University (2018) shows that those who have been killed under the war on drugs are mostly low-level suspects, the majority of whom are from poor sectors. If the Duterte administration's real intention is to eliminate the "threat" brought by illicit drugs, it should be after big-time drug suspects rather than low-level ones, since it is the former who pose a real significant threat to the government as well as to the society (Quismorio, 2018; Enano, 2018). However, despite the enormous death toll and blatant human rights violations committed under the war on drugs, many Filipinos still support the said campaign. Based on the September 2019 Social Weather Station (SWS) survey, 79% of Filipinos remain satisfied with the government's anti-narcotics campaign despite its bloody nature; this is an increase of 2% in the satisfaction rating from the 2018 survey. Moreover, the survey reveals that the most common reason for being satisfied is their belief that drug suspects have lessened due to the government's anti-illegal drugs

campaign (ABS-CBN News, 2019). By being able to frame the drugs issue as a matter of national security, Duterte has been given a free hand in using coercion and violence which in the eyes of the general population is acceptable in the face of the perceived "crisis".

Given the irony of popular support despite the blatant human rights violations committed under the guise of an anti-narcotics struggle, this study seeks to explain how the populist Duterte has been able to exploit the "crisis" narrative to spectacularize the drug problem in the country to his political advantage. In doing so, this paper's position is that the perceived "crisis" from illegal drugs in the country has been "mediated" and "performed" by a populist president. Moffit's six (6) step model of crisis performance by contemporary populist leaders was used to give light on this issue.

## Crisis and Performance: Tools of a Populist

Mizuno and Phongpaichit (2009) define populism as a form of political practice that poses a challenge to the established authority in the name of "the people". It is widely regarded as an abuse of the sentiments expressed by "the people" because populist leaders tend to feed from the anguish of the people in order to gain political support. While populism can be considered as an expression of frustration and distrust against an old political leadership, populism in Southeast Asia paints a different picture.

Rather than just simply presenting a challenge to the existing authority, populism in the region is seen as more dramatic in advocating a widespread social change. In this sense, the emergence of populist leaders in the region could be the result of the desire of "the people" to change the old order where they see themselves excluded and disadvantaged due to the socio-economic and political dislocation facilitated by the established political system and tolerated by the existing authorities (Mizuno & Phongpaichit, 2009). The discontent from the crummy performance of past leaders as well as their failure to pursue meaningful change in the society creates a desperate mentality among "the people" to

look for figures who present themselves differently from the past leadership; as Mietzner (2015) asserts, it is during these times of political stagnation and dissatisfaction that scholars typically predict the rise of a populist leader, who then uses the frustration of the electorate to assume power.

Similarly, Panizza (2005) in Mizuno & Phongpaichit (2009) points out that crisis often sparks populism. Crisis creates conditions in which populist leaders appeal to both the never enfranchised and the newly disenfranchised. Hence, the denunciation of crisis and the "politics of I will" is the recurrent theme among the narratives used by populist leaders to gain support from the people (Calimbahin, 2018). However, crisis can also be a spin-off of populism (Moffit, 2015).

Although early works suggest that populism cannot simply emerge without crisis since a "crisis of representation" is fundamentally the root of populism (Laclau, 2005; Roberts, 2006), Moffit (2015) argues that this causation is problematic in the way that crisis is seen as an external factor that leads to the emergence of populism. He believes that crisis of any kind is contingent upon a given context that induces some sense of threat to a significant portion of the people. The perception of crisis is often bonded by the words we use to describe it; as such, crisis is very much what we make of it. Since crisis is never a neutral phenomenon, it can be "mediated" and "performed" by certain actors, often populist leaders. This means that the relationship between crisis and populism cannot be viewed as linear. Instead of being simply a reaction, populism creates a sense of crisis in the minds of the people through populist performance.

Populist actors perform and perpetuate a sense of crisis through actively participating in the "spectacularization of failure" that underlies crisis. Populists must be able to elevate a failure or a problem to the level of crisis and at the same time perpetuate a "sense of crisis" among "the people". The focus is not on the existence or absence of a "real crisis" but on the populist actors' ability to create a sense of crisis in the minds of the people and how they use that sense of crisis to inject urgency and importance to their message

(Moffit, 2015). Crisis, in this way, is seen not as a trigger that leads to populism, but as a result of populist performance.

To successfully mediate and perform crisis, Moffit's model of a contemporary populist introduces six (6) major steps (not necessarily processed in exact order) that populist actors do to elevate a certain failure or problem to the level of "crisis". ***The first step is to identify/choose a particular (systemic) failure and bring attention to it as a matter of urgency***. According to Moffit (2015), the ability to elevate a failure to the level of crisis will probably be more successful if the chosen problem has already gained political salience. Social issues concerning "the people" are often the best pick by populist actors to gain the people's attention.

***Next is to link this chosen failure with other failures; thus, locating it within a wider structural or moral framework***. Populist actors attempt to make the failure appear asymptomatic of a wider problem in order to elevate the failure to a level of crisis. This is where the performance of the populist actors can be seen. Through mediated performance (whether a speech, rally, interview, written piece, press release or other medium), populist actors set out to homogenize a disparate set of phenomena as symptoms of a wider crisis. Once the initial failure has been linked and elevated into a wider framework of crisis, ***populist actors will try to divide "the people" from those who are responsible for the crisis.*** Their narratives are often against a certain "subaltern" groups who are already seen by "the people" as "quasi-citizens", "vicious", or "ills of society."

When populist actors have successfully framed "the people" against those responsible for the crisis, ***the next step is to propagate crisis performance through the use of media***. By means of the media, populist actors are able to perpetuate a continuing sense of crisis, thus spectacularizing the problem even more. When a failure has been spectacularized and a sense of crisis has been created and propagated, ***the next important step that populist actors do is to present themselves as having the solution***

*to the crisis*. Since populist actors portray other political actors as incompetent and ignorant of true urgency, the former often position themselves as "straight shooters" by presenting simple solutions while legitimizing their strong leadership. The sense of urgency propagated in the minds of "the people" then gives populist actors a free hand to use coercion and violence which in the eyes of the general population is acceptable given the perceived crisis. Because of this, the **populist will try to continue to propagate the crisis to remain in power and consolidate political support from "the people".**

Through this model, Moffit contends that crisis does not just trigger populism, but populism also attempts to act as a trigger for crisis. Populist leaders often "spectacularize" systemic failure and elevate it into crisis and in the process, they divide "the people" from those who are responsible for the crisis, present simple solutions and legitimize their own strong leadership. The question of whether there is a "real crisis" is not important; it is how populist actors create a "sense of crisis" and how they make people believe.

The war on drugs campaign launched by Duterte in the early months of his presidency is touted as his solution to the increasing rate of criminality in the country which was then tied to the use of illicit drugs. He insists that drug users eventually graduate to commit more violent crimes, so cracking down on them saves lives overall (Coronel, Padilla, and Mora 2019). The problem on illicit drug use and trade has been escalated as a matter of national interest when Duterte announced that there were already three (3) million drug addicts in the country (Holmes, 2016; Viray, 2019). These and his other pronouncements were taken seriously by many. In fact, the discussion surrounding the war on drugs in the country is characterized by divisive rhetoric - that those who oppose the campaign are branded as being "with the criminals", and as "traitors" (Kennert and Eligh, 2019). This kind of thinking has eroded the people's support for civil society organizations that express opposition to the use of violence against suspected criminals. It is said that because the campaign is so popular among the people, to dissent is not only dangerous

but also seen as an opposition to the state, particularly to the welfare of the general population (Schaffer, 2016). Duterte can then be identified as a populist leader who performed and mediated the problem on illegal drugs into a crisis through his "war on drugs" campaign.

## Duterte as a Populist: The Politics of "I Will"

Nobody could have predicted that a former mayor of the largest city in the country would become the next President of the Philippines, winning against the other four (4) candidates who were all prominent political figures from the national circle. Duterte's victory was marked by a huge margin against the second placer - Mar Roxas, who was then the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party (LP), led by former President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III. His electoral victory was ascribed by many to the emergence of another populist leader in the country. But how did Duterte win the overwhelming support of the electorate?

Duterte started from being the mayor of Davao, a city known to have high crime rates. In his almost 23 years of being the city mayor, he successfully turned Davao into a peaceful and developed city. When asked what he did to transform the once known crime-infested city into a safe and peaceful place, he was vocal in admitting to the use of "kamay na bakal" to enforce discipline among Davaoeños. Yet, strict and strong implementation of laws and policies was not just his way of portraying "kamay na bakal", since there were also allegations that he led a vigilante group known as the "Davao Death Squad", which conducted summary executions of suspected criminals and drug users. Despite such allegations, his public image has been portrayed as a strongman willing to do anything for the sake of his people, as he often states, "***I am willing to go to hell in exchange for my people's welfare***" (Maizland, 2017); such pronouncements make him look like someone who is willing to do anything in order to defend "the people." Thus, when he entered the 2016 presidential campaign, his "Davao success story" as well as his

"defender of the people" narrative propelled his campaign propaganda of restoring peace and order in the Philippines, which for him is the only way to prosperity (Teehankee, 2017).

Aside from his "tough on crime" approach, Duterte's popularity is also connected to his use of crass language. A major part of his controversial but appealing character has to do with his use of crude language that seems to hypnotize the masses and the spectacle-driven public. His "crass politics" has shed light on the citizen's fear and frustration, exposed powerful institutions' hypocrisies and provided the vocabulary to capture the public's brewing anger against unfulfilled promises from past leaders (Curato, 2017). Indeed, through the use of vulgar words, Duterte has been able to position himself apart from other political figures who are seen as "decent" but full of hypocrisies while at the same time aligning himself nearer to the common people. Yet if we will only look at how Duterte packaged himself as a populist leader, we will fall short in explaining how such branding became popular with the people; hence, the question of how Duterte became phenomenal might be answered through examining "the people".

"The people" is the term used to describe the target group from which the populist seeks to gain support. Mietzner (2015) avers that during times of political stagnation and dissatisfaction, a populist leader emerges and uses the frustration of "the people" to assume power. The numerous but undelivered promises from past leaders as well as their failure to rally the people towards unity and pursuit of meaningful change in society create a desperate mentality among "the people" to elect populist leaders who often identify themselves as friend and defender, a challenger of the existing political order to change the unfair system that has existed for so long. In appealing to "the people", populists must be able to ride along the "frustrations" of the people and use it to benefit themselves.

In Duterte's case, his phenomenal victory is said to be the result of the people's frustration from the failed reform agenda followed and pursued by the second Aquino administration (Tehankee, 2017). The reform agenda that has pervaded Philippine politics since the Cory Aquino Administration introduced good governance centered on the eradication of corruption and upholding of democratic ideals; yet, even though democracy was immediately restored after the downfall of the Marcos regime, its consolidation became too problematic as seen in the country's weak democratic institutions. The inefficiency of these institutions in addressing public demands has fueled the general sense of frustration among voters, turning into desire for a strong leadership which Duterte was able to portray when he ran for the presidency. His campaign narrative of "real change is coming" conveys that his strong leadership would produce real and rapid change, and that this would only be possible by eliminating the threats from illicit drug use and trade. Through this, Duterte is able to tap into the latent anxiety (from the dangers brought by illegal drugs) that is already existing in the public sphere.

Different from the problems that were enumerated by his political opponents, a campaign rhetoric of eliminating the problems brought by illegal drugs was what Duterte pursued once seated. This is not surprising since his presidential campaign is mainly a scale up of his Davao "success story". What is really unexpected is its popularity across classes and generations. According to Johnson and Fernquest (2018), the public support gained by Duterte from his use of the drug crisis narrative is mainly rooted in the anger, frustration, and helplessness that people feel about the dysfunctions of the Philippine criminal justice, which he is able to tap through his desire to eradicate the problems of criminality (tied to illicit drugs). Curato (2016) states that Duterte's rise to power is attributed to "penal populism".

Penal populism is a political style that builds on collective sentiments of fear and demands for punitive politics (Pratt, 2007 in Curato, 2016). Because the criminal justice system in the Philippines is too slow and often biased in favor of those who have resources, the

increasing criminal rate in the country gives latent anxiety to the people. Penal populism in the country is driven by both politics of anxiety (from fear of being a victim of violent crimes) and by politics of hope that posit a better future once crime problems are under control (Curato, 2016). This explains why despite the grave human rights violations committed under the guise of an anti-narcotics campaign, the war on drugs receives popular support from the people. For as long as people believe that the justice system is broken, they will continue to support the President's heavy-handed approach to eliminate threats to social order. But how was Duterte able to create a "sense of crisis" to the public?

## War on Drugs: Performed and Mediated

The rhetorical war against drugs is an easily exploitable issue to gain popular support from a citizenry that feels unsecured amidst widespread crime and violence due to illicit drugs use and trade; thus, in order to garner support, a populist leader will use the "tough on crime" approach (Ahnen, 2003). To make sense of Duterte's unwavering public support, Quimpo (2017) explains that his strategy is centered on a crackdown on the drug menace in the country; his rhetorical strategy is to tell stories of brutal cases of murder committed by drug addicts to transform the ire of the people into public support. This is not just simply done through invoking that there is a problem, but instead by creating a sense of crisis to the people. We posit that the war on drugs campaign is Duterte's tool to consolidate his power, and he has successfully done so through mediation and performance of a drug crisis.

## A Crisis out of a Persistent Drug Problem?

Duterte brought along with his entry to the national political stage, the notion that the country is on the brink of disaster because of the rampant drug use and trade. While other political candidates continued to list the same social problems that were used again and again by most politicians in their campaign narratives, Duterte was unique when he

invoked a crisis narrative which for him can be averted when drugs, crime and corruption are eliminated. Thus, when Duterte won the 2016 elections, he launched immediately his war on drugs campaign to put an end to the drug problem in the country. But is there really a 'crisis' in the country's drug problem ?

One of Duterte's many controversial statements is his pronouncement in 2016 that the Philippines has already approximately three (3) million drug addicts:

> *"Hitler massacred three million Jews … there's three million drug addicts. There are. I'd be happy to slaughter them ."*
>
> (Holmes, 2016)

If this is true, drug users would comprise 3% of the nation's population. Such figure is a higher rate of drug users in the Philippines compared to Thailand and Indonesia's 1.8% as of 2015 (Lasco, 2016). The three (3) million figure increased in 2017 with Duterte's claim of four (4) million drug addicts in the country; this has doubled last year (2019), having seven to eight (7-8) million drug users according to him (de Santos, 2019). These figures are alarming since the increase is exponential in growth; however, how real are these numbers?

When Duterte gave the first pronouncement, the Dangerous Drugs Board's (DDB) official statistics in the last quarter of 2015 show only 1.8 million drug users in the Philippines or 1.8% of the total population; three (3) million is a bloated estimate considering the close time interval from the DDB's report (October-December 2015 and September 2016). In 2017, Duterte's assertion that drug addicts increased to four (4) million again contradicts with the data from DDB which reveal only 1.7 million drug users in the country.  This comparison is how in Figure 1. Later, Duterte fired the chairman of DDB for "contradicting the government" (Gavilan, 2016; de Santos, 2019). The data from DDB is somehow supported by other organizations' reports. In fact, according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Philippines has a low prevalence rate of drug users, compared to the global average (Amnesty International, 2016). But the Philippine

National Police (PNP) was quick to defend the President arguing that the actual number of drug users may be higher than the DDB's figure since some users "have not come out and admitted that they are drug users" (de Santos, 2019).



**Dangerous Drugs Board vs. Duterte's Estimates of Drug Users in the Philippines**
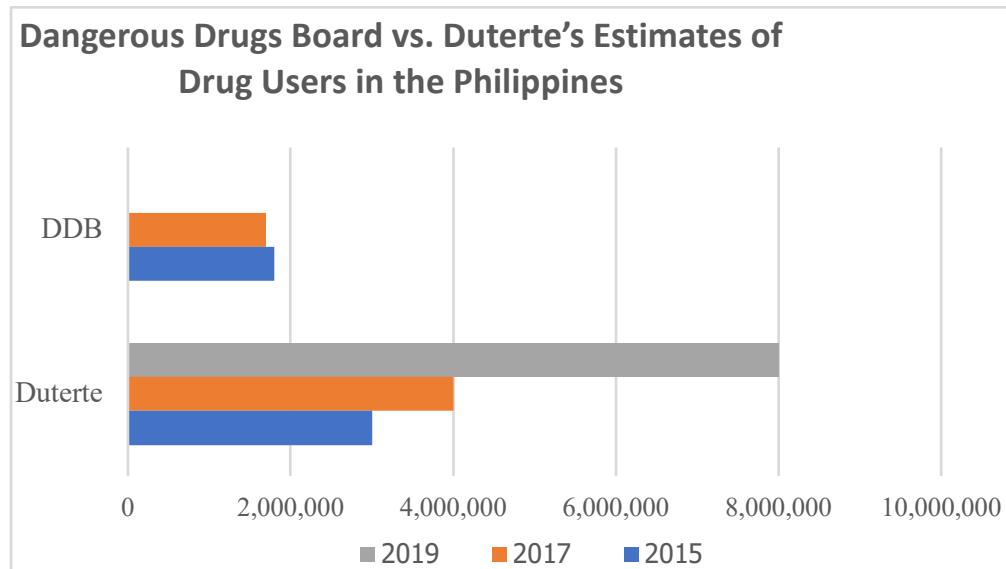
*Figure 1.* Source: de Santos, 2019

Aside from citing the "increasing" number of drug users in the country to justify his crisis narrative, Duterte has also used the "increasing" criminal rate, which he ties to illegal drugs in order to convey to the people that there is already a "crisis". He insists that drug users eventually graduate to more violent crimes, so cracking down on them could save the lives of many people from being possible future victims of drug addicts (Coronel, Padilla, and Mora, 2019).

Yet, statistics show that violent crimes in the country has not really increased nor grown at an "alarming" pace in the past two decades. Figure 2 reveals a downward trend, except for the years 2015-2017, but the increase during those years do not display large differences from the earlier years. Homicide rate is used as a proxy indicator since generally, it is considered as the best measure of violent crimes being the easiest and most direct indicator of violence in a country (Woody, 2019).

## Homicide Rate in the Philippines
## 2000-2017
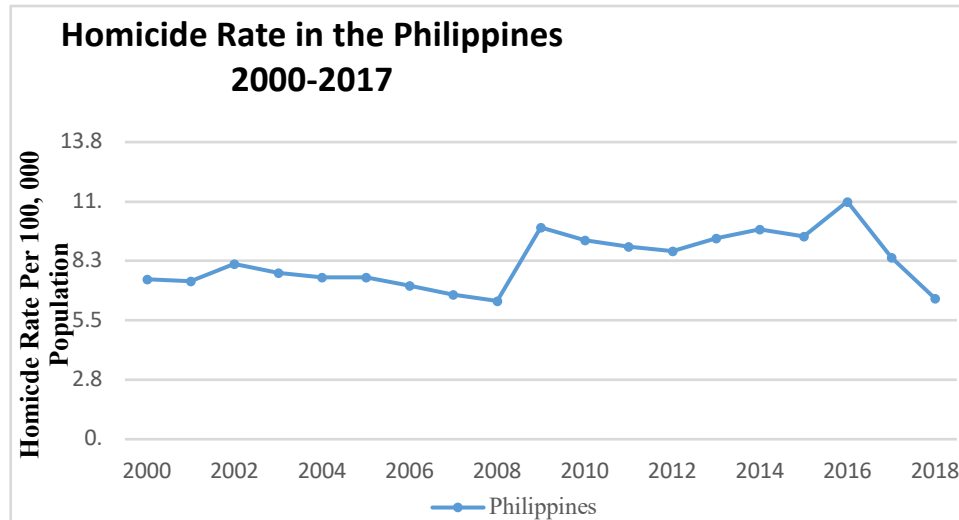


*Figure 2.* Data plotted in this graph were derived from United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Homicide Victims per 100,000 Inhabitants

Therefore, Duterte's rhetoric of crisis or emergency caused by drug problems may be interpreted as an exaggeration using inflated numbers. Ironically, the general population has accepted such rhetoric and supported the war on drugs campaign despite its violent nature. It is reported that 7-8 out of ten (10) Filipinos favor Duterte's drug war and almost half of the Filipinos (46% of the population surveyed by the Social Weather Station) believe that innocent individuals would inevitably get killed in the government's anti-drug war (Bencito, 2017). Given the contradictory evidence that drug users and violent crimes in the country has not really increased to the extent that it can pose an actual crisis threat, what explains the dynamics behind the popular support towards Duterte's war on drugs?

