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**Cultural Agglomeration: Effects of Chinese Culture in the Formation of Urban Space
in Binondo, Manila**

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Rationale

The purpose of this project is to assess the impact of Chinese culture in the formation of an urban space that is specific to Binondo, Manila, Philippines. It is important to note that the oldest Chinatown in the world (Badayos, 2019) could have not existed without material and immaterial cultures brought by the ancestors of today's Filipino-Chinese mestizos or *Tsinoy*s.

Chinatown is an area at the heart of downtown Manila where commercial and residential spaces agglomerate; it is the place where the concentration of ethnic Chinese (in Manila) is the highest. Binondo's ancient ancestors came to the Philippines as traders, turers, students, refugees, and family members, hailing from south China (Guldin 1980 as cited from Pacho, 1986) for escaping the mainland's political, economic, and social turmoil despite the emperor's prohibition, making the country their refuge (as cited from Pacho, 1986). This started the clustering of the Chinese ethnicity in the Philippines, which drove various activities within the limits of the area that they have been given. Chinatown became this cultural hub of Chinese influences with their businesses, livelihoods and ways of life bounded in a fixed space. Over time, interactions with the region caused their culture to be woven in the fabric of the Philippines, bringing in together their language, food and social norms, among many others. (Pacho, 1986).

Today, the unique monoculture created in the area formed different economies of agglomeration, as such can be seen in the "clustering" of many activities ranging from retailing and restaurants to transport terminals define Binondo as Chinatown. Furthermore, well-known close family ties of the Chinese people greatly contributed to the curation of their famous clustered spaces.

The researchers picked Binondo and the Chinese culture as the topics of this study for the reasons that 1) it is generally safer to commute, eat, and stroll in Chinatown more than any other culturally agglomerated spaces in the country, 2) the researchers want to understand deeper this integrated foreign race in the country given the current political climate and intense tensions caused by the present China-Philippines relation, and 3) it is a micro-scale representation of urban spaces and developments that can be further studied and analyzed to project the future of urban spaces given intensive cultural influences.

In trying to understand their culture, we could be able to apply the same principles in looking through different places with the same economic and social characteristics inside and outside of the country.

Statement of the Problem

Chinatown has endured through time and quite remarkably so. Its long history proves unwavering forms of political and economic success through its cultural assets and practices. Existing through three different colonizers, it was able to adapt and essentially thrive up to contemporary times. Although changes occurred, particularly in the demographics of the area, the cultural legacy and its impacts, since it was first established, continues to be felt in the national level.

The study by Rokhsaneh Rahbarianyazd & Naciye Doratli (2017), *Assessing the Contribution of Cultural Agglomeration in Urban Regeneration through Developing Cultural Strategies*, provides five modes of cultural agglomeration; modes of orientation, modes of integration, modes of coordination, modes of designation, and modes of government intervention in the urban context which can be achieved through the successful implementation of different cultural processes. The researchers believe that these modes are all evident in present-day Binondo.

An important concept of Urban Geography is the shaping of urban settings through global and locally-contingent factors. A unique application is used in the study by providing a foreign form of cultural pluralism where sphere of influence extends in a national scale.

The study would focus on the current cultural strategies of Binondo, and its overall impact on the urban space. There is a number of literature discussing relationships between the use of cultural assets and its impact on the development of urban spaces, but not much in the context of a cultural agglomeration thriving in a foreign land, such as the case of *Chinatown*s. This study will provide a helpful description of the cultural strategies evident in Chinatown, and its importance in shaping an urban space.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically this study aims to:

3.1 Assess the strategies of Cultural Agglomeration discussed by Rokhsaneh Rahbarianyazd & Naciye Doratli (2017) in current day Binondo.

This study assesses the five modes of cultural agglomeration under the urban context evident in Binondo. The researchers want to identify the cultural assets of the area and categorize it based on this standard.

3.2 Analyze the impacts of these strategies plus the external factors of Globalization and the Filipino culture in shaping the urban space of Binondo.

