

DECOLONIZING AND RE-/INDIGENIZING FILIPINOS  
IN DIASPORA

A Thesis

Presented to the faculty of the Division of Social Work  
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by

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Abstract  
of  
DECOLONIZING AND RE-/INDIGENIZING FILIPINOS  
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by  
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**Problem:** Colonized peoples, like Filipinos, experience psychological and physical consequences resulting from processes of colonization including physical, spiritual, and epistemic violence. Scholars developed frameworks such as historical trauma (HT) and colonial mentality (CM) to understand these harms, which pass from generation to generation, of catastrophic and intentional violence that disrupts communal, familial, and individual health. Filipino Americans are experiencing mental/health disparities, linked to CM, a form of HT. Filipinos have higher rates of depression than Asian and White Americans and nearly half of Filipina adolescents experience suicidal ideation, compared with 13% of high school students. Depression disparities correlate with CM and studies are linking mental health and health. Filipinos also experience disparate rates of hypertension, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, diabetes, and drug and alcohol use.

**Methodology:** This qualitative, phenomenological study builds on decolonizing/indigenizing methods and Sikolohiyang Pilipino, an indigenous Filipino psychology model. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with leaders in

the decolonizing/indigenizing movement of diasporic Filipinos. The researcher also conducted a *member check* to increase trustworthiness and rigor of the study. Results: Five themes emerged from the data. First, decolonizing, re-/indigenizing, and the survival of indigenous practices are strategies for resisting and healing from colonization. Second, *kapwa mentorship* is practiced within the movement including, seeking, receiving, and providing *kapwa mentorship* as well as promoting intergenerational knowledge exchanges. Third, the individuals as well as the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing are experiencing a trajectory of growth. Fourth, Filipinos in diaspora are experiencing racism and all five of the CM factors. Fifth, and finally, spirituality and connection with the ancestors are important to the leaders of the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. Conclusion: Asian Americans are highly understudied, in particular, Filipinos have received strikingly little attention from the research community despite being the fastest growing population in U.S. This study draws from fields of social work, psychology, and indigenous studies and sought expert knowledge within the decolonizing/indigenizing movement of diasporic Filipinos in hopes of identifying effective interventions in healing from colonization.

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\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Tyler Argüello, Ph.D., DCSW

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Date

## PREFACE

*Indigenous peoples live in lands with extremely delicate environments, made many times more risk-prone because of the intrusion of huge extractive industries in their territories. The indigenous values, however, are probably what we need to survive in this planet.*

Albert E. Alejo, SJ

*No matter what we call it, poison is still poison, death is still death, and industrial civilization is still causing the greatest mass extinction in the history of the planet.*

Derrick Jensen

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been mentored and guided by many wise and generous beings. They have gifted me knowledge, encouragement, strength, advise, companionship, compassion, courage, faith, beauty, passion, and love. Each of you has contributed to my accomplishment. Thank you for the guidance. This paper would not exist without you.

I am lucky to come from various lineages of powerful people. Many died due to historical atrocities and many survived. I live on colonized indigenous land and some of my people were also colonized. These complexities can continue to be explored with the aim of creating a more just world. I dedicate my work to eventual justice for my ancestors and the ancestors of this land. There is no way to appropriately thank you, yet may this work being one offering.

Many indigenous people continue to resist and survive colonial and capitalistic invasions. Many do so beautifully and have preserved ancestral practices, bearing the culture. Thank you to those who are keeping the ancestral knowledge. Thank you to the indigenous and the culture-bearers. May my work serve healing. May your guidance continue to bless me on this journey. May we receive the wisdom you graciously offer.

Thank you to my elders at the Center for Babaylan Studies. You inspire. May we walk together and may we awaken salvation from exploitation, degradation, and violence.

My study participants generously gave their time, passion, and wisdom to me. The conversations we had were very nourishing. I have deep, deep gratitude for your contributions to the world and for sharing yourself with me during this project. Thank

you to my study participants and to those decolonizing and re-/indigenizing around the world.

Thank you to my powerful, brilliant family. You have taught me how to be a good person, how to be passionate, smart, grounded, and real. You nourish me. Through you, we heal the harms our lineages endured. May we change history together. May we show them how to love.