## The Drug Problem And Other Systemic Failures

Moffit (2015) declares that the success of creating "crisis" out of a certain problem will probably be more successful if the chosen problem already has some political salience. Duterte as a populist has identified a problem out of illegal drugs with systemic

implications and has successfully brought attention to it as a matter of urgency. According to Curato (2016) the issue of illegal drugs in the country is already present but "latent"; it is acknowledged as having a precise negative consequence for the community, but it has never really been the focus of political conversations. Through the anti-drug crusade, Duterte has brought attention to the issue of illegal drugs and is able to politicize it through the "politics of I will", positioning himself as having the solution to the crisis. The problem on illegal drugs is also connected to other systemic failures such as the country's "worsening" crime rate and dysfunctional justice system.

In the Philippines, crime has been a political issue; for instance, Marcos cited criminality and lawlessness as a justification for Martial Law in 1972 while Joseph Estrada used his movie image as a crime fighter to gain popularity for his presidential bid. People's concern regarding violent crimes has also been visible; in public opinion surveys prior to 2016, crimes usually come behind unemployment and food prices in the list of people's main concerns. Survey data also show a complex trend during the Aquino administration; in spite of low crime rates, many people were still worried about encountering drug addicts (Timberman, 2019).

Aside from the "prevalence" of crime, the widespread disillusionment with the country's justice system also creates fear among the people. While rich and powerful Filipinos enjoy near-total impunity, many poor and middle class Filipinos experience the system's high cost, delays, partiality, and corruption. Duterte's promise to overcome the corrupt bureaucracy in the justice system and deliver peace and order in a swift and decisive manner tap the "politics of hope" (Curato, 2016; Timberman, 2019). And because Duterte uses Davao City as an example of how he can transform a crime-infested city into a safe and peaceful one, he seemingly offers a compelling track record of being able to deliver his promise of change to the country.

The problems on illegal drugs and the failures of the judicial system to implement swift and impartial justice is effectively reiterated through the use of media, furthering the "crisis narrative". A major part of Duterte's rhetorical strategy is to present brutal cases of murder committed by drug addicts, creating a sense of anger that people share online while provoking human rights advocates to justify why murderers deserve human rights when they have dehumanized victims. His use of media does not only help to spectacularize the problems on illegal drugs in the country and create a sense of crisis in the minds of the people but also allows him to propagate his performance. This is evident, particularly in social media platforms where his narratives of "I will" are always backed up by "trolls" who spin the stories in his favor (Alba, 2018).

## The Virtuous Public and the Dangerous Others

When populists are able to identify a problem and elevate it to the level of crisis, they act as if they alone hold the answer to the problem. They often present simple solutions by targeting the "enemies" of the people instead of reforming the system. Moffit (2015) opines that through performance of crisis, populist leaders divide "the people" from those who are responsible for the crisis or "the dangerous others", in order to exploit the division and garner support from the dominant group.

Under a democratic context (particularly electoral democracy), popular support is important for a regime's legitimacy. Since public safety deteriorates amidst high levels of violent crimes, citizens in societies experiencing extreme levels of violence and social disorder are likely to demand or support heavy handed policies that tend to have many rights abuses (Ahnen, 2003; Celestino, 2012). It is not surprising that the rhetorical war against drugs is used often since this is an easily exploitable issue to gain popular support from the citizenry who feel unsecured because of widespread crime and violence attributed to illicit drug use and trade.

For instance, the drug war in the Philippines is revealed to be heavily supported by the ABC classes. The support from these groups is driven mainly by their concerns about a rising criminality and broken justice system; Duterte, through his tough on crime approach, is able to tap into (and to some extent manipulate) their frustrations and "latent anxiety" particularly about drugs and crime (Timberman, 2019). Because they are frustrated with the justice system, they think vigilantes and death squads should be tolerated if they rid society of criminals. This explains why despite the violent nature of the drug war, many still support this campaign and almost half of the Filipinos believe that innocent individuals are just casualties in the government's anti-drug war (Bencito, 2017). Some even argue that what is happening (extrajudicial killings under the drug war) is better than before and that criminals are just using human rights groups as a shield (Bevins, 2017).

Unfortunately, because the "others" are seen as "vicious" and "ills of society", their victimization is often tolerated and particularly reinforced by the fear of elites and middle-class members (and also some members of the lower class) who view themselves as most threatened by these groups ("others") (Ahnen, 2003). With this, it is also expected that victims (of physical integrity rights violations) are not only dangerous criminals or terrorists but also those who are "marginal"; hence, socially marginalized groups without strong ties to and support from the mainstream society, are especially vulnerable to victimization or abuse by the state (Stohl, 2006).

Despite reports showing the overwhelming death toll of suspected criminals and drug users from the "war on drugs", Duterte is continuously citing that there are still "problems" and many are still using illegal drugs. In one of his statements, he admits to being wrong about putting a six-month deadline on the drug war, a "miscalculation" because he did not realize the gravity of the problem; he also adds that drug money is even funding terrorism (Tan, 2019). It is then evident that Duterte plans to continue to propagate the "crisis" narrative, the last step in Moffit's model of a contemporary populist.

## Conclusion

Using Moffit's model of a contemporary populist, we tried to examine how Duterte made use of his war on drugs campaign in order to gain popular support and consolidate his power.

Duterte has been able to spectacularize the problem on illegal drugs and elevate it to the level of crisis because the problem has long weighed heavily with political salience. Even though the drug problem is already acknowledged to have negative consequences on the security of the people and the community as a whole, it has never been the focus of political conversations, the issue remaining in the background. Aside from its political salience, the problem on illegal drugs is also tied to wider systemic failures, particularly the country's "increasing" crime rate and the "slow and dysfunctional" justice system. That is why, although reports (statistics on violent crime rates, e.g. homicide rate in the Philippines) show that the country is still far from becoming a narco-state, the latent anxiety or fear of the people of being victimized by drug users, is also the reason for Duterte's success in elevating the drug problem into a crisis.

The infamous war on drugs campaign launched by Duterte has become his tool in gathering support from "the people" who feel unsecured and distrust the justice system; thus, despite the blatant human rights violations committed under the anti-narcotics struggle, "the people" seem uncaring and even tolerate the illiberal turn. It would be easy to conclude that supporters are immoral and political "retards" for pinning their hopes on a leader who pursues swift but violent and extra-legal solution. However, these supporters are not who they seem to be since the 2016 election polls show support for Duterte from the ABC crowds which means that they are educated people who have enough resources. Instead, what explains the unusual support from these groups is that Duterte has successfully tapped into their insecurity. They are "the people" to which Duterte appeals while drug users and suspected criminals are the ills of society to be

eliminated for the sake of "the people"; this kind of framing create the division between the virtuous public and the dangerous others. The virtuous public sees the opposition towards the war on drugs as a direct challenge to their security; for them, to oppose it is not only dangerous but also seen as an opposition to the state, particularly to the welfare of the general population (Schaffer, 2016). To maintain the regard of "the people" as their champion, a populist leader persistently tries to propagate the crisis so as to remain in power and consolidate political support. This is apparent in Duterte's claim that six (6) months is not enough to eradicate the threats from illegal drugs, so the continuance of his anti-narcotics campaign is the only solution. His war on drugs is both his tool to draw approval from "the people" and at the same time silence his opponents.

In general, we argue that Duterte, as a populist leader, uses the rhetoric of his "war on drugs" campaign to appeal to the people, garner public support, and legitimize his strong-arm rule.

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# WP SERIES 5

# PUBLIC POLICY AND THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

# Iloilo City as a Bike Friendly City: A Quick Assessment

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## Introduction

One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable by 2030. Specifically, in reference to SDGs 11.2 and 11.2.1, SDG 11 states that nations should provide access to secure, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, improved road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations such as women, children, persons with disabilities and senior citizens (IAEG-SDGs, 2016). The SDG reinforces the New Urban Agenda framework that was agreed upon by 170 member states and promotes cycling as examples of Non-motorized Modes of Transportation (NMT), also known as Active Transportation and Human Powered Transportation (United Nations, 2017; TDM Encyclopedia, 2018). Cycling reduces congestion and pollution while improving efficiency, connectivity, accessibility, health, and quality of life.

According to the European Cyclists Federation (ECF), investing in better conditions for cycling would help governments of respective countries achieve these goals. As identified by the ECF, cycling is directly linked to 11 out of 17 Global Goals namely: No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-Being; Gender Equality; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry Innovation and

Infrastructure; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; and Partnerships for the Goals (European Cyclists Federation, 2016).

By making international commitments to the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, governments have made conscious initiatives to invest in making their areas bicycle-friendly. A bicycle-friendly city is a city that has adequate biking facilities, policies, and a consensus to make cycling as one of the main modes of transportation in a city (Zayed, 2016). Cities are now more open to adopting bike-friendly policies and infrastructures because of the benefits to the community and the city in general. In the U.S. there is a movement called "Bicycle Friendly America" that conducts assessments and educational activities in communities as part of promoting cycling as a mode of transportation (The League of American Bicyclists, 2013). European countries have been the frontrunners in promoting bike-friendly cities and the top five countries are Copenhagen, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Strasbourg, and Malmo respectively (Copenhagenize Design Company, 2017).

In the Philippines, local governments have programs and projects that create a bike-friendly environment. In Marikina City, the LGU has created bikeway projects promoting bike-to-work and school programs. The LGU has also increased connectivity by adding new bikeways that link key areas of the city. Moreover, the LGU has a bicycle loan program (Marikina City Bikeways Office & Engineering Department, 2005). Metro Manila also has a similar program called "Metro Padyakan Walk and Bike Way" which attempts to connect the 17 cities and towns of Metro Manila and decongest the traffic by making a safe pathway for both bikers and pedestrians (Metro Manila Development Authority, 2005).

Iloilo City, a highly urbanized city in Western Visayas, has been making strides as a Bike Friendly City with formal recognition as the "Most Bike Friendly City" in the Philippines during the PhilBike Awards 2018 (Albay, 2018). In addition, Iloilo also has two specific ordinances that promote cycling. Ordinance 2014-193 or "An ordinance requiring government and non-government buildings with existing parking spaces to provide a safe bicycle parking zone", and Ordinance 2016-299 or the Benigno Aquino Avenue bike lane regulation ordinance". Apart from existing ordinances, the city has created a plan that will improve connectivity of bike infrastructures through a comprehensive bike lane for the city (Belleza, 2018). Events and organizations that encourage cycling and that bring together cycling enthusiasts have become common events in the city especially during the annual Iloilo Bike Festival.

This research was conducted to make a quick assessment of a particular section of the city that has a bike facility using criteria from existing literature. The quick assessment was done independently by the researchers without reference to the criteria set by the organization that gave the city an official recognition as bike-friendly. The study's main objective is to provide a description of the conditions of a selected bike facility using a set of criteria and is operationalized in the context of Iloilo City. Recommendations are given to meet the set criteria. The main question being addressed by this paper is "what are the conditions of a particular bike facility in Iloilo City based on the set criteria on infrastructure, social dimensions, and institutional factors?".

## Review of Related Literature

### *Cycling as an alternative mode of transportation*
In October 2016, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development adopted the New Urban Agenda, a framework agreed upon by 170 member states for a shared vision of a better and more sustainable future (United Nations, 2017). Non-motorized modes of transportation such as cycling were promoted

throughout the process. The framework promoted a safe, sufficient, and adequate pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and technology-based innovations in transport and transit systems. The purpose was to reduce traffic congestion and pollution while improving efficiency, connectivity, accessibility, health, and overall-quality of life (United Nations, 2017).

The transportation sector is responsible for 22% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. Other sectors, such as energy industries, residential, and commercial/institutional sectors, have managed to bring down emissions over the years. The transport sector, however, was only ble to bring down emissions starting in 2008 (Kruchten, n.d.). Thus, there is indeed a need to promote sustainable alternative modes of transportation that are environmentally-friendly and emission-free such as cycling.

Apart from improving air quality, cycling also alleviates traffic congestion since it is a reasonably fast alternative for short-distance trips, especially, in congested urban networks (Joo, Oh, Jeong, & Lee, 2015). With the rise of urbanization and the need for sustainable mobility solutions, cities are increasingly moving towards cycling as an alternative mode of transportation.

After intensive work and consultation with experts from different industries involved in urban mobility, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development Sustainability Project 2.0 proposed a set of indicators to evaluate the current situation, understand the natural evolution of sustainable mobility, and to evaluate the impact of selected solutions. The following are the dimensions of urban mobility that were considered: global environment, quality of life, economic success, and mobility system  Cycling as an alternative mode of transportation fulfills a good number of indicators for sustainable urban mobility such as: affordability, lesser emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), energy efficiency, comfort and pleasure, among others (WBCSD Mobility, 2015).

Efforts are being made to build cities that are friendlier to non-motorized transport because of the international agreements and movements that work toward decreasing carbon monoxide emissions among others. These initiatives have resulted in the emergence of the term "Bike Friendly City" or BFC. The term has been used in various contexts and studies and different metrics have been developed to measure the bike-friendliness of a city.

### Characteristics of a Bicycle-Friendly City

In recognition of cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation, the term Bicycle-Friendly City (BFC) has been a global trend. A Bicycle-Friendly City has efficient infrastructure, transportation policies and societal consensus to make cycling a main transport mode (Zayed, 2016). Discussed in the following subsection are the different frameworks of measuring the bike-friendliness of a city.

In the 2017 Copenhagenize Index l, bike-friendliness of cities were measured in terms of fourteen parameters, namely: advocacy, bicycle culture, bicycle facilities, bicycle infrastructure, bike share programme, gender split, modal share for bicycles, modal share increase since 2006, perception of safety, politics, social acceptance, urban planning, traffic calming, and cargo bikes and logistics (Copenhagenize Design Company, 2017).

Hull & O'Holleran (2014) assessed whether good design of bicycle infrastructure encourages cycling. In this study, the physical infrastructure attributes and characteristics of the built environment were operationalized through the Level of Service concept. The bicycle infrastructure audit is a qualitative, subjective audit to capture the different user perceptions on the following criteria: coherence, directness, attractiveness, traffic safety, comfort, spatial integration, experience, and social economic value. The League of American Bicyclists (2013) known as Bicycle Friendly America suggests specific indicators

divided into five. Called 5Es, these 5 broad indicators are Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation and Encouragement. As part of the Clean Air Initiative movement, Huzienga (2005) presented indicators to measure the success of cycling and walking interventions. These indicators were directness, coherence, safety, comfort, attractiveness, and institutional set-up. Majority of the indicators focus on the physical component with institutional set-up as the only indicator focused on governance and partnerships among stakeholders.

Zayed (2016) assessed the urban readiness of Egyptian cities to be bicycle-friendly. A set of twelve (12) variables were selected for the study: city area, city population, city population density, city form, city sectors, land use geography, road network length, motorized transport modal split, motorization rate, terrain slope, annual temperature, and yearly precipitation. Of the 12 initial variables, only five were found to be strongly correlated with cycling rates in cities, namely: city population, road network length, city form, city area, and motorized transport modal split.

Hussey (2012) studied the level of bicycle planning in local government units. He developed a framework for analyzing bicycle transportation plans which may be used as the baseline and comparison of current plans that aim to increase higher modal share of bicycle transportation over time. The following criteria were used in the study: knowledge and recognition; goals and objectives; planning, policy, and program; implementation and funding; and maintenance and monitoring.

The 8 80 cities (2016) is a concept that considers the basic needs of an eight-year old and an eighty-year old. The design criteria of 8 80 are as follows: a walkable neighborhood designed for pedestrians rather than cars; physical activity is encouraged by providing safe accessible spaces that is enjoyable to walk or bike; sidewalks are safe from cars, connected, and have physically separated bike lanes; a neighborhood that prioritizes

human interaction and sociability by having vibrant and great public spaces where people can rest, relax and play; and a street with good quality sidewalk, benches, trees flowers, greenery and good pedestrian lighting.

The table below summarizes relevant studies or projects done by academic researchers and professional groups that provide index to Bicycle-Friendly Cities.

**Table 2.1**

*Indexing Bicycle- Friendly Cities*

| Relevant Study/Paper (Title) or Project | Author/s or Proponent/s | Indicators for Bicycle-Friendly Cities |
|---|---|---|
| The Copenhagenize Bicycle-friendly Cities Index | Copenhagenize Design Co. | Advocacy<br>Bicycle culture<br>Bicycle facilities<br>Bicycle infrastructure<br>Bike share programme<br>Gender split<br>Modal share for bicycles<br>Perception of safety<br>Politics<br>Social acceptance<br>Traffic calming<br>Cargo bikes and logistics |
| Bicycle infrastructure: can good design encourage cycling? | Angela Hull, Craig O'Holleran | Coherence<br>Directness<br>Attractiveness<br>Traffic Safety<br>Comfort<br>Spatial Integration<br>Experience<br>Social Economic Value |

| Relevant Study/Paper (Title) or Project | Author/s or Proponent/s | Indicators for Bicycle-Friendly Cities |
|---|---|---|
| Building a Bicycle Friendly America: A roadmap to transforming states, communities, businesses and universities | League of American Bicyclists | Engineering<br>Education<br>Encouragement<br>Enforcement<br>Evaluation |
| Sustainable Urban Transportation: Integrating Cycling and Walking in Urban Transport Planning | Cornie Huizenga | Directness<br>Coherence<br>Safety<br>Comfort<br>Attractiveness<br>Institutional Setup |
| Towards an index of city readiness for cycling | Mohamed Anwer Zayed | City Population<br>Road Network Length<br>City Form<br>City Area<br>Motorized Transport Modal Split |
| Assessing the Level of Bicycle Planning in Local Planning Efforts: A Case Study | Christopher Michael Hussey | Knowledge and Recognition<br>Goals and Objectives<br>Planning<br>Policy and Program<br>Implementation and Funding<br>Maintenance and Monitoring |

| Relevant Study/Paper (Title) or Project | Author/s or Proponent/s | Indicators for Bicycle-Friendly Cities |
|---|---|---|
| 8 80 cities | | a walkable neighborhood designed for pedestrians rather than cars. physical activity is encouraged by providing safe accessible spaces that is enjoyable for walking or biking. |
| | | Sidewalks are safe from cars, connected, and have physically separated bike lanes |
| | | a neighborhood that prioritizes human interaction and sociability by having vibrant and great public spaces where people can rest, relax, and play. |
| | | A street with good quality sidewalk, benches, trees, flowers, greenery, and good pedestrian lighting. |

### Some Issues on Provision of Basic Services on Non-Motorized Transport

The provision of basic services is far from being a purely technical matter. The political and governance context is important in influencing how and where resources are allocated (Devas et al., 2004). This holds quite true in achieving sustainable transport goals particularly in developing regions which have challenges with technical, scientific, management, financial, & political requirements; issues are cross-cutting in nature (Khisty, n.d.; Rahman, D'este, & Bunker, 2008; GSDRC, 2016).

1. Land-use patterns and growth dynamics are not carefully coordinated to encourage non-motorized modes.

2. Space/time/capacity/cost studies of all non-motorized modes are not adequately studied particularly the relationship between various modes and pedestrianization.

3. Motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation are viewed as competing forces rather than integrated and complementary forces.

4. Lack of information/data to facilitate decision-making in service delivery and enable justification of decisions.

5. Low levels of community participation in government planning because the means are largely thru formal ways of public participation. At the same time, the public has limited knowledge of the urban authorities' roles in service provision.

6. Inadequate sources of revenue.

7. Multiple and overlapping structures and actors.

### Technical Guidelines for Bicycle Infrastructure

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NATCO, 2009) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) have set up guidelines on bike facilities that are safe and comfortable (Toole Design Group, LLC, 2019).