The study also explores the effect of the strategies on the urban space along with other external factors. The researchers elaborate on the cultural goods, services and establishments in the area and examine its impact on its overall urban makeup.

3.3 Discuss the effectiveness of Cultural Agglomeration in its many forms on empowering urban spaces.

The researchers discuss the importance of Cultural Agglomeration in forming urban spaces. Ultimately, they emphasize its effectiveness in developing a structurally and economically stable urban space.

The analyses will be substantiated with the concepts and principles discussed in Geography 135 (Urban and Rural Geography) particularly that of the concepts of Agglomeration of Services and Urban Outcomes.

Review of Related Literature

Chinese in the Philippines

An article by Teresita Ang-See (1990) looks at how the Chinese people in the Philippines eventually built their own communities around the archipelago. It delves back as far as their arrival, up to their present-day communities and culture.

The Chinese who immigrated to the Philippines during the Spanish era were first called Sangleyes, which means "businessmen" or "frequent visitors". They were later called Intsik, from the Malay word encik, meaning "venerable uncle". It was until 1992 when the term Tsinoy was coined, which became popular due to common usage. Still used up to present times, this term means Tsinong Pinoy, or Chinese Filipino (Ang-See, 1990).

People from Southern China started migrating as early as 5000 B.C.. Archaeological findings confirmed that the Philippines had relations to China's southern ports. Maps and annals included some major places in the Philippines. Trade relations flourished under the Yuan dynasty, and waves of migration from China to other southeast Asian countries were caused by drought, famine, poverty, and political unrest (Ang-See, 1990).

Upon the arrival of the Spaniards, they saw the importance of Chinese labor and business around the country. Because of this, they encouraged Chinese immigration. The influx of thousands of Chinese went out of control, with the Spaniards feeling challenged with their dominance. They proceeded to persecute and brutalize the Chinese, resulting in several tragic massacres. Spanish officials then suffered from the loss of the Chinese market, and enticed them to return to the country. They came back, but were still subject to unfair treatment by the Spaniards by charging them higher taxes, restricting their mobility, and blaming the Spanish government's mishandling of the economy to them (Ang-See, 1990).

They also suffered under the Americans' Exclusion Act, closing the borders to immigrants except for students, teachers, merchants, and tourists. This greatly reduced the Chinese population in the country, making the Philippines the country with the least number of Chinese communities in Southeast Asia (Ang-See, 1990).

The Japanese occupation was their darkest, since China was at war with Japan. The local Chinese communities expressed their resistance, despite the warnings of Filipino leaders against bringing the war to the Philippines. With that, one of the first things the Japanese did was to conduct a purge of the Chinese communities in the country. All male Chinese 15 years old and above were killed with the bayonet, perishing more than 600 in the

massacre. Like their Filipino counterparts, the Chinese guerillas helped out by gathering intelligence and assisting in the escape of prisoners (Ang-See, 1990).

In 1949, the People's Republic of China was established, ending Chinese immigration for more than two decades. The Chinese people in the Philippines demanded for citizenship. They expanded their trading businesses to manufacturing and import-export light industries. This marked the birth of the new generation Tsinoy. They were still not considered as Filipino citizens at this time, until June 1975 when former President Ferdinand Marcos allowed the local Chinese an easy access to naturalization, which was then a long, tedious, and expensive process. 90% of the alien Chinese at that time obtained citizenship through the special administrative process. This was the beginning of the full integration, giving the Chinese a sense of belonging to the country. Since then, they are increasingly recognized as one of the cultural minorities in the country (Ang-See, 1990). The Chinese were known as traders in the early history, moving to manufacturing postwar. They were involved in agribusiness- fisheries, farms, and raising cattle. They were also successful in establishing the banking industry. The first Chinese bank, China Bank, opened in 1920. Other Chinese-Filipino-owned banks such as Allied Bank, United Asia Bank, Philippine National Bank, and Banco de Oro followed (Ang-See, 1990).

Before 1975, majority of Tsinoy living in the country rented apartments because they could not own property. Most of them resided in their business establishments. Today, most of them own houses and well-guarded condominiums for security reasons, especially at the height of kidnapping incidents from 1992 to 2003 (Ang-See, 1990).