My partner held me together throughout this process in many, many ways. Thank you for getting me. You are made out of what is right in this world. May you always find joy and beauty and freedom.

I have been inspired by many amazing scholars in many different disciplines. I have been directly taught by some of them and read still more. Thank you for putting forth knowledge for people like me to devour.

My advisor was delivered to me against all odds, including my own plan. Somehow, I was given the most perfect fit I could have ever imagined. There are many things to say about this. Thank you for believing in me, for pushing me, for guiding me, for listening to me, for editing my work, for seeing me. Thank you for all of it. May I somehow amplify your contribution to this world. And may we powerfully impact society.

This thesis is dedicated to future generations. May we build the world in which we wish to live.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface .....	vii
Acknowledgements .....	viii
List of Tables .....	xiii
List of Figures .....	xiv
Chapter	
1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	1
Background of the Problem .....	3
Statement of the Research Problem.....	7
Study Purpose .....	10
Theoretical Framework .....	11
Definition of Terms .....	15
Assumptions .....	16
Social Work Research Justification.....	17
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	19
Colonization of the Philippines .....	19
Historical Trauma and Colonial Trauma Response.....	23
Colonial Mentality .....	26
Colonial Mentality Scale .....	28
Immigrating to the United States.....	29
Health and Mental Health Disparities .....	31
Underrepresentation: Locating Filipinos in the Research .....	39

Filipino Resistance to the Colonial Project .....	43
Gaps in the Literature .....	52
3. METHODS.....	55
Study Objectives.....	58
Study Design .....	58
Sampling Procedures .....	61
Data Collection Procedures .....	62
Instruments .....	63
Data Analysis.....	64
Protection of Human Subjects .....	66
4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	67
Demographics of the Sample.....	67
Prominent Themes in the Data .....	70
Summary.....	97
5. CONCLUSION, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	99
Summary of Study.....	101
Implications for Social Work .....	105
Recommendations for Future Research.....	108
Study Limitations .....	113
Conclusion.....	114
Appendix A. Email Recruitment Letter.....	116
Appendix B. Individual Consent .....	117
Appendix C. Interview Schedule.....	119

Appendix D. Human Subjects Approval .....	121
References .....	122



## LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1. Participant Pseudonyms.....	69

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Colonization: Legacies & Solutions.....	14

## Chapter 1

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Colonized peoples experience a unique set of psychological and physical consequences that result from the process of colonization, including physical, spiritual, and epistemic violence though the process of colonization has been largely romanticized and given an innocuous if not beneficial position in the history books. Harms due to colonization include resource depletion, displacement, extraction of wealth from communities and landscapes, coerced labor, and the loss of people (mass murder) and culture. A growing body of knowledge has begun to explicate the psychological harms of colonization as observed in descendants of colonized peoples, such as historical trauma, colonial trauma response, and colonial mentality, which this paper will explore more in depth (David, 2008, 2013; David & Nadal, 2013; Enriquez, 2001; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Sortero, 2006; Estrada, 2009; Kinzie, Boehnlein, & Sack, 1998; Nagata, 1991; & Strobel, 2001, 2010). Colonization, an economic process or resource extraction, diminishes self-determination as the colonizer imposes a position of superiority over the colonized and assumes authority over their bodies, lands, and cultures. The United States (U.S.) colonized the Philippines for approximately 50 years beginning in 1899, ending a period of 400 years of Spanish colonization, and has had a continued military presence on the islands (David, 2013; Nadal, 2009).

Filipinos immigrated to the U.S. in four waves beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century escaping Spanish galleon ships, settling in Morro Bay, California and parts of Louisiana (Nadal, 2009). The second wave, termed the *pensionados*, occurred in the early 1900s

when the U.S. government, intending to promote the development of so-called civilized society, permitted primarily male students to attend elite universities, intending that they would return home. Some who did not complete their education stayed in the U.S. and worked low paid jobs. The third wave of immigration provided an influx of laborers from approximately 1910 to 1940 and the final wave commenced in 1965, consisting mainly of professionals and educated people. Filipino immigration to the U.S. occurred primarily after colonization and the immigration rates continue to rise into the present day (Nadal, 2009). Filipinos living in the U.S. have immigrated to the land of the colonizers and, as will be further discussed, they exhibit ongoing impacts of colonial trauma.