**Table 2.2**

*NACTO Global Street Design Guide*

| Features | Description | Illustration |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Bike lane | The minimum painted on-street bike lane is 6 feet (ft) with marked buffer zone of 3 feet (ft) and can be used as parking lanes. |  |
| 2. Type of buffers | a. On-street marked buffers are painted spaces parallel to cycle lanes that separate them from motorized vehicle traffic. |  |
| | b. Planted buffers are barriers built into the roadbed that provide a physical separation to a cycleway as green infrastructure. |  |
| | c. Segmented concrete dividers create physical separation of a cycle lane to prevent intrusion of cars and trucks while allowing cyclists to exit the cycleway. |  |

| Features | Description | Illustration |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Bike boxes | (5) Advanced Stop Bars (ASB) provide designated areas ahead of stop lines for vehicles at signalized intersections. ASB should be at least 3 meters (m) deep or higher, allowing cyclists to maneuver into them and face forward. |  |
| 4. Corner Refuge island | Corner refuge islands are concrete barriers at intersection corners with a curved space for cycles between the sidewalk and the roadway. (2) Mark protected cycle tracks at conflict zones such as mid-block crossings, curb cuts, and through intersections. |  |
| 5. Cycle racks, cycle coral, cycle station | Cycle racks or cycle coral are street elements to securely park, a place that occupies space in the parking lane and should be placed at least 0.75 meter (m) apart. |  |

| Features | Description | Illustration |
|---|---|---|
| 6. Cycle Facilities at Transit Stops | **Cycle Track Behind Boarding Island** Curbside cycle tracks may be routed behind transit stops to maintain continuity while enabling better transit service. Cyclists are directed into a street-level channel which uses color and markings to inform cyclists of the expectation to yield to pedestrians. |  |
| | a. **Cycle Track on Bus Bulb** This design is most appropriate where transit ridership or cyclist volumes are relatively low. It provides the best pedestrian access to the stop, since the cycle lane is at the same level as the stop. Though the design favors pedestrians and may slow cyclists down, it also creates the most opportunities for conflicts. |  |
| | b. **Cycle Lane Behind Boarding Island** This design is most suited for streets with no parking lane, and it is the only design that does not require an extension into the roadway. The angled geometry forces cyclists to slow down in the cycle lane and should ensure that sidewalk paths remain safe and clear. |  |

| Features | Description | Illustration |
|---|---|---|
| 7. Protected Cycle Facilities at Intersections | The protected intersection enables cyclist turns to be safe, two stage movements aligned with concurrent traffic flow, decreasing sideswipe and right-hook conflicts.<br><br>**Main elements:**<br>**1** Corner refuge island<br>**2** Forward stop line<br>**3** Setback crossing by extending the curb |  |

**Table. 2.3**

*AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*

| Features | Description | Illustration |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Way finding signs | Way finding sign provides clear user information and navigational instructions to bicyclist to destination. |  |
| 2. Bike lane symbol | Additional markings may be placed at periodic intervals on bike lanes, to remind motorists of the potential presence of bicyclists, especially in areas where motorists are expected to cross bike lanes. In suburban areas with long distances between intersections and little roadside activity, bike lane symbols can be as far apart as 1000 ft (305 m) or more. |  |
| 3. Warning signs | Advance warning signs and solid centerline striping should be placed at the required stopping sight distance from the roadway edge, but not less than 50 ft (15 m). |  |

In the Philippines, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH, 2012) released a highway safety design standard divided into two parts namely: Road Safety Design Manual and Road Sign and Pavement Marking Manual. This manual sets a design standard in terms of safety which includes protected bicycle lanes and signages as protective parameters for human-powered vehicle or cyclist.

- In Book 1- 10.2 Vulnerable Road Users (for Cyclists), separate lanes must be provided for cyclists, especially in heavily trafficked routes. Cyclists are unprotected and when mixed with faster moving vehicles can produce a hazardous situation. Moreover, the pedestrian walkway and bikeway must be separated from the main thoroughfare.

- In Book 2- 11 Miscellaneous Signs (R6), the bike lane sign (R6-10) must have a black symbol, legend, and border. It should also have a reflectorized fluorescent yellow green background. The bike lane signs vary from 450 mm, 600 mm, and 750mm. The bike lane sign is used when a stretch of roadway is dedicated to a bike lane for bicycle use only and to protect cyclists who may not be perceptible to motorists. This is a regulatory sign and requires cyclists to use the Bike Lane only.

There are pending bills favorable to cyclists such as House Bill No. 174 or the Bicycle Act of 2016 or an Act for the Creation of Local Bikeways Office (LBO). This establishes related bike facilities and lays down the bicycle rights to cyclists. Senate Bill No. 400 (or Bike Friendly Communities Act) is an act that promotes the use of bicycles as an alternative mode of transportation and establishes bike friendly communities.

### Initiatives in the Philippines

In support of the road sharing movement, the President reorganized the task force on climate change and directed DPWH & DOTr (then DOTC) to transform roads, giving favor to non-motorized locomotion & collective transportation system such as walking and bicycling (Sec 9, E.O. 774, s. 2008). The purpose is to reduce fossil fuel consumption (DPWH to include, 2019). There is also the Philippine Urban Mobility Programme (PUMP) which provides mechanisms by which the national government is able to support local

government to plan schemes which support sustainable urban mobility (GIZ, n.d.). Duterte's administration has included in its Build, Build, Build program the inclusion of provision that some modern bridges will have bike lanes (DPWH to include…, 2019).

Most recently, there is a joint memorandum order that urges LGUs, with DILG, DOTr, DOH, DPWH, to construct protected biking lanes & walking paths (JAO 2020-0001). Moreover, the public are urged to consider active transport, e.g. as walking and biking, as alternative modes of transportation amid the COVID-19 crisis (https://www.dilg.gov.ph/issuances-archive/jc/).

On the part of the local government unit, one of the devolved functions is to plan and to provide safe, affordable, accessible & sustainable transport systems to the public (LGC 1991). This provision shall be articulated in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Development Plan, and the Zoning Ordinance.

### Framework in the Assessment of the Conditions of a Bike Facility

Based on existing literature, the researchers identified three components to assess the conditions of a bike facility in a particular section in Iloilo City. These components are then operationalized in local context.

**Table 2.4.**

*Conceptual and Operational Definition of Components for Assessment*

| Component of Assessment | Conceptual Definition | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Infrastructure | Physical infrastructure and hardware to support cycling<br><br>*Source: The League of American Bicyclists* | In this study, infrastructure will be measured through the presence of bike lanes, bike racks, road signs and their adherence to minimum standards based on the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Global Street Design Guide by the National Association of city transportation officials (NATCO). |
| Institutional | Equitable laws and programs that ensure motorists and cyclists are held accountable; processes that demonstrate a commitment to measuring results and planning for the future<br><br>*Source: The League of American Bicyclists* | Existence and proper implementation of ordinances supporting or promoting the use of bikes as alternative modes of transportation |

| Component of Assessment | Conceptual Definition | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Social | **-** Programs that ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of cyclists and fellow road users<br>- Incentives, promotions and opportunities that inspire and enable people to ride<br><br>*Source: The League of American Bicyclists* | Presence of regular bike/ride events and bike organizations |

Three dimensions were considered in the assessment: infrastructure, institutional and social. Under each dimension, specific indicators were identified based on the existing BFC assessment tools and applicability to Iloilo City.

**Table 2.5**

*Conceptual and Operational Definition of Components*

| Specific Indicator/Component | Conceptual Definition | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| **Infrastructure Component** | | |
| a.   Coherence | Continuity, logically connected destinations<br><br>*Source: Hull & O'Holleran, 2014* | Availability of route plan connecting to places like schools, offices, malls and work area and perception of cyclists regarding continuity of bike lanes. |

| Specific Indicator/Component | Conceptual Definition | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| b. Attractiveness | The cycle infrastructure is designed, furnished, and illuminated with personal safety in mind to make cycling socially safe and attractive<br><br>*Source: Hull & O'Holleran, 2014* | Existence of bike racks and lightings for cyclists, and perception of cyclists regarding sufficiency of these bike facilities. |
| c. Comfort | The cycle infrastructure allows cycle traffic to circulate smoothly<br><br>*Source: Hull & O'Holleran, 2014* | Standard bike lane width and perception of cyclists regarding sufficiency in bike lane width. |
| d. Road Safety | Infrastructure design ensures the traffic safety of all users<br><br>*Source: Hull & O'Holleran, 2014* | Establishment of standard road markings for bicycle users that is visible for all user groups, as well as perception of cyclists regarding sufficiency of the road markings, and perception of cyclists regarding sufficiency of signages for all road users. |

**Institutional Component**

| Specific Indicator/Component | Conceptual Definition | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| a. Information, Education, and Communication | Information, Education Communication is an approach to change or reinforce a set behavior in a target audience regarding a specific topic or problem.<br><br>*Source: Hawaibam,2015* | Awareness of key informants and cyclists on existing ordinances and perception of cyclists on the materials used for bike advocacies and campaigns. |
| b. Implementation | System by which some members of society act in an organized manner to enforce the law by discovering, deterring, rehabilitating, or punishing people who violate the rules and norms governing that society.<br><br>*Source:New Law Journal - Volume 123, Part 1 - Page 358, 1974* | Refers to actions related to implementation of ordinances as reported by key informants and survey respondents. |
| **Social Component** | | |
| Sociability | Stronger sense of place or attachment to the community and to the place that fosters social activities<br><br>*Source: Project for Public Spaces* | Regular bike events and the presence of bike organizations with membership open for people across ages and gender. |

A graphical representation of the assessment framework is presented in the figure below:

CRITERIA

**Institutional Dimensions:**
- IEC awareness of survey respondents
- Subjective rating of ordinance implementation

**Social Component:**
- Conduct of regular bike events open to people across age, gender

**Infrastructure Components:**
- Coherence
- Attractiveness
- Comfort
- Road safety

Met the Criteria/
Did Not Meet the Criteria

Suggestions to
Meet the Criteria
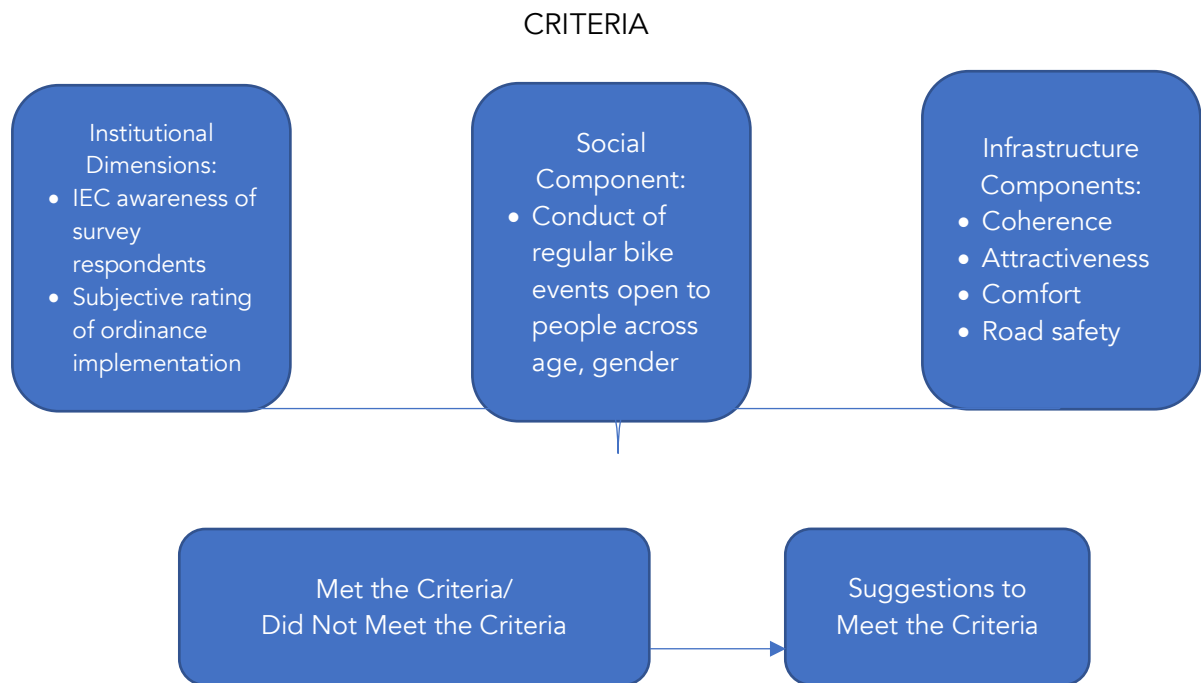
**Figure 2.1** Framework for the Assessment of Bike Facility Conditions (Authors, 2019)

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study used qualitative-quantitative descriptive research design. In this type of design, the researchers are interested in describing the situation or case under study. (Bhat, 2019). This design attempts to gather information that can be used to statistically analyze a target audience. This study uses both observational and survey method wherein researchers interact with individual test subjects by collecting information thru surveys or interviews. Thirty (30) survey respondents and a handful of key informants answered questions related to bicycle infrastructure, policies (ordinances), and the cycling community of Iloilo City. The data are both quantitative and qualitative, and are presented in the form of descriptive statistics, represented in tables, graphs, and charts.

*Description of Study Site*

Iloilo City is a highly urbanized city in Western Visayas. It sits at the southwestern edge of the Province of Iloilo in the island of Panay and is considered as the gateway to Panay Island and the Western Visayas Region (Iloilo CPDO, 2011). Iloilo City has a total of 7,834 hectares as established in November 2007 through an approved Base Map prepared by the DENR Land Management Bureau (LMB), Manila. The city has a gently graded topography, a characteristic that is crucial for a safe and comfortable transport network (Majumdara and Mitra, 2013).

From the city's 2010 and 2013 Socio-Economic Profile and road survey done by the DPWH, the city has a 260 kilometer length of roads. The primary mode of transport is by public transport, in particular, public utility jeepneys (PUJs). Based on volume counts and passenger occupancy data, it is estimated that 80 to 85% of daily trips within the city proper are made using public transport such as jeepneys, taxis and tricycles (ALMEC Corp., 2015)

Iloilo City has recently been making strides as a Bicycle Friendly City, having been awarded as the "Most Bike Friendly City" of the Philippines during the PhilBike Awards 2018 (Albay, 2018). The following maps show the Proposed Comprehensive Bike Lanes, Proposed University Bike Loops, and portion indicating the implemented bike lanes by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).
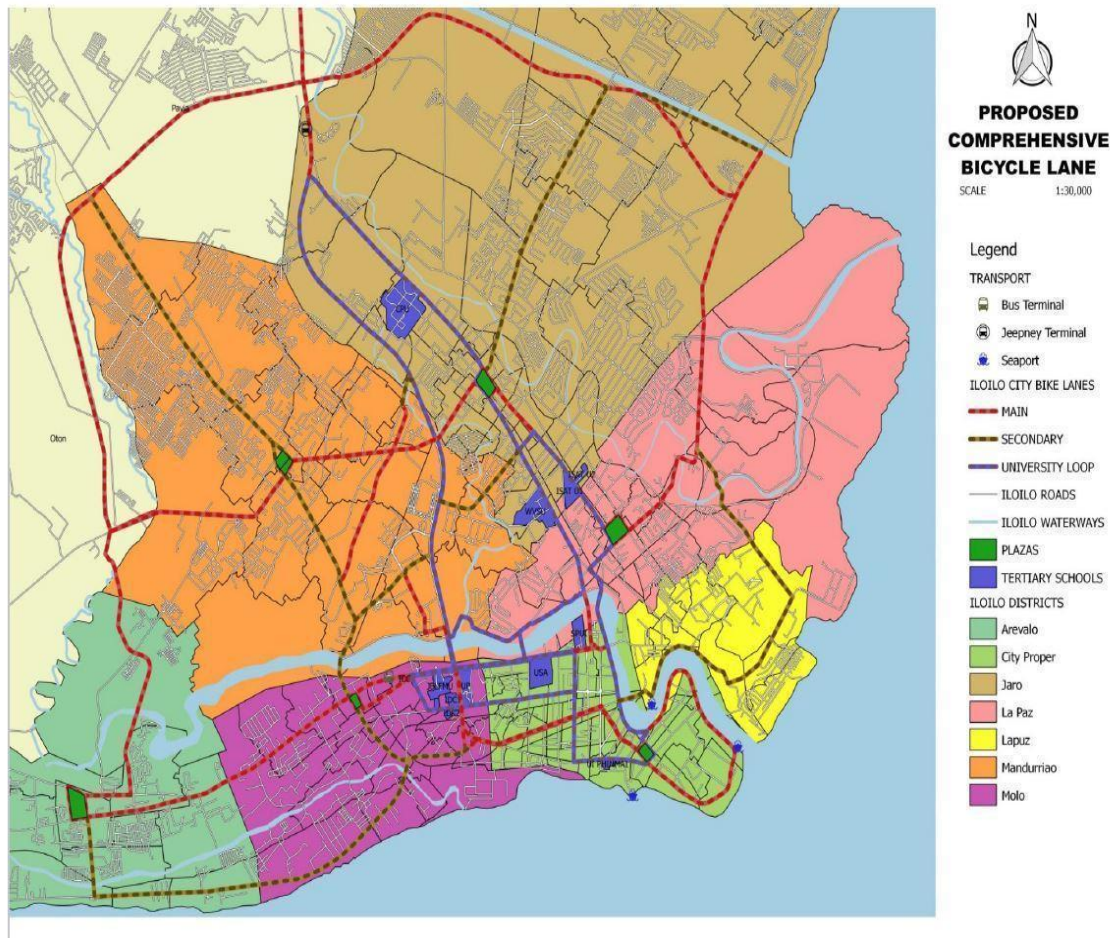
**Figure 4.1** Proposed Comprehensive Bicycle Lane of Iloilo City (CPDO, 2019)