In terms of households and families, Ang-See (1990) sees marriage with Filipinos is not encouraged now, but not as discouraged as before when the Chinese will be disowned by their families if they do so. The interactions with the Filipinos, from being friends to colleagues or business partners, can be easily done. Intermarriage is difficult to avoid. The patriarchal family traditions has also changed, with more and more women establishing their own careers and playing important roles in their businesses (Ang-See, 1990).

In religion, Ang-See (1990) notes that 87% of the ethnic Chinese minority are Christians. About 90% of these Christians are Catholics, combining Catholic and Chinese beliefs together in their practices. Among these practices is the Catholic ritual of baptism done after some Chinese practices, sometimes even if the parents are not both Catholics. This includes getting Filipino and Chinese godparents, giving rise to social connections through the child's baptism. Another example is when a Chinese opens a new establishment for their business. Their traditional lion dance with firecrackers and consultations with feng shui experts are done, and afterwards a Catholic priest blesses the premises with holy

water. Other traditions are practiced as well, like the Chinese Lunar New Year celebration, which is observed by the Filipinos and Chinese alike.

This article thoroughly explained the entirety of Chinese integration to the Philippines. A lot of drivers moved to create this present reality we see today. A lot of them were born and raised in the country, having little to no firsthand experience in China and considering the Philippines as their home (Ang-See, 1990). The major and most obvious changes they have brought are evident in culture -- from religion to practices and lifestyle. The intertwining of two different cultures, which is the focus of our research, will be much easier to understand if we are able to look at its roots.

Assessing the contribution of cultural agglomeration in urban regeneration through developing cultural strategies

This study by Rahbarianyazd & Doratli (2017) talks about how different cultural bodies affect the overall growth or regeneration of the urban landscape. The different cultural strategies are created from the different clusters of culture carriers. These culture carriers can be people, products, themes, processes, places, and time. The research was then able to divide the cultural strategies into three categories: Entrepreneurial strategies, Creative industry strategies, and Creative class strategies (Rahbarianyazd & Doratli, 2017).

The Entrepreneurial strategies are used in large-scale redevelopment, starting from the planning phase. These strategies use culture as a catalyst for urban growth, incorporation to big projects and cultural events, and require public investment. The strategies aim to stimulate future development by aligning urban design and construction of structures for public use and to protect the heritage and the environment (Rahbarianyazd & Doratli, 2017).

In the Creative industry strategies, culture is seen as an integral part of the planned urban structure. Culture is integrated with the flourishing of the economic, social, and physical features. Cultural production has a big role in enhancing the social identity of communities and boosting the economy. This involves the creation of local cultural products, establishment of cultural districts, and is more about helping and extending existing plans in terms of urban regeneration (Rahbarianyazd & Doratli, 2017).

In the Creative class strategies, culture is more of a contributing factor to the different spheres of the urban landscape, rather than its own sphere. Examples of the application of these strategies are arts education programs, community arts programs, and the collaboration of the arts sector with private entities. Culture then provides context for the

ongoing processes happening in the different spheres, and provides narratives for wider development (Rahbarianyazd & Doratli, 2017).

The research provides a solid foundation for studying or evaluating urban regeneration strategies with the involvement of culture. The analysis of the different combinations of culture carriers and modes of agglomeration makes it easier to dissect the role of culture in different policies and urban structures. In this way, the areas lacking support or interest can be pinpointed and approached with a smaller-scale solution.