The colonization of the Philippines was foregrounded by centuries of imperial and colonial projects throughout the world, recently exacted by European super powers. European countries such as Spain, France, England and the Netherlands competed to invade African, American, and Asian lands for the purpose of resource extraction to amass wealth. These colonizing projects included various degrees of violence, genocide, and subjugation of the peoples living in such lands in order to access the raw materials present. In addition, varying degrees of intentional cultural domination and/or epistemic violence, including several missionizing projects, were perpetrated against the native inhabitants of the colonized lands. Europe began colonizing Asia in 1511 for such purposes (Nadal, 2009). Each colonial project bears nuances and specific dynamics based, in part, on the colonizing technologies utilized as well as cultural factors of both the colonized and colonizers. For example, the level of violence or resistance employed, the methods of subjugation utilized, as well as which cultural practices were targeted by

the colonizers for extinguishment can all intricately impact the features and expressions of trauma in the colonized. Generally, colonized peoples do share an experience of violence and denigration of their identities and ways of life though, due to the particular details of each colonial experience, the consequences and impacts on the colonized populations bare distinct features and therefore require specific attention to remediate.

### **Background of the Problem**

In the Philippines, the Spanish colonial project was characterized by assaults on the spiritual beliefs of Filipinos, extracting gold, spices, and other resources, as well as disrupting and de-stabilizing the existing social order (David, 2013). Reports of treatment of Filipino tribal people by Spanish Friars during colonization describe brutal and excessive physical violence in conversion efforts and produced a country that is now 85% Catholic (Hardacker, 2013; Nadal, 2009). In addition, tribal leadership and spiritual practitioners were rounded up and slaughtered as part of the colonizing and missionizing endeavors (Mendoza & Strobel, 2013). Shame and moral superiority were employed in an attempt to extinguish the animistic indigenous religions and spiritualities of Filipino people and replace them with discourses of sin. In addition, Spain deployed an educational system to support the spread of Catholicism, though for several reasons there was varying and limited success (Hardacker, 2013). This use of Catholicism to convince Filipinos that their lifestyle, spirituality, and beliefs were inferior is an example of epistemic violence that has impacted the Filipino psyche (David, 2013). Filipinos have widely adopted the Catholic faith, which defiled their indigenous wisdom and way of life, producing profound shame about their ancestral practices prior to contact. This, then,

may underlie *colonial dept*, a specific feature of Colonial Mentality, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2, wherein Filipinos believe that they owe the colonizers for their civilization and may experience a sense of gratitude to the colonizers for intervening in the savage ancestral ways (David, 2013).

The American colonial project, which focused on changing the Filipino mind through schools, has shifted the cultural values and contributed to the dynamic of Filipinos immigrating to the U.S. During the period of Spanish colonization, education was used as a means of control, for example gate-keeping access to communications in Spanish which was the language of those in control, and those who did receive education were members of the elite class (Hardacker, 2013). Though incomplete, the Spanish school systems and missionizing efforts impacted Filipino cultural values in terms of Catholicism and Spanish gender roles, for example, and shifted many of the indigenous languages towards Spanish such that you will find cognates and identical words with in Filipino languages (Hardacker, 2013; Nadal, 2009).

When the U.S. began their period of colonization, they specifically used education as a means to subjugate Filipinos, deploying 500 teachers from the U.S. to set up more schools throughout the country modeled after the system in the U.S., which utilized the Western modality of education and espoused Western knowledge (David, 2013). Whereas Spain used Catholicism to “civilize” Filipinos, the U.S. used schools to effect their version of “civilization,” inoculating the rural Philippines with American capitalist values of competition, individualism, and education. These, combined with Spanish values, supplanted Filipino knowledge systems, values, beliefs, and ways of learning,

favoring Western ways of thinking and learning, such as capitalism, individualism, and meritocracy (David, 2013; Nadal, 2009; Strobel, 2001). This, in turn, is thought to have caused a dynamic of Filipinos idolizing the U.S. and adopting Western values as their own. In addition, the representation of the U.S. as the land of opportunity may have contributed to a longing for the American Dream and may underlay the rationale for those who chose to immigrate.