The comprehensive bike lane consists of main tracks plying the major highways of the city, and secondary tracks that connect the main tracks. A proposed university bike loop is also indicated. The proposed bike lanes traverse all districts of Iloilo City. The university bike loop as shown in figure 4.6 is divided into phases. The existing portion is the bike lane along Benigno Aquino Avenue. Phase 1 is already partially implemented, with road markings for bikes along General Luna, Delgado, and Infante Streets, near the University of the Philippines Visayas - Iloilo City campus and the University of San Agustin. Shown in the following map is a zoomed in map of the implemented bike lane along the proposed university loop.
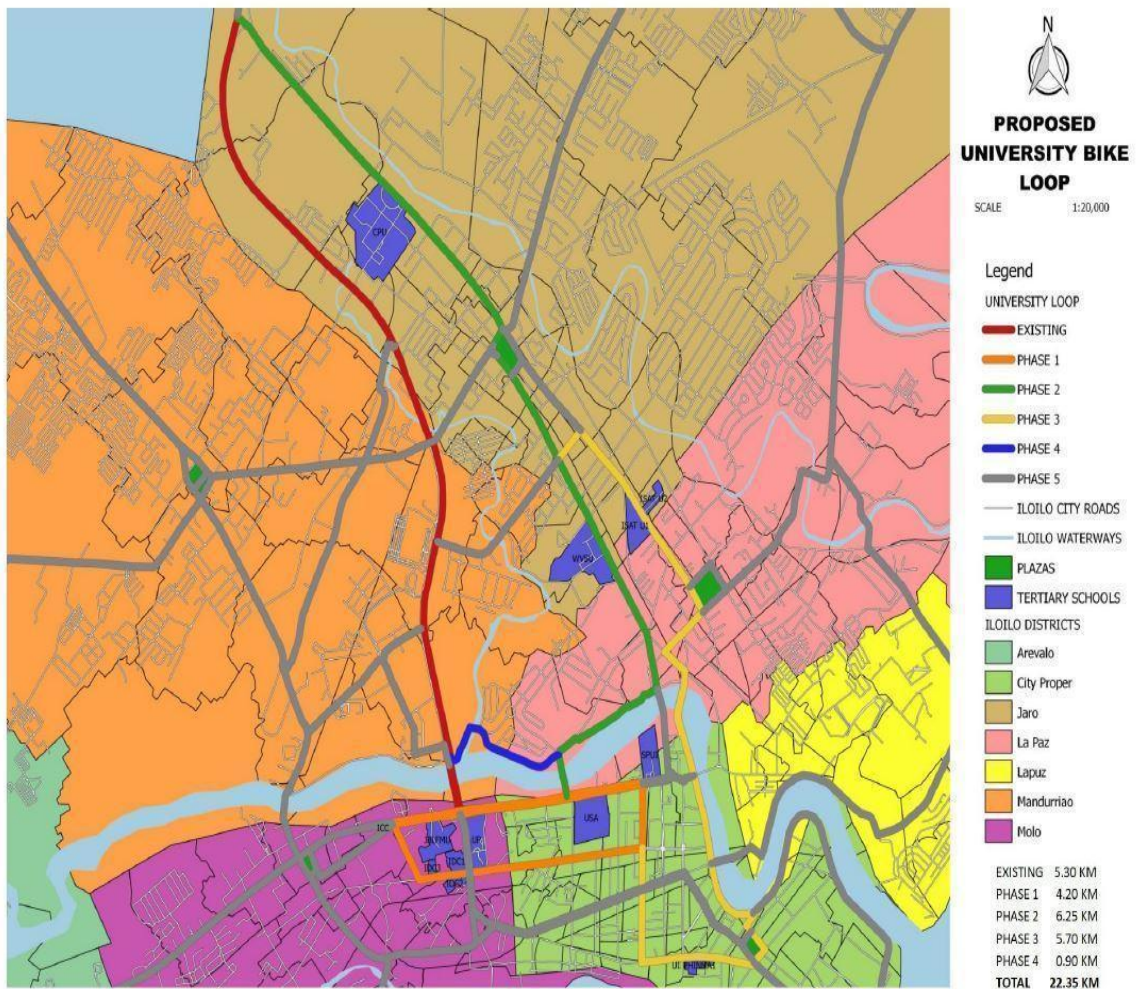
**Figure 4.2** Proposed University Bike Loop of Iloilo City (CPDO, 2019)
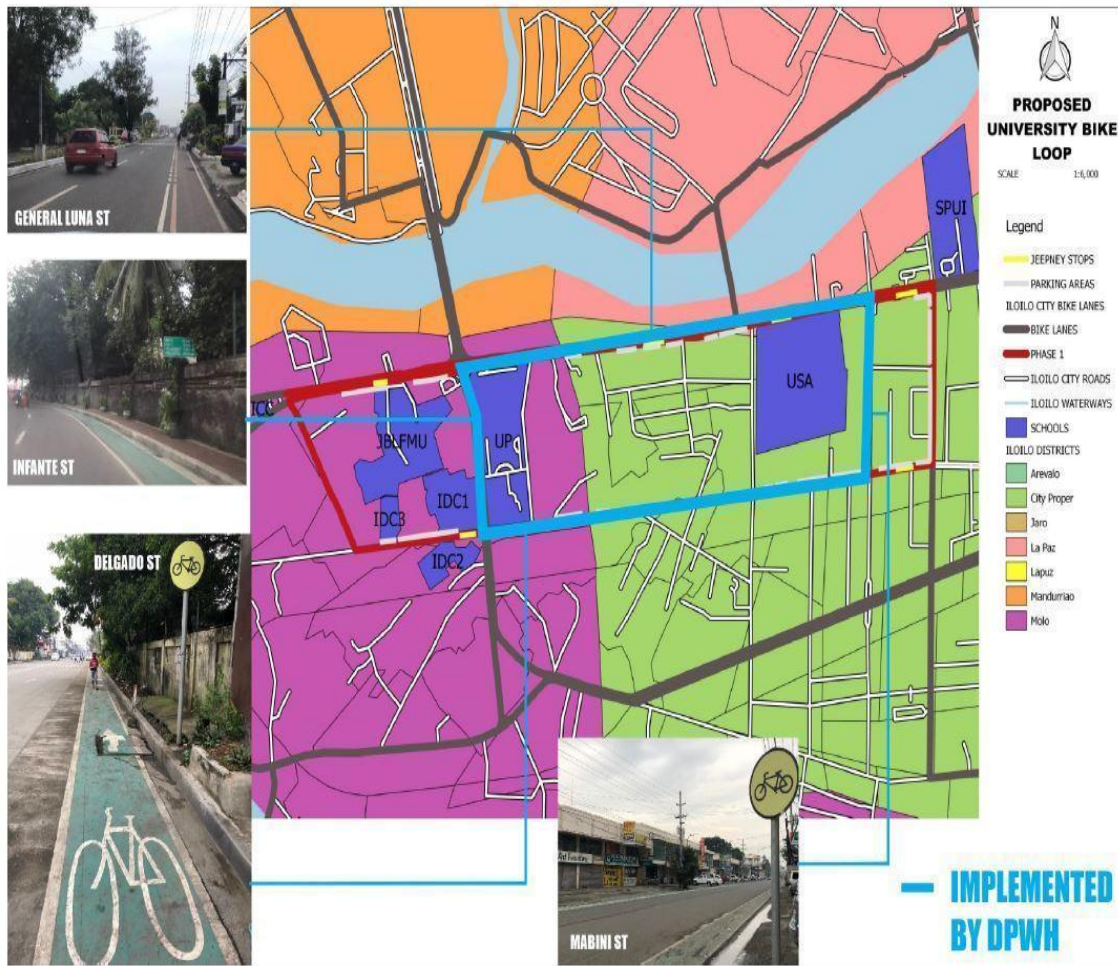
**Figure 4.3** Portion of Bike lane Implemented by DPWH (CPDO, 2019)

### Review of Secondary Data

The researchers gathered secondary data from key informants and offices. Of the documents collected, the following policies/plans were reviewed: Ordinance 2014-193 or an ordinance requiring government and non-government buildings with existing parking spaces to provide a safe bicycle parking zone, Ordinance 2016-299 or the Benigno Aquino Avenue bike lane regulation ordinance, and the Transport and Traffic Management Plan for Iloilo City under the Traffic and Transport Management for Philippine City Development Strategies (CDS) Cities Project supported by the Cities

Alliance (CA) and the World Bank (WB). These secondary data were reviewed through a Traffic Control Plan/Policies Checklist prepared by the researchers.

*Survey*

The survey with thirty (30) respondents was conducted during one the bike event in the city with the permission of the organizer. This was to ensure the availability of respondents. The target of the survey was the bike-enthusiasts and the bikers participating in the event. The respondent had to consider himself/herself to be a bicyclist enthusiast and had an experience driving within city vicinity or a long drive distance travel as a frequent road user. He/she had a purpose (leisure, exercise, mode of transport, travel tour) in traveling from point of origin to destination using bike as mode of transportation. The respondent as a bike enthusiast, should have had experienced driving along major thoroughfares during peak hours, to have a valuable insight regarding the physical aspect of bike infrastructure.

The self-administered questionnaire is divided into three (3) parts: the first part consists of information about the respondents; the second part asks the respondents on their perception of Iloilo's biking infrastructure; and, the third part asks about their perceptions of laws and guidelines related to biking.

The researchers used purposive sampling which is a sampling method that identifies common characteristics of the population and group them all together based on identified similarities (Palinkas, L. A., 2015). In this study, they were the bikers and enthusiasts that were present during the event.

*Key Informants Interview*

These interviews were conducted with national government agencies and local government offices as well as members of the Federation of Iloilo Cycling Organizations (FICO) who provided 'expert 'opinion on bike infrastructure in Iloilo City. The key informants are given questions tailored to their office or position. Key informants from City Planning Development Office (CPDO), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and City Engineer's Office are given questions related to biking infrastructure. Members of the Federation of Iloilo Cycling Organizations (FICO) are given questions related to the social aspect of biking. A representative from the Public Safety and Transport Management Office (PSTMO) and a city councilor were given questions about related laws and ordinances and its implementations (for the institutional component of the study).

*Assessment of Design Standards for Bicycle Infrastructure*

A checklist was created by the researchers to assess whether the bike lanes meet the criteria set in this paper.

## Study Results and Initial Analysis

*Secondary Data*

### Local Biking Ordinances

The city government of Iloilo passed two local ordinances to support biking in the city - Ordinance 2014-193 or "An Ordinance Requiring Government and Non-government Buildings With existing Parking Spaces to Provide a Safe Bicycle Parking Zone", and Ordinance 2016-299 or the "Benigno Aquino Avenue Bike Lane Regulation Ordinance". The table below shows the checklist used on biking ordinances.

**Table 4.1**

*Secondary Data Analysis of Existing Biking Ordinances for Iloilo City*

| PLANS | Yes | No | Remarks (If the answer is No, provide brief description) |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Were public hearings/consultations conducted prior to the crafting of the policies? | x | | |
| b. Is there a special or regular budgetary fund for the implementation of the policies? | X | | There is a special budget from projects but not a regular budget. Once the project ends, funding will also stop. |
| c. Have all provisions been implemented? | | x | Not all provisions are sufficiently implemented since budget comes from special projects. For implementation, there should be a regular budget. |
| d. Is there a monitoring tool incorporated in the policies? | | x | A monitoring tool was not stated in the Ordinances. |
| e. Are the prohibited provisions clearly stated? | x | | |

From the checklist above, public consultations were conducted prior to the drafting of the existing ordinances, and provisions especially prohibitions, are stated clearly. However, there is no monitoring tool incorporated in the policies which would show whether objectives and targets are being met or not and actions to be done to respond to potential issues. There is a special budget for bike-related facilities. However, once the project stops, there will no longer be a budget. It is necessary to have a regular budget but this requires local officials to give such projects high priority.

*Transport and Traffic Management Plan*

This transport and traffic management plan for Iloilo City was formulated in collaboration with the Iloilo City Project Team (Iloilo CPT) and in consultation with key stakeholders. The vision-mission of Iloilo City calls to expand and improve the city's infrastructure, thereby securing a dynamic, safe, and healthy environment conducive to learning, sports and eco-cultural tourism. To meet this vision-mission, the TTM Project Team, together with the Iloilo CPT members, set five transport goals, (i) Improve road safety; (ii) Improve public transport quality; (iii) Reduce air pollution from transport; (iv) Reduce traffic congestion; and (v) Enhance transport equity (ALMEC Corporation, March 2015).

Table 4.2 shows the analysis checklist of the transport and traffic management plan of Iloilo City.

**Table 4.2**

*Secondary Data Analysis of Transport and Traffic Management Plan for Iloilo City*

| PLANS | Yes | No | Remarks (If the answer is No, provide brief description) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Have all provisions been implemented? | | x | Section 4. 2 Under Table 5.2 Traffic Signalization Project and Table 5.10 Bikeway Network Expansion Project of the plan was not materialized. |
| Sufficient Information | | | |
| a. Are there sufficient maps, graphs, tables, and pictorial representations? | x | | |
| b. Are plans simple and comprehensive? | x | | |

c. There is a clear purpose and goals          x
   of the plans.

---

The transport plan has clear goals and purpose, has sufficient information and is comprehensive. However, key informants say that while there is a plan, the implementation of the contents of the plan is another matter and poses a challenge. The main challenge is that there is no allotted regular budget for the plan as funds are generated through special projects only.

### Survey

Thirty (30) bikers participated in the survey conducted by the researchers during the Earth Hour Night Ride organized by Habagat last March 30, 2019 at Robinsons Place Jaro. Summarized in the following tables are the results of the survey.

**Table 4.3**

*Sex of Survey Respondents*

| Sex | f n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 29 | 96.67 |
| Female | 1 | 3.33 |
| **Total** | **30** | 100.00 |

Table 4.3 shows the sex of bikers who participated in the survey. Of the 30 respondents, 29 were male and only 1 was female. For this reason, the researchers decided to disregard sex distribution in the presentation and analysis of subsequent questions.

**Table 4.4**

*Place of Residence of Survey Respondents*

| Place of Residence | f n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Within Iloilo City (District not specified) | 11 | 36.67 |
| Jaro District | 7 | 23.33 |
| Mandurriao District | 5 | 16.67 |
| Outside Iloilo City | 2 | 6.67 |
| Molo District | 2 | 6.67 |
| Lapaz District | 1 | 3.33 |
| Arevalo District | 1 | 3.33 |
| No Answer | 1 | 3.33 |
| **Total** | 30 | 100.00 |

Table 4.4 shows the place of residence of the bikers who participated in the survey. Of the 30 respondents, 27 were from Iloilo City, 2 were from outside the city, and 1 respondent did not specify his/her place of residence. Of the 27 respondents from Iloilo City, 7 were from Jaro district, 5 from Mandurriao district, 2 from Molo district, and 1 each from Lapaz and Arevalo districts. Of the 2 respondents who were from outside the city, 1 was from Lambunao, Iloilo and 1 was from Roxas City, Capiz.

**Table 4.5**

*Number of years that survey respondents participated in bike events*

| Number of years participating in bike events | f<br>n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0-3 years | 8 | 26.67 |
| 4-6 years | 11 | 36.67 |
| 7-9 years | 3 | 10.00 |
| 10 years onwards | 5 | 16.67 |
| No answer | 3 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | 30 | 100.00 |

Table 4.5 shows the number of years that survey respondents participated in bike events. Of the 30 respondents, 8 participated in bike events within 0-3 years, 11 participated within 4-6 years, 3 participated within 7-9 years, 5 participated for 10 years and beyond, while 3 did not give an answer. On the average, respondents participated in bike events for at least 5 years. Also shown in the table are the percentage of the corresponding years of participation in bike events.

**Table 4.6**

*Reasons of survey respondents for participating in bike events*

| Reasons for participating in bike events? | f n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Health | 10 | 33.33 |
| Social | 8 | 26.67 |
| Leisure | 6 | 20.00 |
| Advocacy | 5 | 16.67 |
| No Answer | 1 | 3.33 |
| **Total** | 30 | 100.00 |

Table 4.6 shows the reasons of survey respondents for participating in bike events. Of the 30 respondents, 10 cycled to achieve health benefits, 8 cycled to widen their social circles and meet new people, 6 cycled for leisure/recreational purposes, 5 cycled to promote specific advocacies, and 1 did not give an answer.

**Table 4.7**

*Person who influenced survey respondents to participate in bike events*

| Person/s who influenced you to participate in bike events? | f n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Peers | 18 | 60.00 |
| Immediate Family | 3 | 10.00 |
| Nobody | 2 | 6.67 |
| Relatives | 1 | 3.33 |

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| Person/s who influenced you to participate in bike events? | f<br>n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| No Answer | 6 | 20.00 |
| **Total** | 30 | 100.00 |

Table 4.7 shows the person/s who influenced the survey respondents to participate in bike events. On top of the list with 18 answers was peers. The remaining answers were immediate family with 3 counts, nobody (i.e. biking was cyclist's own choice) with 2 counts, and other relatives with 1 count. Of the 30 respondents, 6 did not give any answer to this query.

Table 4.8

*Membership of survey respondents in bike organizations*

| Are you a member of a bike organization? | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| **YES** | | |
| *Specify bike organization* | | |
| Cinderella | 6 | 20.00 |
| Trail Seekers | 6 | 20.00 |
| Ill Fixed Gear | 3 | 10.00 |
| CCC | 2 | 6.67 |
| Padjakeroz Iloilo Chapter | 2 | 6.67 |
| Iloilo Bike Campers/A.G. | 1 | 3.33 |
| ISAT U Bikers | 1 | 3.33 |
| Mang Inasal Bikers | 1 | 3.33 |

| Are you a member of a bike organization? | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| Striker Team | 1 | 3.33 |
| Sub-Total | 23 | 76.67 |
| **NO** | | |
| *Are you planning to join any?* | | |
| Yes | 4 | 13.33 |
| Depends | 1 | 3.33 |
| No Answer | 2 | 6.67 |
| Sub-Total | 7 | 23.33 |
| **Total** | 30 | 100.00 |

Table 4.8 shows the membership of survey respondents in bike organizations. Of the 30 respondents, 23 were members of bike organizations (see table for specific names of organizations) while 7 were not members of any bike organization. Of the 7 who were not members of bike organizations, 4 planned to join a bike organization in the future.

**Table 4.9**

*Assessment of Survey Respondents on Existing Bike Infrastructure of Iloilo City*

| Questions | YES | | NO | | No Answer | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | n=30 |
| Do you think the width of the bike track or lane is sufficient in Iloilo City? comfort | 20 | 66.67 | 10 | 33.33 | 0 | 0.00 | 30 |
| Is there continuity to lanes? coherence | 20 | 66.67 | 10 | 33.33 | 0 | 0.00 | 30 |
| Do you think road markings for bikers are visible to all user groups? safety | 19 | 63.33 | 11 | 36.67 | 0 | 0.00 | 30 |
| Do you think there is sufficient number of bike racks in the city? attractiveness | 11 | 36.67 | 18 | 60.00 | 1 | 3.33 | 30 |
| Are road signages sufficient for bike lanes? safety | 12 | 40.00 | 18 | 60.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 30 |
| Do you think there is sufficient lighting along bike tracks/lanes? attractiveness | 13 | 43.33 | 17 | 56.67 | 0 | 0.00 | 30 |

Table 4.9 shows the assessment of survey respondents on the existing bike infrastructure of Iloilo City. Twenty (20) survey respondents, or 66.67% of the total, think that the width of the bike track or lane is sufficient. The same number also believes that there is continuity in the bike lanes. Nineteen (19) survey respondents, or 63.33% of the total,

think that road markings for bikers are visible to all user groups. Eleven (11) survey respondents, or 36.67% of the total, think there is sufficient number of bike racks in the city. Twelve (12) survey respondents, or 40% of the total, believe that road signages are sufficient in the city. Only thirteen (13) survey respondents, or 43.33% of the total, believe that there is sufficient lighting along bike tracks/lanes. More than 50% of the bikers perceive directness through continuity of lanes, comfort due to sufficient bike lane widths, and safety through road markings. Less than 50% however, perceive the sufficiency of bike racks, signages and lighting for bikers. The survey results show the gaps perceived by the bikers in Iloilo City are mainly on these types of bike infrastructure.

**Table 4.10**

*Respondents 'Perception of Biking Safety in Iloilo City*

| On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 as the highest, how safe do you feel when biking? | f n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 to 3 | 4 | 13.33 |
| 4 to 6 | 12 | 40.00 |
| 7 to 10 | 11 | 36.67 |
| No answer | 3 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | 30 | 100.00 |

Table 4.10 shows the rating of survey respondents on the safety of biking in Iloilo City. Four (4) respondents rated bike safety in the city between 0 to 3, twelve (12) rated it to be between 4 to 6, 10 rated it to be between 7 to 10, and four (4) respondents did not give any answer.

**Table 4.10.1**

*Respondents'Reasons for the Rating on Biking Safety*

| Reasons for the Rating | f<br>n=27 | % |
|---|---|---|
| There is improvement in the bike infrastructure to improve road safety | 6 | 22.22 |
| Road safety depends on the driver | 5 | 18.52 |
| There is improvement in the enforcement of biking policies and traffic rules to improve road safety | 2 | 7.41 |
| No answer | 14 | 51.85 |
| **Total** | 27 | 100.00 |

Table 4.10.1 shows the reasons of the respondents for their ratings in Table 4.8. Of the 27 respondents who rated biking safety in Iloilo City, 14 persons or 51.85% did not give any reason for rating while the remaining 13 respondents, or 48.15%, gave the following reasons: road safety depends on the driver, needs more improvement in bike infrastructure, needs better enforcement of biking policies and traffic rules.

**Table 4.11**

*Respondents'Awareness of Policies and Ordinances on Cycling*

| Are you aware of policies or ordinances pertaining to cycling in Iloilo City? | f<br>f=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 17 | 56.67 |
| No | 12 | 40.00 |
| No Answer | 1 | 3.33 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100.00** |

The table above shows that 17 respondents are well-aware of the policies and ordinances and 12 respondents were not aware of the policies, while 1 did not provide any answer.

**Table 4.11.1**

*Respondents 'Perception on the Implementation of Local Bike Ordinances*

| On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 as the highest, how well-implemented are local bike ordinances? | f n=17 | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 to 3 | 4 | 23.53 |
| 4 to 6 | 6 | 35.29 |
| 7 to 10 | 5 | 29.41 |
| No answer | 2 | 11.76 |
| **Total** | **17** | **100.00** |

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 as the highest), the respondents rated how well implemented the local bike ordinances are. Of the 17 respondents who were aware of policies/ordinances pertaining to cycling in Iloilo City (see table 4.9), 4 persons gave a rating between 0 to 3, 6 persons gave a rating between 4 to 6, 5 persons gave a rating between 7 to 10, and 2 persons gave no rating at all.