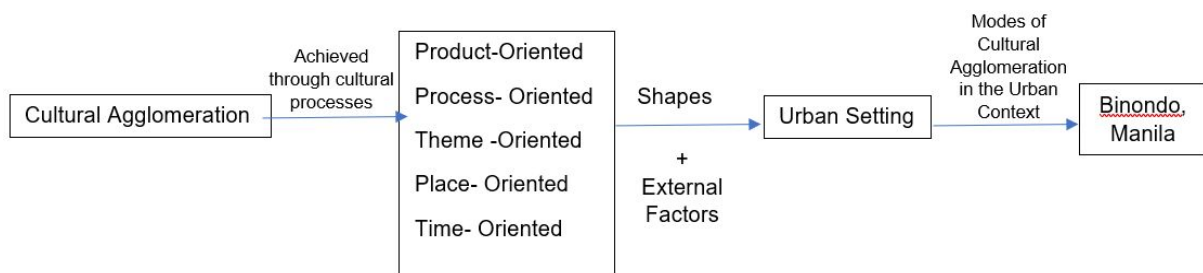
In our research, we based our analysis on the concepts and principles of Rahbarianyazd & Doratli's study. Our conceptual framework is a combination of the study's concepts and some ideas we have touched into in our class discussions. These combinations of ideas create a simple but comprehensive analysis of the different factors that affect the cultural, and ultimately, urban landscape of Binondo.

Conceptual Framework

Binondo exhibits cultural agglomeration whose forms are described in the study. It is unique in the way that it shows a rare form of cultural pluralism existing in foreign lands with severe or widely-felt impacts.

Cultural agglomeration can be an efficient tool for urban regeneration (Rahbarianyazd & Doratli, 2017) given proper practices of cultural strategies. It can therefore be added that cultural agglomeration, without disregarding external factors, also pave the way for shaping urban settings. This is the type of framework used to analyze Binondo.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of How the Forms of Cultural Agglomeration Shape the Urban Setting of Binondo, Manila



The categorization for the modes of cultural agglomeration in the urban context will be seen as well from the study of Rahbarianyazd & Doratli (2017). The researchers will use it for it is comprehensive (compiled from a number of studies) and specific.

Results and Discussions

The forms of cultural agglomeration in Binondo, Manila, as seen in the urban context, are categorized as product-oriented, process-oriented, theme-oriented, place-oriented and time-oriented. These forms, upon successful implementation, will enable the area to become modes of orientation, modes of integration, modes of coordination, modes of designation and modes of government intervention, and from here its urban setting will be ultimately determined.

6.1 Product-Oriented

There is a point where the link between the cultural production and urban spaces is extremely magnified that they actually define each other (Cruz, 2017). Such is the case for Chinatown. As the name of the place implies, products of Chinese origin and influence can be found here from food, clothing, accessories, and other materials. It can be argued that these products can be seen elsewhere in the country but the bulk and authenticity of these materials in Binondo cannot be matched.

6.2 Process-Oriented

Process refers to the entrepreneurial cultural events (Richards & Palmer, 2010) and the individual's or group's mental activities which produce and achieve the creativity (Puccio, 2006). 'Street Culture' is popular in Binondo. Along its streets, interaction between the cultural, mixed economies and the local population in small and medium scales are prevalent. It is a sort of enjoying the creation and meeting its creators. Examples of these are Chinese fortune telling, religious interactions and Chinese restaurants. The creativity in the entrepreneurial spirits of the residences does not end there as they also have retail establishments specifically customized in their culture such as drugstores, merchandise, boutiques, and others.

Additionally, several large-scale events which boost economic performance in lieu with cultural assets are celebrated here such as Chinese New Year and a number of other Chinese festivals. It is also important to note the acculturation of Christianity to the people and the place itself. Several saint feast days are celebrated here such as the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz (Hermoso, 2018). These events do not only capture the local population but as well as tourists boosting urban activities.

6.3 Place-Oriented

The place-oriented form of cultural agglomeration is mainly exhibited in two ways; cultural heritage sites and modern buildings with privileged architectural designs such as iconic buildings (Ashley, 2014). These places will attract tourists, enveloping and further employing cultural practices.

Binondo contains several heritage sites which exemplifies the Filipino-Chinese identity. It is a sanctuary for several religions containing religious temples for varied beliefs and practices. For example, there is the Binondo Church or the Minor Basilica of St. Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint, for the Christians and the Seng Guan Temple and the Kuang Kong Temple for the Buddhists.

As for modern structures architecturally embroidered with cultural significance, there are the streets of Escolta and Ongpin where many luxurious, cultural brands are sold in modified, old-art style establishments.