The U.S. and Spanish colonial projects assaulted the minds, spirits, bodies, and lands of the Filipino people through educational and religious angles respectively. While the strategies employed by each colonizer were distinct, they both took the position and propagated the idea that Filipinos were inferior and needed betterment by the colonizer. By taking this position of superiority, the colonizers rationalized entitlement to Filipino lands, resources, and labor, consistent with other colonial projects throughout history.

Colonization in the Philippines by the U.S. shares similarities with and differences with other colonial projects. The U.S. policies of colonization were informed by the lessons learned from the conquest of Native Americans in the U.S. (Williams, 1980). Whereas the Native American population was treated, in the beginning, as a sovereign entity and were engaged through treaties and other negotiations, Filipinos were deemed unfit to own land from the start (Williams, 1980). Native Americans faced policies of extermination that caused catastrophic harm to their population, while Filipinos and their culture were treated as an improvement project and suffered fewer losses of human life (Williams, 1980). The particulars of policy and treatment bare

impact on the effects and harms caused during colonial contact as well as specific cultural features of each. These similarities and differences in colonial processes will inform responsive healing interventions developed for specific populations.

Filipinos have endured historical harms due to hundreds of years of colonization by both Spain and the U.S., from 1565 and 1946 respectively, and have experienced ongoing colonizing processes that impact health and mental health outcomes, including historical trauma, intergenerational trauma, and colonial mentality, which are emerging frameworks that will be further discussed in Chapter 2 (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Sortero, 2006). They have experienced loss of people, culture, practices, spiritual beliefs, healing practices, science, history, knowledge, and land (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-Canilao, 2013). The pre-colonial Filipinos, had complex, diverse, and beautiful societies rich in vibrant clothing, tattoo practices, artful weavings, baskets and homes all inspired by and created from earth-based materials (David, 2013). Filipinos had developed impressively engineered irrigation practices (e.g., the rice terraces) as well as celestial navigation systems. Prior to Spain's implementation of the Roman alphabet, Filipinos were literate, using *baybayin* to read and write (David, 2013). Organized government and vivid spiritual practices were also intact prior to Spain's colonial violence. Loosing these cultural practices has impacted the community and shifted the psychology towards a collective sense of cultural inferiority (David & Nadal, 2013). In addition to the psychological harm related to colonization, recent empirical research has linked negative mental health outcomes with negative health outcomes (David & Nadal, 2013; Maj *et al.*, 2007).



### Statement of the Research Problem

Filipinos represent a significant portion of Asian Americans though they are largely unstudied and understudied. Filipinos also face significant negative mental health outcomes such as higher prevalence rates of depression, lower self esteem, and higher rates of suicidality than other subgroups (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006). Social work promotes cultural competency and relevancy in practitioners and services and serving the most vulnerable population. This task is difficult to approximate within the context of highly limited empirical knowledge about the social, environmental, health, mental health, acculturation, racism, and cultural factors of Filipinos in the U.S., for example. (David & Nadal, 2013).

Western personality concepts were applied to Filipinos during the U.S. colonial period, however, Filipino scholars later determined that they did not appropriately map on to the Filipino personality (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-Canilao, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002). Western interpretations of the Filipino personality, in fact, created a sense of inferiority and misrepresented the Filipino personality as superficial and somewhat manipulative. Dr. Virgilio Enriquez (1992) developed *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP), or Filipino Psychology, which centers on indigenous Filipino values and articulates culturally specific psychological concepts for Filipino people (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-Canilao, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002). Application of these concepts helps address historical trauma, colonial mentality, and healing among the Filipino population because they re-center the agency and expertise of Filipinos in their own path of healing and make a decisive move away from privileging Western understandings and interpretations of the

culture. Scholars from across disciplines have taken up SP and utilized it to understand arts and culture, for example, beyond the original intention of understanding the Filipino psyche and counteract impacts of colonization (see Felipe de Leon Jr.).