**Table 4.11.2**

*Respondents 'Reasons for the Ratings*

| Reasons for Rating | f<br>n=17 | %<br>(n/17) |
|---|---|---|
| Poor Implementation | 3 | 17.65 |
| Lack of Awareness | 3 | 17.65 |
| Good Implementation | 2 | 11.76 |
| No Answer | 9 | 52.94 |
| **Total** | **17** | **100.00** |

The table above shows the reasons for the rating of the respondents. The researchers have narrowed down the answers into four categories namely: No Answer, Poor Implementation, Lack of Awareness and Good Implementation. The results show that 3 respondents gave the ratings because of poor implementation, 3 respondents gave reasons pertaining to the lack of awareness of the public, and 2 respondents gave reasons pertaining to good implementation. The rest of the respondents, or 52.94%, did not give any reasons for their rating.

**Table 4.12**

*Respondents 'Perception of Iloilo City as a Bike Friendly City*

| On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 as the highest, how bike-friendly is Iloilo City? | f<br>n=30 | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 to 3 | 1 | 3.33 |
| 4 to 6 | 4 | 13.33 |
| 7 to 10 | 20 | 66.67 |
| No Answer | 5 | 16.67 |
| **Total** | **30** | **100.00** |

Table 4.12 shows the perception of the respondents toward the idea of Iloilo as a Bike Friendly City. One (1) respondent gave a rating in the range of 3 and below, 4 respondents gave ratings in the range of 4-6 while 21 respondents gave ratings in the range of 7-10 and lastly 4 respondents did not give any ratings.

**Table 4.12.1**

*Respondents 'Reasons for the Rating*

| Reasons for Rating | f<br>n = 25 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Bike Friendly City | 9 | 36.00 |
| Needs Improvement | 8 | 32.00 |
| No Answer | 8 | 32.00 |
| **Total** | **25** | **100.00** |

The table above shows the reasons for the rating in the table. The answers were categorized into No Answer, Bike Friendly City and Needs improvement. Thirteen (13) respondents did not provide any reason for their ratings. Eleven (11) respondents gave reasons on why Iloilo is a Bike Friendly City while 11 respondents said Iloilo city needs more improvement to be a bike friendly city.

*Key Informant Interview*

The researchers communicated with key informants from offices and organizations such as the Federation of Ilonggo Cycling Organizations, City Planning Development Office (CPDO), the Public Safety & Transportation Management Office (PSTMO), City Engineer's Office, Department of Public Works and Highways, and key local government officials who are responsible for policy-making and implementation of bike-related ordinances and regulations. Table 4.13 shows the profile of major key informants involved in the planning and design process in the formulation of the infrastructure facilities, policies &

programs. The responses of the key informants are summarized in the succeeding tables below.

**Table 4.13**

*Profile of Key Informants*

| Profile | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Sex | All Males - 4 |
| Affiliation | Federation of Ilonggo Cycling organizations (FICO), City Planning & Development Office, and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), City councilor |
| Current Position | - Project Development Officer III (CPDO);<br>- ENGINEER II, planning and design section (DPWH);<br>- ENGINEER II, Planning and Design Section (DPWH);<br>- City councilor (City Council) |
| No. of Years in Current Office | 2 to 6 years |

**Table 4.14**

*Assessment On Bike Friendliness*

| ASSESSMENT ON BIKE FRIENDLINESS | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| In your opinion, what is a bicycle friendly city? | Supports bike commuting in terms of infrastructure & institutions | Promotes alternative mode of transportation and recreation | Reduces pollution, traffic congestion, accidents; as environment-friendly communities | Promotes bike programs, policies, and infrastructure |

## ASSESSMENT ON BIKE FRIENDLINESS

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What are the projects and activities of your office related to the promotion of a bicycle-friendly city? | Bike racks for city hall; Bike agenda in the local transport plan | Bicycle parking ordinance; reflector/blinker ordinance; Benigno Aquino bike lane ordinance; university loop bike lane | Painted Bike lane as university loop | Development of bike lanes within Iloilo city |
| Which organizations or agencies have been the most reliable in terms of promoting Iloilo City as a bicycle-friendly city? What are their significant contributions? | Iloilo city government for co-facilitating; Iloilo bike fest | IFold started the visit-tour cycling around Iloilo heritage landmarks | DPWH regional and district office; city councilors; bike group organizations | LGU; Dept. of tourism |
| In a rating scale of 1 to 10 with 10 as the highest, how would you rate the bicycle-friendliness of Iloilo City? | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 |

| Reason for the rating | Infrastructure support is limited; lack of vision as bike friendly city | A long way to go as a city and as a people | Only few are into biking | No city ordinance protecting the bicyclist against motorized vehicles |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Table 4.15**

*Assessment of Infrastructure Facilities*

## ASSESSMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES

| Describe the existing bicycle infrastructure in the city | Limited; but Benigno Aquino Ave. is a good pilot project | - | Bikeways are limited | Bike lanes along Delgado, Mabini, infant, Gen. Luna street stretch 5,727.4 miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How can the bicycle facilities be improved? | Route improvement based on origin-destination of bikers | - | Build more bike lanes/facilities | Enhance or strict implementation of policies |
| What does your office do in the planning/implementation/maintenance of bicycle facilities? | Mainstreaming of the bike agenda to the plans | - | Maintenance-repainting of bike lanes | - |

## ASSESSMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What are the existing standards/guidelines in the construction of bicycle facilities? | N/A | - | DPWH design guidelines, criteria, and standards; Volume 4 highway design 2015; chapter 3 geometric design of road links | DPWH road safety manual |
| What can your position/office do to help improve the current state of bicycle facilities in Iloilo City? | Implementation of bike racks for business establishments as required by city ordinance | - | Coordinate with LGU to promote bicycle facilities | Monitor and maintain existing bike lanes, and provide solutions to the problems/issues |

**Table 4.16**

*Assessment of Institutional Aspects*

## ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What are existing bicycle-related policies and ordinances of Iloilo City that you are aware of? | bike racks requirements for business establishments | - | Refer to local government code | - |

## ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What is your office's role in the implementation of the bicycle-related policies/ordinances? | none | - | Refer to local government unit | - |
| Are the existing bicycle-related policies and ordinances well-implemented? | no | It could be better | Refer to local government unit | - |
| With respect to your office, what can still be improved on to make Iloilo City more bicycle-friendly? | Consider non-motorized transport in spatial planning (land use plan, public transport route plan, etc) | Bicycle lanes and strict implementation | Build bike lanes along national roads | Create/develop strategic planning especially on the location of bike lanes |

Table 4.16 determines the quality of bike friendliness in Iloilo city, considering certain criteria and indicators, promoting a non-motorized mode of transportation. Table 4.16 pertains to the existing bike facilities in promotion of bicyclist's safety from point of origin to destination. It determines the relationship of infrastructure facilities to the user's needs. Table 4.17 refers to the local and national policies/ ordinances strengthening the plans, designs, programs, and its implementation towards bike-friendliness for environmental concerns, and economic aspects.

*4.4 Observations on Bike Infrastructure and Road Safety*

The observations were conducted on April 13, 2019 in the university bike lane along the university loop (portions of General Luna St., Jalandoni St., Delgado., and Infante St.), and the comprehensive bike lane along Benigno Aquino Avenue.

Table 4.17

*Infrastructure Audit (Physical Survey) for Design Standards*

| Physical Features | Standard Design (NATCO: Global Street Design Guide) | Actual On-Site |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Bike lane | The minimum painted on-street bike lane is 6 feet (ft) with marked buffer zone of 3 feet (ft) and can be used as parking lanes | There is an existing painted on-street bike lane along university corridors known as "university loop" having a lane width of 3.61 feet (ft) or 1.1 m. (meters) |
| 2. Type of buffers | a. On-street marked buffers area painted spaces parallel to cycle lanes that separate them from motorized vehicle traffic | none |
| | b. Planted buffers are barriers built into the roadbed that provide a physical separation to a cycleway as green infrastructure | none |
| | c. Segmented concrete dividers create physical separation of a cycle lane to prevent intrusion of cars and trucks while allowing cyclists to exit the cycleway. | none |

| Physical Features | Standard Design (NATCO: Global Street Design Guide) | Actual On-Site |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Bike boxes | (5) Advanced Stop Bars (ASB) provide designated areas ahead of stop lines for vehicles at signalized intersections. ASB should be at least 3 meters (m) deep or higher, allowing cyclists to maneuver into them and face forward. | none |
| 4. Corner Refuge island | Corner refuge islands are concrete barriers at intersection corners with a curved space for cycles between the sidewalk and the roadway. (2) Mark protected cycle tracks at conflict zones such as mid-block crossings, curb cuts, and through intersections. | Corner refuge islands are not available but presence of marked cycle tracks at conflict zones such as mid-block crossings, curb cuts, and through intersections between Mabini Street and Delgado Street |
| 5. Cycle racks, cycle coral, cycle station | Cycle racks or cycle coral are street elements to securely park, place that occupies space in the parking lane and should be placed at least 0.75 meter (m) apart. | Cycle racks are available only in select sites such as plazas, and some commercial establishments (1 meter apart min.) |

| Physical Features | Standard Design (NATCO: Global Street Design Guide) | Actual On-Site |
|---|---|---|
| 6. Cycle Facilities at Transit Stops | a. Cycle Track Behind Boarding Island Curbside cycle tracks may be routed behind transit stops to maintain continuity while enabling better transit service. Cyclists are directed into a street-level channel which uses color and markings to inform cyclists of the expectation to yield to pedestrians. | none |
| | b. Cycle Track on Bus Bulb\s. This design is most appropriate where transit ridership or cyclist volumes are relatively low. It provides the best pedestrian access to the stop, since the cycle lane is at the same level as the stop. Though the design favors pedestrians and may slow cyclists down, it also creates the most opportunities for conflicts. | none |

| Physical Features | Standard Design (NATCO: Global Street Design Guide) | Actual On-Site |
|---|---|---|
| | c. Cycle Lane Behind Boarding Island. This design is most suited for streets with no parking lane, and it is the only design that does not require an extension into the roadway. The angled geometry forces cyclists to slow down in the cycle lane and should ensure that sidewalk paths remain safe and clear. | none |
| 7. Protected Cycle Facilities at Intersections | The protected intersection enables cyclist turns to be safe, two stage movements aligned with concurrent traffic flow, decreasing sideswipe and right-hook conflicts<br><br>Main elements:<br>1 Corner refuge island<br>2 Forward stop line<br>3 Setback crossing by extending the curb | none |

Table 4.17 reveals that there is an existing painted on-street bike lane along university corridors known as "university loop" having a lane width of 3.61 feet (ft) or 1.1 meters (m.). Corner refuge islands are not available but marked cycle tracks are present at conflict zones such as mid-block crossings, curb cuts, and through intersections between Jalandoni Street and Delgado Street. Cycle racks are available in some areas like plazas,

and some commercial establishments placed one (1) meter apart. Other Physical Features such as buffers, bike boxes, cycle facilities at transit stops, protected cycle facilities at intersections are not available on the areas observed.

**Table 4.18**

*Safety Audit (Protective Measures) for Design Standards*

| SIGNS AND SYMBOLS | STANDARD DESIGN (AASHTO: Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities) | ACTUAL ON-SITE |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Wayfinding signs | Wayfinding sign provides clear user information and navigational instructions to bicyclist to destination | none |
| 2. Bike lane symbol | Additional markings may be placed at periodic intervals on bike lanes, to remind motorists of the potential presence of bicyclists, especially in areas where motorists are expected to cross bike lanes. In suburban areas with long distances between intersections and little roadside activity, bike lane symbols can be as far apart as 1000 ft (305 m) or more. | Available |
| 3. Warning signs | Advance warning signs and solid centerline striping should be placed at the required stopping sight distance from the roadway edge, but not less than 50 ft. (15 m). | none |

Table 4.18 reveals that bike lane symbols are available and are placed with intervals on bike lanes. While wayfinding signs that would provide users of clear information and instructions to their destination are not available. Also, advance warning signs and solid

centerline striping that should be placed at the required stopping sight distance from the roadway edge, but not less than 50 ft (15 m) are not available.

*Infrastructure Component*

*Coherence.* Based on the on-site observation of the infrastructure, it was observed that corner refuge islands are not available but marked cycle tracks at conflict zones such as mid-block crossings, curb cuts, and through intersections between Mabini Street and Delgado Street were present. Furthermore, 20 out of 30 or 66.67% of the survey respondents perceive continuity of bike lanes.

*Attractiveness.* Based on on-site observation, the existence of cycle racks was found to be available only in select sites such as plazas, and some commercial establishments. Distance between racks was measured to be more than the prescribed 0.75 meters. The limited number of cycle racks is apparent from the survey results with only 11 out of 30 or 36.67% respondents saying that there is sufficient number of bike racks in the city. Also, only 13 out of 30 or 43.33% of the survey respondents perceive that there is sufficient lighting along bike tracks/lanes.

*Comfort.* The existing width of bike lanes adheres to the existing standard of at least 3 feet. Consequently, 20 out of 30 or 66.67% of the survey respondents perceive that the width of the bike lanes in Iloilo City are sufficient.

*Safety.* Toad markings and road signages for cyclists were observed at periodic intervals. Of the 30 respondents, 19 cyclists or 63.33% perceive that there are sufficient road markings for bikers visible to all user groups. Also, 12 out of 30 or 40% of the survey respondents perceive that road signages in the city are sufficient. Furthermore, the respondents were made to rate their general perception about biking safety in Iloilo City.

Summarized in the table below are the mean, median and mode values for the rating given by the respondents.

**Table 4.19**

*Perception of Survey Respondents on How Safe Biking is in Iloilo City*

| Criteria | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| Biking Safety in Iloilo City | 6.29 | 6 | 5 and 6 |

The mean rating for biking safety in Iloilo City is 6.29. This value leaves a lot of room for improvement in terms of bike infrastructure, safety education and precautions of the drivers on road, and improved enforcement of biking policies and traffic rules, as cited by the respondents as reasons for rating. (see table 4.10.1)

*Institutional Component*

*Information, Education, and Communication.* From the survey, respondents cited peers as the primary influencer for participating in bike events. (see table 4.8) The survey respondents were also asked about their awareness of the existing ordinances pertaining to cycling in the city. Of the 30 respondents, only 17 or 56.67% were aware of the existing policies. Awareness of cyclists and all road users of the institutional dimensions in cycling may be improved through intensification of education and campaign drives in schools and offices. However, it must be noted that improvement of existing bicycle infrastructure and safety measures must be put in place first before promotion of cycling as mode of transportation.

*Implementation.* From the review of secondary data, there are already existing information and provisions for biking in Iloilo City. The city has a Transport and Traffic Management Plan and two ordinances related to biking in the city. It is the monitoring

and implementation of these plans and policies that is lacking. The city government thus, must make efforts to improve enforcement and allocate regular budget for better bike infrastructure. The 17 survey respondents who were aware of the local bike ordinances gave a rating on how well-implemented the policies are. Shown in the table below are the mean, median, and mode of the ratings given by the respondents.

Table 4.20

*Perception of Survey Respondents on How Well-Implemented are the Local Biking Ordinances in Iloilo City*

| Criteria | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| Implementation of Local Bike Ordinances | 5.40 | 5 | 5 |

The mean rating for implementation of local bike ordinances is only 5.35 while the median and mode are both 5. This means that there is more to improve on when it comes to the effectiveness in implementation of existing bike ordinances in the city.

*Social Component*

*Sociability.* In terms of the social dimension in cycling, participation and membership in bike organizations is quite high with 23 out of 30 or 76.67% of the survey respondents as members of existing bike organizations. One should note that the survey was conducted during an advocacy event for Earth Hour which is mostly participated by members of bike organizations, advocates, and enthusiasts. Regular bike commuters who cycle to work, mostly composed of workers with blue collar jobs, were not represented during the survey. The limitations in time and resources did not enable the researchers from covering the other road users so this is an aspect that may be considered for future studies.

*Perception of Survey Respondents on Iloilo City as a Bicycle Friendly City*

Survey respondents and key informants were made to rate their perception of Iloilo City as a bicycle friendly city. The measures of central tendency were computed and summarized in the table below.

**Table 4.21**

*Survey Respondents and Key Informants Perception of Iloilo City as a Bicycle Friendly City*

| Perception of Iloilo City as a BFC | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|
| Survey Respondents | 8.04 | 8 | 10 |
| Key Informants | 3 | 2.5 | 2 |

The survey respondents have a relatively high perception of Iloilo City as a Bicycle Friendly City with a mean rating of 8.04. In fact, most of the respondents pegged the rating of Iloilo City as a Bike Friendly City at a perfect score of 10. This means that although there are gaps in the existing infrastructure and policies, bikers are generally satisfied and hopeful about the state of biking in Iloilo City.

The key informants were also asked to rate Iloilo City as a bike friendly city. It can be observed that compared to the survey respondents, the key informants gave lower ratings for the bike friendliness of Iloilo City. Key informants are the decision makers and implementers of biking policies and projects from key offices. They may have given lower ratings as they are able to see the bigger picture and experience actual challenges in the fulfillment of a more bicycle friendly Iloilo City. The recommendations by the key informants may be used to propose new projects or policies for the improvement of the biking experience in Iloilo City.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Upon audit of the physical and safety aspects of bike infrastructure in Iloilo City based on the Global Street Design Guide by NATCO and the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities by AASHTO, results showed that although Iloilo City has existing bike lanes and racks, a number of improvements are still needed in order to comply with the international standards.

In terms of the social component, Iloilo City exhibits high participation in community bike events and membership in bike organizations as shown in the results of the survey. However, for further studies, it should be noted that the pulse of the other road users and not just bike enthusiasts should be considered.

For institutional component, Iloilo City has existing ordinances and a transport and traffic management plan. However, there are gaps in the implementation of the said policies and plans. The LGU should provide regular budget apart from the special budget for the continuous implementation of the ordinances and projects indicated in the plans.

### *Recommendations to Meet the Set Criteria*

1. Strict implementation of Art. 5 of Ordinance No. 2014-193, enacted on April 08, 2014 which penalizes building owners who fail to comply.
2. Allocation of regular funds to materialize the Bikeway Network Expansion Project and Traffic Signalization Project as well as to properly implement ordinance provisions.
3. More discussions among stakeholders regarding continuous, safe cycling network – particularly investment for the infrastructure. The LGUs are expected to take on this task but majority may not have the resources needed to make a safe cycling network work.

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# Competence, Effectiveness, and Dispute Resolution Practices of the Lupong Tagapamahala in Selected Resettlement Areas in Cavite and Laguna: Basis for the Development of a Training Module

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## Introduction

This study aimed to determine the level of competency and performance of the barangay officials in managing and resolving conflict in selected resettlement areas in the provinces of Cavite and Laguna.

The descriptive method of research was employed. A research-made questionnaire was utilized to gather data from 311 respondents who were barangay officials and residents of resettlement areas in Cavite and Laguna. The population of this study was determined through purposive sampling.

## Results of the study

1. Majority of the barangay residents perceived the cooperative conflict management as most commonly applied by their barangay officials.

2. The barangay residents rated their barangay officials as competent while the barangay officials rated them as somewhat competent in managing and resolving conflict in their respective barangays.

3. The level of performance of the barangay officials in resolving conflict was found to be effective by the respondents, both the barangay residents and the barangay officials.

4. Barangay residents found negligible positive correlation between the level of competency and the level of performance of the barangay official in managing and resolving conflict as (r = 0.148, t = 0.635, $\propto$ = 0.05) while barangay officials found moderately positive correlation in the same (r = 0.587, t = 3.076, $\propto$ = 0.05).

5. The problem in managing and resolving conflict identified by the barangay officials included the following: how to set up a meeting between the conflicting parties to discuss the issue, how to make the conflicting parties realize that they are there to work together to find a solution, and how to make them focus on the problem and not on the person. Other problems were the inability of the conflicting parties to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person; the inability to compromise or see the other person's side, and the lack of readiness to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger.