6.4 Theme-Oriented

The name *Chinatown* shouts for the theme of the district. People are largely expected to experience a touch of Chinese community practices, services and goods influenced by the outlying factor of the Filipino Culture. Especially during festivals, the establishments and streets are flowering with the Filipino-Chinese theme. Signages and posters are mostly written in Chinese with corresponding Filipino translations. Even the residences are mostly designed with traditional Filipino-Chinese architecture.

6.5 People-Oriented

A place cannot be disassociated with the people and their activities (Florida, 2014). Binondo is certainly a place where services, goods and traditions unique to a culture are practiced by the vast majority of its population. The place contains a number of people who are able to practice the varieties of Chinese language, Chinese Fortune Telling, cook authentic Chinese Food and head spiritual practices (Buddhism, Taoism and Roman Catholicism).

The successful implementation of these cultural processes set the modes of cultural agglomeration in the urban context for Binondo, and ultimately dictated and modified its

urban setting. Its modes of orientation represent the clustering of cultural products and services in the district such as Chinese restaurants, stalls and establishment selling merchandises of chinese authentic products and religious temples among others.

With regard to the agglomeration cultural assets in Binondo, modes of integration are important to regulate competition. This is mainly described in two forms, *Plural-Cultural Industry Production* and *Mono-Cultural Industry Production*. As the terms suggest, the former pertains to the regulation of prices through a sort of cartel process, while the latter pertains to regulation of monopolies to enable small-scale businesses (Martin & Sunley, 2013) thrive despite unmatching the production capability or existing popularity of extremely larger competitors.

The modes of coordination pertains to political and market relationships among clusters inside and outside of Binondo. Specifically it pertains to the existing connections of the industries inside (inter-cluster) and their connections with other clusters outside the district (intra-cluster). This is evident as Binondo has vast traces of connections with the other districts of Manila (local level) and as well as with other regions of the country (national level). One example for this is the textile manufacturing industries in *Chinatown* wherein the products are largely distributed nationwide (Ongpin, 2015).

One of the important aspects of urban planning is identifying areas where clustering of cultural industries occur (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). As an indicator for modes of designation, Binondo is subject to cultural policy intervention and is a benefit of cultural policy intervention in order to boost cultural consumption.

Lastly, modes of government interventions are also prevalent in Binondo. Aside from prior planning and policy-making from its local government unit, the national government has expressed its support for the cultural agglomeration in the district. In 2011, Malacañang declared Chinese New Year as a special non-working holiday (Porcalla, 2011) in respect of Filipino-Chinese communities. In terms of infrastructure, the Binondo-Intramuros bridge is under construction. This is established to link tourism areas, market centers, schools, and institutions. Specifically, it will provide alternative linkage between the busy commercial establishments and restaurants in Binondo and the historical sites in Intramuros (*Overlay of Economic Growth, Demographic Trends, and Physical Characteristics*, 2017).

Conclusion

Analyzing the assessment of the cultural strategies (product-oriented, process-oriented, place-oriented, theme-oriented and people-oriented), Binondo can be seen as a successful example wherein culture empowers the urban setting. In the study's context, it continues to develop and receive supportive modes of cultural agglomeration in the urban context which in turn perpetuates successful urban development and urban economy.

Cultural agglomeration impacted the urban setting of Binondo both physically and economically. Infrastructures, products, services, events, and policies are strategically incorporated with Filipino-Chinese culture to uniquely and robustly boost urban economic activities. Cultural production and consumption are prioritized in the urban planning of the district through the planning, construction and renovation of roads, establishments, and cultural heritage sites, policy making and additional government interventions.

Cultural agglomeration can be a vital part of an effective urban development. Aside from physically and economically shaping the urban setting, it also provides unique strategies which emphasize the cultural assets and cultural identity of an area. In the study, *Chinatown* is a proof that cultural preservation is not a hindrance but rather a tool for empowering urban activities. For five centuries, amidst the challenges of being a foreign culture and the drastic trend of Globalization, *Chinatown* still continues to grow and prosper.

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