6. To address the problems encountered, an instructional module is designed in order to equip the barangay officials with appropriate knowledge on the essential elements of conflict resolution.

## Conclusions.

1. Majority of the barangay residents and barangay officials believed that cooperation and compromise are the types of conflict management practices always applied by barangay officials.

2. The two groups of respondents differed in their assessment of the level of competency of the barangay officials in resolving conflict. The barangay residents rated them competent while the barangay officials rated them as somewhat competent.

3. The barangay officials performed effectively in managing and resolving conflict in their respective barangays.

4. There was a negligible positive correlation between the level of competency and performance of the barangay officials in managing and resolving conflict as

assessed by the barangay residents. Moderately positive correlation in the same was found by the responding barangay officials.

5. The difficult problems often encountered by the barangay officials included the following: how to set up a meeting between the conflicting parties to discuss the issue, how to make the conflicting parties realize that they are there to work together to find a solution, and hot to make them focus on the problem and not on the person. Other problems were the inability of conflicting parties to recognize and respond to things that matter to the other person, the inability to compromise or see the other person's side, and the lack of readiness to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger.

6. The policy enhancement program included the creation of an instructional module designed to equip barangay officials with appropriate knowledge on the essential elements conflict resolution.

## Recommendations

1. Barangay officials should attend seminars and trainings to become more effective in managing and resolving conflicts.

2. Barangay officials should have a deeper understanding of their functions in maintaining peace and order in their respective jurisdictions attained through regular trainings and performance evaluation.

3. Barangay officials should every now and then review the procedures and practices they utilize in resolving problems of the barangay. After that they must have a procedure in check the overall success or failure of their decisions in order to understand better their work.

4. Barangay officials should know the essentials of public administration or public governance. Enhancement of their knowledge on public administration can be obtained through continuing education, seminar and workshops.

5. Barangay officials should develop a deep sense of responsibility and seek ways to improve the services they render in their respective areas.

6. Barangay officials and barangay residents may be encouraged to cooperate in the coordination of barangay services in order to build a better and strong community.

7. Further studies are recommended to strengthen the performance and competency of barangay officials in managing and resolving conflict.

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# From the Grassroots to the Local Legislators in Daraga, Albay: Tangible and Intangible Heritage

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## Introduction

Policy goals and means are products of constant conflict and negotiation among policymakers guided by their values and interests shaped by a variety of contingent circumstances (Howlett, et al., 2009). Hence, legislators make laws for the common welfare of the people. They are tasked to create policies based on the needs of the people. The people, in turn, may be able to lobby their needs so that the lawmakers may be able to pass laws for their own good. Moreover, there are some problems in the society that the lawmakers observe and they work out the solutions through the passage of laws. Besides, the 1987 Philippine Constitution under Article XI Section 1 states that the public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives.

The Local Government Code of 1991 provides for a more responsive and accountable local government structure instituted through a system of decentralization with effective mechanisms of recall, initiative, and referendum, allocate among the different local government units their powers, responsibilities, and resources, and provide for the qualifications, election, appointment and removal, term, salaries, powers and functions and duties of local officials and all other matters relating to the organization and operation of local units. The Local Government is considered the most important level because its policies and programs impact residents, workers, and visitors daily (Urban, 2017). The code serves as a guide on what kind of programs, projects, and services a

local government should implement and deliver. These programs, projects, services, and ordinances are mostly the key elements that give the local government intervention to the citizenry. These are the ones that intervene with the public in terms of its implementation and ensure the protection of their basic rights. Additionally, the government should consider a smooth operation of the program that fits the needs of its target population and is positioned to achieve its desired outcomes and address challenges.

The ordinary people in the society, especially those without money or power, or the grassroots have mechanisms in the exercise of their citizenship responsibilities. But some of them rely on the power and authority of the public officials they elected as reflected in a patron-client relationship. Politics in the Philippines has traditionally been dominated by clans and political bosses and patronage and is characterized by lawmakers that make decisions based on fiscal incentives rather than 'principles 'and voters that make choices based on personality rather than reasoned policies. Under the traditional "utang na loob" system of patronage, or obligation earned through favors, voters expect money or jobs in return for their political support. In many cases, politician's performance was based on dole-outs, not on programs or policies. Philippine concepts about debt repayment and kinship responsibilities play a major role in how political networks are set up and run (Hays, 2008). The relationship is personal as clearly seen in local communities. They are more concerned with their daily lives and needs as it is more of being individualistic but the patron expects to return the favor given them. However, the environment where they live plays an important role in their actions and decisions. The environment may also be looked into what kind of cultural heritage they have to understand the interplay of these things.

*Cultural heritage* as defined by UNESCO includes traditions and living expressions inherited from the ancestors and passed on to their descendants. These are oral

traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe, or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional craft. Further, an understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and mainstream social groups within a State and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

 UNESCO further stated that Intangible cultural heritage is: Traditional, contemporary, and living at the same time: intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past, but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part; Inclusive: they may share expressions of intangible cultural heritage that are similar to those practiced by others. Whether they are from the neighboring village, from a city on the opposite side of the world, or have been adopted by peoples who have migrated and settled in a different region, they all are intangible cultural heritage: they have been passed from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments and they contribute to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from the past, through the present, and into the future. Intangible cultural heritage does not give rise to questions of whether or not certain practices are specific to a culture. It contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large; Representative: intangible cultural heritage is not merely valued as a cultural good, on a comparative basis, for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills, and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or other communities and community-based:

intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it – without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage.

The locale of the study is the municipality of Daraga, formerly known as Locsin. It is a landlocked municipality in the coastal province of Albay. The municipality has a land area of 118.64 square kilometers or 45.81 square miles which constitutes 4.61% of Albay's total area. Its population as determined by the 2015 Census was 126,595. Daraga is located in the south-west portion of Albay, Philippines. The Municipality of Daraga is a first-class municipality in the province of Albay.

The Philippine Information Agency stated that the municipality of Daraga won second place in the formerly called "Seal of Good Housekeeping" award from the Department of Interior and Local Government for the year 2017. The Seal of Good Housekeeping recognizes local government units with good performance in internal financial housekeeping, particularly in the areas of local legislation, development planning, resource generation, allocation and utilization, customer service, human resource management and development, and valuing fundamental governance.

## Objectives

This study discusses the type of tangible and intangible heritage, its description, significance, measures, and legislations that have been taken and currently being taken at the level of the municipality of Daraga, Albay.

## Methodology

This research adopted the Cultural Mapping Approach of the NCCA or National Commission for Culture and the Arts (UNESCO Retrieved from

https://ncca.gov.ph/about-ncca-3/ncca-cultural-mapping-program/ on February 15, 2020 ) in profiling the tangible and intangible heritage of Daraga, Albay. The framework for cultural mapping was implemented in five phases. These were the *Scoping and Negotiation*, *Social Preparation*, *Training of the Local Team*, *Data Validation/Reporting of Draft*, and *Finalized Profile*.

The scoping and negotiation phase involved the building of partnership between NCCA and the Local Government Unit (LGU). For this study, the building of commitment was between the LGU, Bicol University, and NCCA. The second phase is the social preparations where the LGU's, researchers, cultural mappers were briefed with the objectives of the said endeavor. This was the stage where the participants and stakeholders were introduced with the cultural mapping project, identification of mapping teams, planning, and identification of areas to be mapped. The third phase was the actual Training of the Cultural Mappers. Mappers were trained by experts from the NCCA and then sent out to the field to research during the training days. The Data Gathering Phase was about three to six months to substantially gather data. It is in this phase where the mappers conducted the actual mapping of their assigned cultural properties or practices. Data collected during the fieldwork underwent a validation where internal and external experts, stakeholders, and other members of the community confirmed the validity and authenticity of the data. The last phase was the finalization of the local culture profile. It is in this stage where LGU can draw out significant information that may be beneficial in the formulation of development plans, programs, and activities (Besmonte, 2020).

The study utilized the standard method used by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) on cultural mapping. This study discusses the type of tangible and intangible heritage, its description, significance, measures, and legislations that have been taken and currently being taken at the level of the municipality of Daraga, Albay. The tangible immovable heritages in the municipality of Daraga documented were

Budiao Church Ruins, Cagsawa Ruins, and Cagsawa Festival while the sculpture of Enteng Bato was documented as tangible cultural heritage.

## Results and Discussion

The Budiao Church Ruins is the remains of the historic Budiao Church which was built in 1798 but was destroyed by the 1814 Mt. Mayon eruption. Budiao Church Ruins is an archaeological site privately owned by the Diocese of Legazpi located at Barangay Banadero, Daraga, Albay with an area of 53 m x 15 m and declared as a local heritage site in the Municipality of Daraga through Municipal Resolution No. 95 - 2017. The site was surrounded by fences made of bamboo. It had a marker "Budiao Ruins Barangay Banadero, Daraga, Albay". A tarpaulin could also be seen and that stated it was under the care of the Diocese of Legazpi. A few meters from the fence, the sidewalls of the church, made of stones were visible. The ruins were excavated for 20 days by the archaeologists from the University of the Philippines and three areas were already excavated. And of these three areas, two of the areas excavated, big roots of acacia tree were seen.

In the information bulletin posted by the University of the Philippines, it stated that the Church of Budiao was a former visita of Cagsawa. On November 29, 1876, the visita of Budiao had separated from its mother church of Cagsawa and became the Pueblo de Budiao under the patronage of Asuncion de la Nuestra Senora. During the 1814 Mount Mayon eruption, the lone church of Budiao was devastated, ruined, and abandoned. And for many centuries, there were no archaeological attempts to investigate and excavate the ruins in order to determine what it looks before. The LGU Daraga and the Diocese of Legazpi in collaboration with the University of the Philippines unearth the ruins. The archaeological site is rich in research data that can be used to further investigate the site and know more its historical, social, economic, and political significance. And there are

plans to transform Budiao Ruins into a tourist stopover which may generate income for the community.

Every month, there is a mass conducted in Barangay Banadero. The Budiao Ruins serves as a marker for the community's collective memory of the events that transpired because of Mt. Mayon. The Budiao Ruins integrity is quite commendable despite being exposed to many disasters since 1814. The stone materials are intact, and the current structure gives visitors the chance to picture what the church might have looked like centuries ago before the Mayon eruption destroyed it.

There are quarrying activities in the area and these quarrying activities are regulated by the Provincial Government of Albay and maintained by MENRO. This becomes the source of livelihood of the people aside from planting *gabi* plants in the area.

The natural hazards like a flood, eruption, and its nearness to the Mayon Volcano are the constraints that need to be addressed by the legislators of the Municipality of Daraga as the barangay always encounter disaster such as volcanic eruption, typhoon, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other natural calamities, in which they faced difficulties in recovering from such disaster. Thus, the Local Government implemented programs and activities in responding to disasters encountered. So, an ordinance regulating the Resilient Land Use, Activity, and Development within the Mayon Volcano 6 kilometer danger zone was enacted to protect the people residing within the area from disasters. This is also in consonance with the creation of R.A. 10121 otherwise known as the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Program laid the basis for a paradigm shift from disaster preparedness and response to national disaster risk reduction management. This provides for the development of policies and plans for the implementation of actions and measures pertaining to all aspects of disaster risk reduction and management, including good governance, risk assessment, early warning,

knowledge building and awareness-raising, reducing underlying risk factors, and preparedness for effective response and recovery.

Another intangible heritage that was documented is the Cagsawa Ruins. It is a church ruin and publicly owned by the Municipal Government of Daraga located at Barangay Busay, Daraga, Albay. It has an area of 15, 336 hectares. It is also declared as a national treasure in 2015 by the National Museum. The conservation management plan of Cagsawa Ruins was made through the Municipal Resolution No. 94 – 2018. The church was originally built in 1587, rebuilt in 1724, and destroyed in February 1, 1814 eruption of the Mayon Volcano. The church is made of volcanic stones. There are indications of surface deposits as there is the presence of vegetation and plant growth on the Ruin's masonry walls and belfry's dome. Thus, it can affect the architectural integrity and structural stability of the Ruins. Hence, an inspection must be made by proper government authorities to preserve and conserve the structure.

The said Ruins lie within the identified Buffer Danger Zone in Barangay Busay and the church belfry is its dominating structure. It has undergone alterations when it was developed as a recreational park. Paved walks and lamp posts were made. New structures were also built. Parking areas, souvenir shops, and small eating spaces were also made as it is now considered a park. The Ruins is in a fair state of conservation and maintenance. Cagsawa Ruins contributed much to the rich history of the Province of Albay as it was among the first churches built by the Franciscan friars in the Bicol Region and these friars pioneered the spread of Roman Catholicism in the province. The church withstood the tests of times, from the battles fought by the many colonizers to the ravages of World War II and the constant threat of Mt. Mayon. The surviving bell tower is a landmark found nowhere else in the Philippines. Consequently, the structure is a concrete witness of the resiliency of the people of Cagsawa.

Cagsawa Ruins is now considered a park but remains as a holy ground. Religious activities especially during the Lent season are held. Many local and foreign tourists visit the place as it serves a picture-perfect view of Mt. Mayon and Cagsawa Ruins. Resolution No. 26-2002 declared Cagsawa Ruins as a Municipal Park and Historico – Cultural Landmark.

In the Conservation Management Plan of the local government, an action plan was proposed on how to conserve the Cagsawa Ruins: (a) develop and maintain open space, building footprint, height, and density of new buildings following the building code requirements, (b) develop the site to improve the drainage system, (c) consider the seismic retrofit when so warranted, (d) consider to further strengthen statutory protection of the property designated as National Cultural Treasure by integrating heritage conservation policy in the LGU's Comprehensive Land Use Program and consider establishing the appropriate buffer zone inclusive of the established view corridors, (e) encourage and strengthen local community participation through stakeholders consultation, and by providing access to relevant information concerning the Property's warranted building interventions, and (f) consider the presentation of the Property 'to the public by providing appropriate visitors 'facilities. This plan implies that there are still many things that the local government must do to cater to the needs of its people.
The action plan of the local government is a manifestation of government accountability and public participation. The local government should consult and involve communities in discussions about projects and programs that directly affect them. And the citizens have the right to hold the government to account for and know the reasons for the decisions made by the government that directly affect them.

Another documented intangible heritage was the Cagsawa Festival which was made in commemoration of the 1814 Mt. Mayon eruption. Cagsawa Festival is held at the streets of the Daraga town proper and is a month-long celebration showcasing various activities and entertainment. It also showcases dance numbers narrating the legend of Daragang

Magayon. The festival started in 2010 and was called the Daragang Magayon Festival. However, the Provincial Government of Albay got it from the local government of Daraga and renamed the festival to Cagsawa Festival in 2012. It is celebrated yearly except last 2018 because of Mt. Mayon's eruption and is now one of the tourist attractions in the Province of Albay. It also triggers the youth to study the legend in terms of producing dances or music or other performances that interprets the Legend of Daragang Magayon. Schools and the local government agencies are invited to participate in the festival. However, the change of administration and budget is one of its constraints in its implementation. Good governance must be practiced in this case as governance is the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. Actions made must not be based on the whims of the administrator as the change of administration is inevitable since there are laws governing the tenure of office of the public officials. Governance encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighboring associations in pursuing collective action (Bradway and Shah, 2009). Good governance is about the good processes for making and implementing decisions, thus having good processes generally leads to better outcomes for local governments and their communities. With this, whatever programs, projects, or activities proposed must be implemented for the betterment of the local government and the people.

And lastly, a cultural tangible movable heritage that was also documented was an artwork of Vicente Ajero, also known as "Enteng Bato" from Barangay Busay, Daraga, Albay. It was a sculpture made from the volcanic rock of Mt. Mayon he created in 2012. The sculpture was a nude woman sitting on her feet. Her arms on her side, her long straight hair covered her breast, her eyes closed, the mouth was slightly open, and had a long aquiline nose. It was 65 cm in height and a width of 34 cm. Though the weather condition and improper handling of the sculpture are the challenges that may be experienced by

the sculptor and these should be to be addressed by the local government of Daraga to help the people prosper their business. Moreover, the preservation of the artwork is also needed as it is considered to be a legacy for the future generations for them to know the past.

According to Enteng Bato, he got the volcanic rock he used in making his sculpture from the Yawa River. Many volcanic rocks were found in the area as it is where volcanic materials from Mt. Mayon were washed out. These volcanic rocks become a source of income for both ordinary people and big businesses for quarrying undertakings. Thus, a shared partnership is expected to happen between the local government and the people. The shared partnership of the legislators and the grassroots brings greater efficacy in the delivery of social services. Transparency and proper measurement contribute to the enhancement of government accountability to its citizens and are determinant to improve the quality of governance. Transparency and innovative activities made by the local government can foster active citizenship through shared governance, by allowing citizens to have a crucial role in policy decisions and co-production of services. Technology-driven transparency is also regarded as a vehicle to enhance trust in government. Many researchers have found positive relationships between the use of e-government and e-participation to improve transparency, accountability, and political trust (Da Cruz et al., 2015). These are the things needed to foster proactive citizens and leaders aside from the fact that the world at present makes use of digital technology.

Leaders must also be responsive to their people. Responsiveness in the delivery of service is considered as a core element of service quality. The key implications of considering responsiveness as relating to inequalities include: first, that responsiveness relates to a broad set of service organization and delivery; second, responsiveness is seen as a core duty of an organization – providing a level of service that meets needs fairly across all groups or individual and a recognition that responsiveness may involve managing

demands; and third, the focus is on diverse groups and ensuring that no groups are disadvantaged in their experiences of receiving services. Under this definition, achieving responsiveness requires more than just good customer service; it requires an understanding of population characteristics, and proactive planning to meet needs and avoid disadvantages. Finally, measures of responsiveness need to pick up on differentials between different groups and identify whether or not certain groups are disadvantaged (Tarrant et al., 2014). Thus, the local government of Daraga must be receptive to the needs of the people, and at the same time, the leader recognize these needs.

A good leader must be aware of these things and what the future may bring. One model of leadership training suggests that future leaders will need, among other things, the following areas of training: Global awareness – leaders will need to be knowledgeable of worldwide issues that may affect the organization and the organizations and organizational members it must interact with; Capability of managing highly decentralized organizations – as more and more work is done in independently functioning work teams, leaders will need to play more of a "coaching" or "consultant" role, than the traditional authority role of "boss"; Sensitivity to Diversity Issues – leaders will be looked to as "diversity experts," so they must be able to deal effectively with groups that have different values and world views; Interpersonal Skills – the changing and expanding role of workgroup leaders (e.g., from "bosses" to "coaches") will require them to become more interpersonally skilled; Community-Building Skills – effective leaders of the future will have to build work groups into cooperating, interdependent "communities" of workers. The leader will need to build group cohesiveness and commitment to goals. More and more, group members will turn to leaders for the "vision" of where the group and the organization is going. It appears that once again, leader flexibility is called for. Leaders of the future will be required to be "culturally" flexible and adaptable if they are going to be effective in leading diverse workgroups in an increasingly complex world of work.

Muchinsky (2006) also emphasizes the powerful influence of electronic technology on work has given rise to new types of required leadership skills. Avolio et al. referred to this as "e-leadership," the fusion of leadership and information technology. Successful leaders in the new economy must be skilled in getting their organizations to adopt information technology systems and not resist or reject them. They must be adept at getting those new systems integrated into the existing norms and culture of their organization. In a survey of chief information officers, Oz and Sosik reported that passive leadership was the main factor contributing to the failure of implementing information technology systems. Leadership can restrict the adoption and use of new information systems to such an extent that they have little impact on organizational effectiveness. Some reluctance on the part of leaders to adopt these systems may be understandable given there is no precedent in business. In the late 1960s, when computers were first available for widespread commercial use, some companies were slow to shift away from manual systems of record keeping. However, that era was more than a generation ago, and few leaders today grew up in a computer-less environment. Furthermore, the sheer spread of technological change today is greater than at any time in the past. Thus the adoption of information technology is an ongoing process, with each new iteration in technical capability. One perspective for thinking of business is supply chain management. Every business is linked to suppliers and customers; that is, every organization is a customer and a supplier to yet another. The connection of suppliers and customers creates a chain, and each organization is a link in the chain and adds value to some product or service. Entire information systems have been developed to help connect suppliers and customers/connect each supplier and customer in this chain. The successful e-leader is one who solidifies an organization's position in the chain and is consistently attuned to changes that occur "upstream" and 'downstream" in the chain

Then, as provided in the Theory of Effectiveness Measurement, a feedback mechanism must be used as it provides decision makers feedback on the impact of deliberate actions and affect critical issues such as the allocation of scarce resources, as well as whether to maintain or change existing strategies on the government. The fundamental principles and concepts are grouped into an effective feedback strategy (Bullock, 2006).

And the usefulness of the program may be determined through the Program Theory of Funnell and Rogers on the usefulness of a program into four clusters: planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation, and synthesis for evidence-based policy and planning. Program Theory can be used for preplanning an intervention by undertaking a situation analysis, planning how an intervention by undertaking a situation analysis, and planning how an intervention will address particular needs. Program theory can support the management of interventions both directly and indirectly through monitoring and evaluation. It can help communicate about the program to newcomers or outsiders. It can be used as the basis for developing performance contracts. It can engage and empower communities (Funnell and Rogers, 2011). Henceforth, local legislations may be made for the protection of the artworks and other tangible heritage to plan, manage, monitor, and evaluate based on acceptable criteria. Besides, this study aims to strengthen the partnership of the local legislators and the grassroots to promote and enrich their partnership and innovative activities and legislations that will eventually boost its tourism and produce proactive citizens at the local level.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

The cultural heritage was inherited from the past generations deeply linked with familial and communal expressions and knowledge. The Local Government of Daraga recognizes the existence of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage present in their locality and connects the experiences of the people to legislations passed.

Based on the above conclusions, this study recommends for continued identification of natural and cultural heritage in the Local Government of Daraga and to capacitate local authorities the ability to adopt people-centered framework to include both natural and cultural values. They could also strengthen their government policies and partnerships with other governmental and non- governmental organizations in the preservation and conservation of the heritage sites. The local government may collaborate with other institutions and organizations for the mutually beneficial exchange of information and resources that may also be organized in the context of hazard risk awareness and development.

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# Awareness and Perception of Effectiveness of Corruption Prevention Mechanisms of the Office of the Ombudsman: Basis for Strategic Policy Formulation

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## Introduction

In the past decades, much of the research had focused on root causes of corruption, general principle of public administration, and humanistic approach in human resource management in Psychology. The importance of people within the organization should always be stressed in all respects, most importantly, on the issues in public administration. The only same thing about public administration and business administration is the word "administration," which at all times viewed that principles in the management of people in the business should share the same approach in managing people in the public sector.

A more tender approach in a more technical sense is the humanistic approach in public administration which should always be paramount to public administrators in dealing with their subordinates. Keeping in mind that public administration is a professional practice that is bound by laws, rules and regulations, culture, values and norms and its end goal is service to the people -- the most important element of the State in its political technical sense.

Effective public administration contributed to human development by educating the citizens of the State. The *New Public Management* (NPM) as defined is an approach in running public service organizations that is used in government and public service institutions and agencies, both sub-national and national levels. As with the private sector, which focused on "customer service", NPM reformists often focused on the

"...centrality of citizens who were the recipients of the services or customers to the public sector" (New Public Management Model, n.d.). NPM reformists, experimented using decentralized service delivery models, to give local agencies more freedom in how they deliver programs or services.

In some cases, NPM reformists used e-government consolidated program or service to a central location to reduce costs. "Health is wealth" is more of than just a saying as many people nowadays pay closest attention to their well-being (physical, emotional, and mental). The reason behind this is that, people today believe that prolonging life existence here on earth is to prevent sickness. "Prevention is better than cure" as the old saying goes in the medical world and health sciences and even more in alternative medicine. This "Prevention is better than cure" principle can be applied in the long standing ill effects of corruption in governance. Many authors and experts had already dug into the study of the root causes of corruption and even the culture or practice of corruption in the public service, but very few had ventured into focusing on how to address and counter-attack the findings of these studies in the preventive and not in the punitive side.

The installation of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Anti-Red Tape Authority, Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission, Commission on Audit, and some other entities created by law has the goal to fight corruption and strengthen their main mechanism in investigation, filing of case, and forfeiture of ill-gotten wealth. The respondents believe entirely on the legal system, and that is an erring official/officer/employee will be jailed in the future and by such they perceived they already fought corruption and helped in solving the problem. Integrity Development Review challenges are highlighted and can be connected to the findings of this study specifically on "agency ownership issues, uncooperative agencies" (Baliton, 2008). This can be connected to the researcher's online academic papers that the internalization of the value of corruption prevention

mechanism are not yet truly embedded in the civil service's psychosocial organizational culture (Santiago, 2018; Santiago, 2019).

Corruption prevention practice in government envisioned preventing corruption in happening by means of instituting concrete and implementable control and preventive policies in government processes through the use of an extensive research/corruption prevention audit tool/s. The dilemma of this infant specialization in the fight of corruption was the lack of acceptance and internalization of the value of corruption prevention in government organizations presumably due to want for information or just getting tired of thinking that there is still hope in fighting corruption. "Leadership by example," "Setting the tone at the top," and other good governance principles for the leaders in government were the heart and soul of corruption prevention audit tool. It was in the hands of the head of such government agency to implement a policy to prevent corruption at its door step. Now, the run of a corruption prevention audit tool can be voluntary or mandatory due to an executive order issued by the Aquino administration (Santiago III, 2017).

Corruption held back growth and progress to lift people out of poverty. Corruption wasted general public's resources that came from the hard-earned money or labor for work by its people through collection of taxes, be it professional or skilled government office may vary and be attributed to the historical and cultural environment of such (Magno, 2009).

## Background of the Study

Public administration is the single most important aspect of bureaucracies across the world; be it a democratic, socialist, or a capitalist state -- more so in a socialist state --as all aspects of the citizen life is influenced and decided by the government. A considerable shift in the way the public administration was carried out in ancient and medieval times happened when the initiatives were nothing more than sporadic administrative functions

like maintaining law and order and collecting revenues with little or no welfare activities. The people who carried out those activities were selected by the monarchs and were no better than their personal servants (Nature and Scope of Public Administration, n.d.).

Corruption prevention mentioned that the Commission on Audit estimated around 2 billion pesos was the cost of ill-embedded corrupt system, or about 25% of the annual budget. It was corruption that hinders government's capacity to deliver basic services especially to the poor – who are vulnerable sectors (Magno, 2009). Branding and processing of the norm stating that the "government is corrupt" even though in some respects was a reality, made other good people in the government develop low morale and became adamant to the needs of the people they serve, coupled with low salary and less benefits before, these good people may internalize the "branding/perception building/impression making" to be corrupt and became now the norm or value in the civil service – redounds to non-actuation or passiveness if there is evident corruption in their organization, and fear of being a whistleblower due to non-protection of the State to those who report irregularities in offices of the government (Santiago III, 2017).

Corruption Prevention at its early stage had many challenges, which were: the lack of research on the subject area; academic expertise and specialization in governance setting; compilation of specific good governance habits; management of knowledge sharing and data banking; etc. The experience of those who took a course in Corruption Prevention and practiced it at such person's work place could be generated, gathered, or documented and can serve as empirical inputs in generating theories to explain the challenges and opportunities in such field of specialization. Efforts of cascading and implementing a corruption prevention program can be successful if government agencies analyzed corruption using the appropriate theories, best practices, develop strategies and faithfully implement the anti-corruption measures according to peculiarities of the program (Magno, 2009).

Internalization of corruption prevention in the governance culture and system was already evident but not continuing. Whether there was force or mandate from superiors, an implementation of the national anti-corruption tools and initiatives, was already success - dependent to the Head of Office/Agency and even the Presidential Call. The loss of large sums of hard earned tax money from the people which should be dedicated to housing, education, livelihood and decent living of Filipinos. These endeavors were not a waste of time and government resources, since there were tangible policies issued out of the recommendations done by assessors of different corruption prevention roll out/implementation. Most of the resources came from development partners due to their heart to help the Philippines curb corruption (Santiago, 2018; Santiago, 2019)

The thing was that implementation of the policy/-ies and internal controls - already in place - had no continuing effect due to the discretion or selective implementation of whoever heads a government agency; continuous monitoring of the implementation, monitoring the applicability and adaptation of the existing internal controls to different demands of the time, like social and information technology advancements. A partnership of the experts and practitioners in the field of corruption prevention, and the scientific/technical know-how-of-Research by the Academic Community can sway and easily influence Legislators or even to the worst scenario if not supported through legislative sponsorship was via a People's Initiative since there had been an organic law on creation and pushing of a law by a group of Taxpayers/Concerned Citizens through Republic Act No. 6735 otherwise known as the "The Initiative and Referendum Act" (Santiago, 2018; Santiago, 2019).

With such, it remained unclear the sustainability of corruption prevention practice in the Philippine Governance system which needed an organic law for the compilation as well as centralized and systematized actions of all actors in this infant field. Internal controls in the government should be in place (implementation and monitoring); corruption risks should be identified, measured and remedied; giving importance to the organizational

value of  building integrity culture and integrity systems; removing political factors, as much as possible, in governance and administration; career/professional development and collaboration in the area of corruption prevention be established in the private, public and the private-public partnership; findings and implementation of recommendations by experts in the field of corruption prevention should not be taken for granted and a corresponding administrative and criminal liability should be imposed to those who shall fail to adapt a corruption prevention measure or internal control in a high corruption vulnerable procedure and processes in a government agency. A conduct of thorough and inter-disciplinary research as to effectiveness of the corruption prevention tools already rolled out by different oversight and anti-corruption agencies in different participating government agencies should be reached through a collaboration of the corruption prevention officers with the Academic Community and come up with a more credible and reliable source of information to be submitted to Legislators for policy direction (Santiago, 2018; Santiago, 2019).

In sum, this study's objectives were: 1) To assess the awareness of the employees of their knowledge about corruption prevention mechanisms of the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015; 2) To assess the perceived effectiveness of the corruption prevention mechanisms at in the years 2009-2015; and 3) To provide a baseline study of the awareness and effectiveness of the corruption prevention mechanisms of the Office of the Ombudsman for strategic policy formulation, to make it sustainable.

## Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess employees' awareness and perception of effectiveness of the Office of the Ombudsman's Corruption Prevention Mechanisms in the years 2009-2015 as basis for Strategic Policy Formulation. Specifically, it answered the following questions: 1) How did respondents assess their awareness of the Office of the Ombudsman's

corruption prevention mechanisms, like the following: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program, Anti-Red Time Act Compliance, Technological Advancements, Statement of Assets Liabilities and Networth compliance, Humanistic Approach in Public Administration?; 2) How did respondents assess their perception of effectiveness of the Office of the Ombudsman's corruption prevention mechanisms, like the following: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program, Anti-Red Time Act Compliance, Technological Advancements Statement of Assets Liabilities and Networth compliance, Humanistic Approach in Public Administration?; 3) What were the significant gaps between awareness and effectiveness of corruption prevention mechanisms? And; 4) Based on findings of the study, what strategic policy formulation on corruption prevention can be proposed?

## Significance of the Study

Corruption continues to deter development and progressiveness; therefore, prevention is better than cure. We must address the issue on corruption and provide baseline study to such, contribute to nation building, promotion of good governance values that will in turn benefit the field of development administration. The study of corruption prevention's role as basis for strategic policy formulation will benefit the following: 1) Corruption Prevention Officers, for a well-defined and steady work duties, functions, powers and responsibilities; 2) Legislators; 3) Consultants; and 4) Academe and Future Researchers, providing a start-up search for answers and baseline to future researches, as well as to the teaching and learning process, advocating social upliftment and enriching our governance best practices.

## Methodology

### The Sources of Data

The primary source of data in this study were the responses of the officials/officers/employees. Prepared questionnaire by the researcher focused on the participants awareness and perceived effectiveness of corruption prevention mechanisms in this government office. Their identities unknown and strict observance of confidentiality in the handling of the accomplished survey questionnaires, could provide basis for strategic policy formulation on corruption prevention practice in our country, as well as, to their agency. It was the ideal source of actual information that could lead to possible new and innovative perspectives that could be of valuable use to the top management's future policy directions.

### Data Gathering Procedure

A letter addressed to the top management of the subject government office was done. The survey questionnaire was distributed by the researcher within the organization with the help of the Administrative Officers of the research sites. The collection of the accomplished survey questionnaire place inside sealed envelopes was done same day or the next working day. Survey Questionnaire Distribution and Collection took two months of planning, coordination and site visitation depending on the number of respondents.

### Research Instrument

A letter with detailed instructions, the purpose of the study, confidentiality clause, and the profile of the researcher were attached separately from the survey questionnaire itself. It was placed outside of the empty legal size envelope, and handed to the respondents with their informed consent. Upon completion, the survey questionnaire was placed inside the envelope and submitted to the Administrative Officer of the research site or to

the researcher himself. The survey questionnaire consisted of nine short pages with statements. Each statement has a Likert Scale presented below:

**Table 1.**

*Likert Scale*

| Point Scale | Range | Item Description |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4.21-5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41-4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61-3.40 | Undecided |
| 2 | 1.81-2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.00-1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

The survey questionnaire was pretested to survey respondents who are not included in the final list of survey respondents comprising of the sample size mentioned in this study. This pretest survey was conducted before the actual research site visits of the researcher. The results of the pretesting was encoded by the researcher himself and was sent for the Statistician's running of the Cronbach's Alpha Test or the "test of reliability" of the survey too. The turnout was found out to be 95% reliability. Therefore, the survey instrument is a reliable measuring tool of the respondents 'view on the items evaluated by this study. All the collected survey questionnaires included in this study were encoded by the researcher himself in observance to the strict confidentiality of answers. The questionnaire consisted of nine short pages with questions to the five chosen corruption prevention mechanisms, namely: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program (IDR/IMP), Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) Compliance, Statement of Assets, Liability and Networth (SALN) Compliance, Humanistic Approach in Public Administration (HAPA) and Technological Advancements (TA).

*Sample Size*

Using the purposive random sampling technique, the researcher requested the Administrative Officer through a letter for each research locale/site to assist him in the distribution and collection of survey questionnaire. The Regional Director/Assistant Regional Director/Division Chief, Supervisor, Technical Officer and Rank and File employees), composed the total of 208 respondents. Immediately, the study respondents answered the prepared survey questionnaire and the turn out and non-turn out, are as follows:

**Table 2.**

*Sample Size*

| Area/Sectoral Office | Total Population | Total Answered/ Retrieved Survey | Did not participate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Luzon-Central Office | 95 | 66 | 29 |
| Luzon-NCR | 49 | 19 | 30 |
| Luzon-Baguio City | 25 | 19 | 6 |
| Luzon-Tuguegarao City | 40 | 33 | 7 |
| Visayas-Cebu City | 46 | 31 | 15 |
| Mindanao-Davao City | 54 | 40 | 14 |
| Total | 309 | 208 | 101 |

*Statistical treatment*

The raw data gathered used the descriptive statistics. Measures of entral tendency, standard deviation and *t*-statistic were utilized in the statistical treatment.

## Results and Discussion

1. How did respondents assess their awareness of the Office of the Ombudsman's corruption prevention mechanisms, like the following: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program, Anti-Red Time Act Compliance, Technological Advancements, Statement of Assets Liabilities and Networth compliance, Humanistic Approach in Public Administration?

**Table 3.**

*Overall Ratings for Integrity Development Review (IDR)/Integrity Management Program (IMP) Awareness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall I am aware that Integrity Development Review (IDR) and Integrity Management Programs (IMP), a corruption prevention mechanism promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in 2009-2015, helped in eradicating corruption. IDR is study of critical agency processes and recommending policy actions to address such. | | | |
| Integrity Development Review | 3.42 | .946 | Agree |

The communication of the roll out to the different levels of the organization, recommendations, and policies resulting from recommendations all received ratings of agree. These emphasizes that there were evident implementation of information dissemination efforts. While policies and recommendations arising from findings were found to be disseminated, the actual results did not appear to have the same level of awareness. As results suggested, the respondents were unsure if efforts to disseminate results were undertaken. This became true due to Management Prerogative. Most Top Management do not give the basis for their crafted policies and some matters discussed during IDR/IMP exercise in the Agency are for Top Management consumption only. The Philippines being one of the earliest democratic governments in Southeast Asia, have

been for years fighting corruption in governance. Fighting corruption to most citizens is filing appropriate cases against erring public officials/officers/employees. IDR/IMP culture acceptance and the promotion of corruption prevention mechanism practice atmosphere starts from the top management itself. It is for the reason that they are the ones steering the wheels and maneuvers the government agency.

**Table 4.**

*Overall Ratings for Anti-Red Tape Act Compliance Awareness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, I am aware that Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) as a corruption prevention mechanism in this Office promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman for the years 2009-2015, helped in eradicating corruption. ARTA Compliance consists of: 1) Posting of Citizens' Charter; 2)Anti-Red Tape Act Audit done by the ARTA Team or Civil Service Commission; 3) Updating of Citizen's Charter Compliance | | | |
| Anti-Red Tape Act Compliance | 4.06 | .82596 | Agree |

The area of Anti-Red Tape Act Compliance received an overall rating of 4.06 or agree. This signifies that, in general, the respondents observe compliance on the Anti-Red Rape Act. This highlights that communication efforts are the most evident effort implemented. Communication of the implementation to all levels, overall awareness as a corruption prevention mechanism and communicating results of compliance from the Audit Team all received ratings of agree. As it appears, the government agency is successful in communicating and implementing the Anti-Red Tape Act. The positive finding can be attributed to: the organic law that mandates government agencies to comply and update their Citizen's Charters; coupled with government oversight committees monitoring the performance of different agencies in the government; rules making it one of the criteria for granting the Productivity Bonus; and sanctions maybe imposed to Top Management

for non-compliance to the Anti-red Tape Act provisions. As previously mentioned in the review of related literature, ARTA was the first legislation in the Philippines to establish a minimum standard in accessing frontline government services, including at its core a "maximum processing period of five days for simple transactions and ten days for complex transactions.

Signatories are also mandated to be limited to a maximum of five (ARTA Law, 2007). Being a law itself, the likelihood of acceptance, knowledge, and practical application would be high due to a penal clause that goes with it. ARTA implementation, according to Schaefer (2018), was difficult to assess due to different management styles of all the local and national government units. This was proven when the respondents ARTA audit results to a low affirmative awareness because top managers who are not fond of giving basis in issuing orders typical in a government office.

**Table 5.**

*Overall Rating for Submission of Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Networth Compliance Awareness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, I am aware that Submission of Statement of Assets, Liability and Networth (SALN) as a corruption prevention mechanism in this Office promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in 2009-2015 helped in eradicating corruption. SALN Compliance consists of: Timely submission of SALN, Monitoring of SALN compliance, Database Management of SALN entries | | | |
| Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth Compliance (SALN) | 4.17 | .74814 | Agree |

The area of SALN received an overall rating of 4.17 or agree. This signifies that in general, the respondents are aware and observe the implementation of the SALN submission. Such manifests that indeed, the respondents have knowledge on the purpose and importance of SALN. They likewise believe that SALN is a critical tool in eradicating corruption. As Valderama (2017) on her online article, SALN has been used as a primary instrument in removing an unwanted or uncooperative official, it is about time an office dedicated to tracking down compliance with the SALN requirements and verifying the assets declared by the officials and employees be established. Furthermore, SALN should not only be used as a political tool to oust public officials who can only be removed by impeachment. It should also serve as an effective tool against corruption and for measuring a public official's honesty and integrity (Valderama, 2017). In 2012, an article was written by Gonzales further stating that SALN is potentially a good tool in preventing corruption in government, but there was a need to revise the implementation of the law to avoid vague or ambitious reporting. The CSC had already done some revisions of the SALN form but government officials objected to the new features and different types for different government branches, constitutional bodies, GOCCs and instrumentalities. While as respondents already answered the question on awareness, they are aware that they should declare the accurate entries or else they shall suffer the fate of other government officials/officers/employees who were removed due to misdeclarations of entries in the SALN form.

**Table 6.**

*Overall Rating on Humanistic Approach in Public Administration Awareness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, I am aware that Humanistic Approach in Public administration as a corruption prevention mechanism in this Office promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015 helped in eradicating corruption. Humanistic Approach in Public Administration encompasses -Promotion of a corruption free organizational atmosphere ,-Merit Selection and Promotion Plan System, -Human Resource Information System, -Administrative Discipline System | | | |
| Humanistic Approach in Public Administration | 4.02 | .781 | Agree |

The Humanistic Approach in Public Administration received an overall rating of 4.02 or agree. This signifies that, in general, this area is implemented and respondents are equally aware of its presence. As results suggest, even the HR component of the organization are aligning efforts and implementing activities that support the objective of eradicating corruption. Humanistic approach in Public Administration is being fair and effective management of the human resource compliment of the government agency (Santiago, 2018). Since the results show that HR aspect of subject agency is effectively done by the Top Management at the time this study was conducted, the related literature that espoused from the principle of humanistic approach applied in private agrees to the discussion of New Public Management popularized by Osborne and Gaebler (2012). The theories derived from the forerunners of humanistic approach in organizations by known authors and the principle of humanistic approach in public administration should always be in remembered in the minds of top managers as well as its middle managers in implementing a culture that starts from the top to subordinates. This aids in the promotion of a corruption prevention culture in their respective agencies.

**Table 7.**

*Overall Rating on Technological Advancements Awareness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Overall, I am aware that Technological Advancements as a corruption prevention mechanism in this Office promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015 helped in eradicating corruption. This is all about: 1) Information Technology infrastructure development; and 2) Online Services /Non-Interface of clients to subject agency employees. | | | |
| Technological Advancements | 3.93 | .826 | Agree |

Technological Advancements received an overall rating of 3.93 or agree. This signifies that, in general, the respondents observe the aspect of Technological Advancements as a tool in eradicating corruption. In like manner, all item components of Technological Advancement received ratings that equated to agree. Among the three items of evaluation, the highest rating (4.16) was observed on the respondents 'awareness on the help given by technological advancement in providing the best frontline service for the public. This signifies that for the respondents, technology is best observed and is beneficial on its capability to offer the best frontline service. The two remaining items under Technological Advancements also received ratings of agree. Awareness on the management efforts of advancing technological development and overall awareness measure and its capability to eradicate corruption. Strong political leadership is critical to the success of e-government because there is a need to establish a long term commitment of financial resources, personnel and technical expertise in the design, development, and implementation of e-government projects (Magno, 2010). The respondents are aware that Top Management is doing its part in the modernization of IT tools to prevent corruption prevention mechanisms like the ease of processing of frontline

services by the Board and the non-interface interaction of the client and its employees according to the OIC Chief of the subject agency's Legal Division.

2. How did respondents assess their perception of effectiveness of the Office of the Ombudsman's corruption prevention mechanisms, like the following: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program, Anti-Red Time Act Compliance, Technological Advancements Statement of Assets Liabilities and Networth compliance, Humanistic Approach in Public Administration;

**Table 8.**

*Overall Rating on IDR/IMP Effectiveness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Integrity Development Review (IDR)/Integrity Management Program (IMP) as a corruption prevention mechanism promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015 is an effective tool in curbing corruption. IDR/IMP is a study of critical agency processes and recommending policy actions to address such. | | | |
| IDR/IMP Effectiveness | 3.75 | .999 | Agree |

The overall rating of perceived effectiveness can be surmised by the researcher, as a former Resident Ombudsman staff for the subject agency is that, they can recall the corruption prevention mechanism but no longer practiced, or somewhat "forgotten", "shelved", "a ningas-kugon initiative" based on informal interviews with some employees who do not want their identities disclosed. Still, they recall the purpose of the Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program to check on systems and procedures of their agency because they were a participant to focus group discussions and/or individual employee survey. The subject agency management explains the findings and rolls out the recommendations for implementation in a form of memoranda

or circulars. Among the corruption prevention mechanisms asked for this section of the questionnaire, this part is the lowest having only an overall mean of 3.75 and a standard deviation result of .999. On the other hand, the adjectival description of this corruption prevention mechanism landed on "agree" as a qualitative description.

**Table 9.**

*Overall Rating on ARTA Compliance Effectiveness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) compliance as a corruption prevention mechanism as a corruption prevention mechanism promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 20092015 is an effective tool in curbing corruption. ARTA Compliance consists of: 1) Posting of Citizens' Charter; 2) Anti-Red Tape Act Audit; 3) Updating of Citizen's Compliance | | | |
| ARTA Compliance | 3.92 | .995 | Agree |

During the time of the defunct Presidential Anti-Graft Commission headed by Chairman Constancia De Guzman, the Office of the Ombudsman headed by former Ombudsman Ma. Merceditas Navarro-Gutierrez, were having duplication of monitoring jobs as to the implementation of the Anti-Red Tape Act. Until the Civil Service Commission came up with the Anti-Red Tape Act Citizen's Charter Audit Score Card, only then that there has been a clear policy as to the monitoring of the implementation of the law. The early years of implementation of this law, the government agencies were worried all the time for the so-called "mystery client" or "disguising customer of any of the frontline services of national government agencies and local government units. But after being audited for a month, a quarter or a semester, the old bad habits, the "pagsusungit", the non-immediate attention to the immediate needs of the client and even the client satisfaction feedback card was again set aside and will start the practice after an audit was conducted

by the CSC. In this table, even though it showed a qualitative equivalent of "agree" responses from the participants of the survey questionnaire, still the mean which is 3.92 and standard deviation are high compared to the first corruption prevention mechanism tested in this research.

**Table 10.**

*Overall Rating on SALN Compliance Effectiveness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | Std. Deviation | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Submission of Statement of Assets, Liability and Networth (SALN) compliance as a corruption prevention mechanism as a corruption prevention mechanism promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015 is an effective tool in curbing corruption. SALN Compliance consists of: 1) Timely submission of SALN; 2) Monitoring of SALN compliance; and 3) Database Management of SALN entries | | | |
| SALN Compliance | 3.95 | .982 | Agree |

Among the five areas of evaluation, the highest rating (3.95) was observed on the area of SALN. Relative to other areas, it can be said that SALN is perceived as the most effective mechanism in preventing corruption. SALN is one document that all government workers fear of. It was mandated by law to be filed, before and after working in the government. It was to be filed every year. Furthermore, SALN is a tool that can be used for your government career to easily end. SALN compliance are for years taken for granted. Employees of the government just copy and paste or even just changed the year at the top of the form, until came when, cases in the judiciary and impeachment cases against top officials of the land happen due to misdeclarations in SALN late filing and non-filing at all. Respondents believe that SALN now was a deterrent to corruption due to the

mentioned cases. But, SALN compliance cannot fulfill its purpose if the data entries were not analyze efficiently and effectively and could be a source of discriminative or malicious prosecution for political rivals or even a non-political allies. In this case the mean is 3.95 and the standard deviation is .982 and the qualitative equivalent is "agree".

**Table 11.**

*Overall Rating on Humanistic Approach in Public Administration Effectiveness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Humanistic Approach in Public Administration as a corruption prevention mechanism as a corruption prevention mechanism promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015 is an effective tool in curbing corruption. Humanistic Approach in Public Administration encompasses: 1) Promotion of a corruption free organizational atmosphere; 2) Merit Selection and Promotion Plan System; 3) Human Resource Information System; 4) Administrative Discipline System | | | |
| Humanistic Approach in Public Administration | 3.93 | .955 | Agree |

In this corruption prevention mechanism, the mean was 3.93 and standard deviation among the responses of the participants is .955 with a qualitative description of "Agree". This showed that the humanistic component is important and valued at the agency and it was a corruption deterrent among their ranks. All of the sub-points are perceived effective by the respondents and with such this maybe attributed to the current top level officials of the current administration, whom from the very start communicated a strong voice against corruption and instituted reforms.

**Table 12.**

*Overall Rating on Technological Advancements Effectiveness*

| Items of Evaluation | Mean | SD | Qualitative Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Technological Advancements as a corruption prevention mechanism as a corruption prevention mechanism promoted by the Office of the Ombudsman in the years 2009-2015 is an effective tool in curbing corruption. This is all about: 1) Information Technology infrastructure development; and 2) Online Services /Non-Interface of clients to employees | | | |
| Technological Advancements | 3.92 | .982 | Agree |

Among the corruption prevention mechanisms technological advancements also received a low mean which is 3.92, a standard deviation of .982, but a qualitative description of "Agree". With such, the respondents are no longer impressed of high class technology that could use up all the agency's budget based on informal interviews. They believe that even if they agree that it could be a deterrent to corruption the upgrade of facilities, violators can still find ways to go around the technology system and could be another problem in the near future.

Problem 3: What are the significant gaps that exists between awareness and effectiveness of corruption prevention mechanisms?

In order to measure the gap between the respondents 'level of awareness and their perceived degree of effectiveness, the researcher utilized the Paired Sample *t*-test. This statistical technique enabled the researcher to determine whether significant differences exists between the respondents 'degree of awareness and perceived level of effectiveness. If significant differences were observed, the researcher can conclude that a gap between the two variables are persistent. Significant differences can be determined

using the *p*-value of each generated *t*-statistic. If the *t*-statistics '*p*-value is less than the level of significance of 0.05, it can be concluded that a significant difference exists.

**Table 13.**

*Paired Sample t-test Results for Awareness and Effectiveness: IDR / IMP*

| Areas of Evaluation | Mean Rating | *t*-statistic | *p*-value (decision) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Integrity Development Review / Integrity Management Program Overall Awareness | 3.42 | -5.651 | 0.000 Significant Difference |
| Overall Integrity Development Review (IDR)/Integrity Management Program (IMP)'s Effectiveness | 3.75 | | |

In the case of IDR and IMP, comparison of mean ratings and *t*-statistic showed significant difference in rating. This is particularly concluded from the *p*-value of the *t*-statistic, which is lower than the level of significance of 0.05. This in effect leads to the finding that there is a significant difference in the level of awareness and the respondents 'perceived level of effectiveness of the IDR / IMP in addressing corruption. Using the overall mean rating, results suggest that the degree of effectiveness is significantly higher than the level of awareness. This implies that while the respondents view the effectiveness of the IDR / IMP, they do not necessarily see, the same level of awareness in its implementation. With that, it can be deduced that the level of awareness was nearly "not aware", or aware but "refuse to be aware" or resistance of awareness due to the culture of "non-acceptance of the pro-active approach" in combatting corruption through this corruption prevention mechanism.

**Table 14.**

*Paired Sample t-test Results for Awareness and Effectiveness: Anti-Red Tape Act Compliance*

| Areas of Evaluation | Mean | t-statistic | p-value (decision) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Awareness on Anti-Red Tape Act Compliance | 4.06 | 2.07 | .015 Significant Difference |
| Perceived Effectiveness of the ARTA | 3.92 | | |

In the case of Anti-Red Tape Act, the computed *p*-value of the *t*-statistic was also less than the level of significance of 0.05. This in effect suggests that significant differences were observed between the awareness and effectiveness of the ARTA. Using the mean ratings, results showed awareness having significantly higher mean rating than effectiveness. This suggests that while the respondents are highly aware of the ARTA implementation, they do not necessarily see the same level of effectiveness on its implementation. During the researcher's stint, as Technical Staff for the Office of the Resident Ombudsman for Transportation, subject agency is a regulatory office that deals mostly to Liaison Officers.

Transportation government regulatory agencies procedure is quiet specialized in nature, because it has something to do with laws, urban planning, population projection with economics and some other related disciplines. Liaison Officers are culturally viewed in the grass roots as "professional fixers", due to the accreditation process -- prescribed by the government to regulate their practice -- they became part of the government operations. It can be surmised that subject agency respondents saw these people "as violators of the Anti-Red Tape Act", but cannot be eradicated due to cultural and psychosocial considerations. Anti-Red Tap Act compliance became so tedious for most

government offices to always update the Citizen's Charter and comply with the reportorial requirements of the Civil Service Commission while corruption still prevails in some aspects of the agency operations.

**Table 15.**

*Paired Sample t-test Results for Awareness and Effectiveness: SALN compliance*

| Areas of Evaluation | Mean Rating | t-statistic | p-value (decision) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Awareness on Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth Compliance | 4.17 | 4.106 | 0.000 Significant Difference |
| Effectiveness of Overall Submission of Statement of Assets, Liability and Networth (SALN) | 3.95 | | |

Similar with IDR/IMP and ARTA, results for SALN were found to be on the same direction. As observed, the *p*-value of the *t*-statistic was less than the level of significance of 0.05, indicating significant differences in results. Upon examination of mean ratings, results showed higher ratings of awareness than effectiveness. This again suggests that the respondents 'level of awareness on the SALN compliance is significantly different or higher than the respondents 'perceived level of effectiveness. The respondents observe and are aware of the SALN compliance.  However, they don't necessarily see the same level of effectiveness in its implementation and ability to prevent corruption. SALN compliance had been a problematic corruption prevention mechanism. Generally, the compliance culture became "just routine" and not a feeling of doing it "with dignity or honesty". In reality, not all government officials/officers/employees declared in their SALN forms the correct and honestly accurate entries; there is no portion of a narrative, to explain why you have those entries in the form; SALN when it falls to the hands of your opponent could be a start of a "phishing expedition"; SALN entries were just recorded

but not analyze and or interpreted; the entries are subject for validation even though it was already a "declaration under oath". It became a tool to remove an official/employee, this had been abused by some to propagate good or bad propaganda to/against officials/officers/employees in the government, defeating the purpose of the law, which is to make government service "a noble calling" and not a place to earn millions through corrupt acts.

**Table 16.**

*Paired Sample t-test Results for Awareness and Effectiveness: Humanistic Approach in Public Administration*

| Areas of Evaluation | Mean Rating | t-statistic | p-value (decision) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Humanistic Approach in Public Administration: Awareness | 4.02 | 1.674 | 0.0976 No Significant Difference |
| Humanistic Approach in Public Administration: Effectiveness | 3.93 | | |

In the case of Humanistic Approach in Public Administration, results revealed no significant differences in the respondents 'level of awareness and effectiveness rating. As observed, the *t*-statistic generated *p*-value greater than the level of significance of 0.05. This indicates no significant differences. As results suggest, the respondents 'awareness and effectiveness are not significantly different. It's safe to conclude that at this point, no gap or difference were observed between the two variables.

**Table 17.**

*Paired Sample t-test Results for Awareness and Effectiveness: Technological Advancements*

| Areas of Evaluation | Mean Rating | t-statistic | p-value (decision) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Technological Advancements Awareness | 3.93 | | 0.829 |
| Technological Advancements Effectiveness | 3.92 | 0.216 | No Significant Difference |

When Technological Advancement is considered, results revealed no significant differences in ratings. This is evident from the *p*-value of the *t*-statistic, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. This in effect leads to the conclusion that the respondents 'degree of awareness and effectiveness rating are not significantly different. It is likewise safe to say that no significant gaps are observed between the two variables.

**Table 18**

*Paired Sample t-test Results for Overall Rating Awareness and Effectiveness*

| Areas of Evaluation | Mean Rating | t-statistic | p-value (decision) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Awareness Rating | 3.93 | | 0.739 |
| Overall effectiveness rating | 3.92 | -0.334 | No Significant Difference |

On top of the individual evaluation for each mechanism, the researcher also determined the overall difference between the respondents 'degree of awareness and effectiveness rating. While there were areas that posted significant differences in results, overall rating

revealed that no significant differences were observed. This signifies that on the overall level, the respondents 'degree of awareness and effectiveness ratings are not significantly different. Hence, no significant gaps are observed on the overall level.

## Conclusion

Corruption Prevention practice or the pro-active approach in the fight of corruption had never been accepted by the employees of the government until present. The cultural and psychosocial dimension, understanding and feeling of the respondents showed that even if they were aware of the Integrity Development Review and Integrity Management Program, they prefer that a case should be filed against an erring official/officer/employee and be disciplined or removed from Office.

The discussion of the researcher in his three different research presented abroad, is that fight against corruption in the Philippines, by our government crusaders is "reactive" by running these culprits after amassing government coffers, if someone files a complaint. After providing media mileage on the cases filed before the regular courts or the "Sandiganbayan" the anti-graft court, these are no longer carefully watched by public, how the cases progressed and the legal battle was no longer highlighted in the succeeding days.

The legal battle in the Philippines, is lengthy and pricey. The culprits can hire the best lawyers and bribe judges/justices, which they already have calculated in amassing these amounts. The anti-graft body of the country, the Office of the Ombudsman, having functions mandated by the constitution and its organic laws, namely: Investigation, Prosecution, Public Assistance, Preliminary Investigation and Administrative Adjudication and finally, Corruption Prevention, had office circulars and memoranda on the four functions, to wit: Public Assistance- Memorandum Circular No. 1, Series of 2015 and

Office Circular No. 4 Series of 2018; Investigation- Office Circular No. 01, Series of 2015; Preliminary Investigation and Administrative Adjudication- Administrative Order No 7; Prosecution- Administrative Order No. 13, but Corruption Prevention continued to lack the necessary policy, system and manual of operations.

The Office of the Ombudsman as the "protector of the people" has the power to issue its own rules and regulations in the implementation of its mandated core functions, which means, there is no need for a legislation, but publication only. This issuance can be applied to all branches of the government, for the reason that, all public officials, officers and employees, whether appointed or elected, working in any branch or instrumentality of the government, the constitutional commissions, government owned and controlled corporations, state colleges and universities, local government units, or anyone who falls under the case law definition of a public officer/official/employee, which is "a person who derives his salary/honorarium from public funds" were under this Office's jurisdiction.

The Office of the Ombudsman is an office of last resort of any person whose rights were violated by any public official/officer/employee, but as Protector of the People, it also protects the legal rights of civil servants. Based on these findings and the summary table of done *t*-statistic test on the five chosen corruption prevention mechanisms, the policy recommendation will focus on the three areas, which are: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program, ARTA Compliance and SALN Compliance.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals No. 16, this SDG principle can be divided into three stages: First Stage: Build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, Second Stage: Access to justice for all, Third Stage: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development attaining the First Stage of SDG 16 will result in an implied effective and efficient justice system (Second Stage of SDG 16), if the Judiciary and all other branches of the government will enthrall the idea

of institutionalizing Corruption Prevention by building a culture of integrity through organizational integrity and periodic review of all legal procedures in tune with the evolving cycles of the society.

## Recommendation

The contribution of this study to the existing body of knowledge, is a strategic policy proposal in the area of Corruption Prevention. Since, the country had been a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the constitutional and legislative basis of corruption prevention in our local laws, it is but imperative to institutionalize corruption prevention mechanisms in the fight of corruption in our country.

The product of Corruption Prevention practice which are integrity systems and procedures will give people easy access to the judicial processes, which in return shall answer to the legal concerns, in a simplified manner. The primary goal of corruption prevention practice towards good governance, is the simplification of government processes and addressing the concerns of the transacting public in a government office/agency frontline or even organizational support operations. The achievement of the Second Stage, shall produce and promote a peaceful and inclusive society for sustainable development (Third Stage of SDG16).

An effective and efficient judicial system would create a public image of fair legal process that in time will promote an inclusive society. The integration of internal controls as a result of the institution of corruption prevention tools through research/ corruption vulnerability assessments, systems study methodologies, etc. will foster a culture of integrity in government institutions and further create an impression of forging partnerships with the other member organizations (private and civil society organizations) of the society to be accountable and inclusive institutions.

Finally the third stage is "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development" which shall provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The need for accountable and inclusive government institutions, should first be achieved to attain SDGs 1-15 and that is through the pro-active and pre-emptive approach in fighting corruption – the introduction and promotion of the corruption prevention culture in the Philippine Governance system.

Thus, in the three corruption prevention mechanisms, namely: Integrity Development Review/Integrity Management Program, ARTA Compliance and SALN Compliance, the Office of the Ombudsman must issue a policy on corruption prevention, which will be adapted by government offices. The significant gaps will be addressed by this policy recommendation pertaining to accountability (determination of designated officers), training, performance monitoring and well defined duties and functions (sustainability) and rewards system for good performing Corruption Prevention Coordinators who shall assist the implementation of the Corruption Prevention function of the OMB.

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