Scholars have divided critical responses to colonization into two categories: decolonizing and indigenizing. Decolonizing includes uprooting colonial narratives from individual and collective cultural narratives, while indigenizing is a process of reaching back to ancestral ways by resurrecting, remembering, and, ultimately, practicing indigenous practices. Decolonization includes defining the impacts and grieving and harms of colonization from the perspective of the Filipino instead the accounts from the colonial perspective. Decolonizing, in part, consists of uncovering and re-telling history from the perspective of the colonized. This process draws attention to the physical and *epistemic violence*, or the imposed denigration of a world-view, endured by colonized Filipinos and gives a more accurate account of history. Examining the uncomfortable truths about the ways in which ancestors were complicit with colonization is also part of this process. Indigenizing includes learning and practicing the ancestral knowledge and ways, particularly regarding connection with the land, ancestors, and the spirit world. It also includes learning the arts and healing practices of pre-colonial Filipinos.

A problematic ideology of colonization is that indigenous peoples can and should be subjugated to make way for resource acquisition (Smith, 1999). The Western research paradigm treats knowledge as such a resource and expresses this value by assuming a separate and distinct position, and therefore as an objective, expert producer of knowledge. Knowledge created is extracted from communities with little to no regard for

the communities entered nor the impacts had. The premise that the researcher is superior to the research participants is consistent with the ways hierarchies were utilized in the colonizing projects in the Philippines. Though presented as unbiased, the resulting knowledge is replete with the unchallenged ideology of the researcher. In the Western model, research participants have little to no recourse or credibility to correct assertions made, nor do they often have access to the knowledge produced. This false separation can harm the communities researched, further colonization, and deprive communities of essential knowledge produced about their communities (Smith, 1999).

Decolonizing and indigenizing research paradigms strive to acknowledge and correct researcher bias through transparency, collaboration, and acknowledgement of and attention to the relationship between researchers and participants. Knowledge is produced through collaborative methods is one way to attempt equalizing the power imbalance present and promotes the accuracy and resonance of information gathered for the community. When done well, the researcher can lend their status and prestige to amplify the voices of disenfranchised people. The aim is to amplify the voices of the research participants rather than speak for or over them. As well, the knowledge produced in decolonizing and indigenizing research aims to help the communities researched by making research finding available to the communities served (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Smith, 1999).

New paradigms for describing the impacts of colonization, for example Historical Trauma, Colonial Trauma Response, and Colonial Mentality (see Chapter 2), are gaining momentum that account the ways in which colonization and historic events continue to

impact recipients of such violence. According to this growing body of knowledge, Filipinos living in the U.S. are experiencing the ongoing impacts of colonization and exhibit the effects of Colonial Mentality (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006). Furthermore, recent studies have identified exposure to trauma as a contributing factor in negative health outcomes in addition to mental health outcomes (van der Kolk, 2014). Preliminary studies into the treatment of Historical Trauma within Native American communities have indicated an important link in successful treatment with culturally specific practices, specifically revitalizing ancestral protocols as applicable and effective healing practices (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998).

### **Study Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore the processes, methods, and perspectives pertaining to the re-/indigenizing and decolonizing healing practices of diasporic Filipinos living in the U.S. The study will also be an example of praxis, using decolonizing re-/indigenizing theory in the practice of research and therefore advance efforts of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing efforts. A quorum of Filipino leaders are pursuing a decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement in the U.S., much of whose work is centered on a healing protocol currently in use within their community. This phenomenological study seeks to collect expert testimony with these leaders to gain some understanding of their work and compile recommended strategies for future culturally responsive interventions. This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What cultural commitments motivate leaders to engage with decolonizing and re-/indigenizing work?

2. What cultural practices are they and/or their communities using or developing to promote decolonization and re-indigenization, and in turn contribute to reducing health disparities?
3. What resources and supports are needed to further the movement?
4. How is the work of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing connected to the homeland?

For the purposes of this study, it is acknowledged that Filipino people had healing protocols prior to colonization and that members of the community may bear relevant cultural knowledge to that end. As seen in studies conducted in Native American communities where the reinvigoration of ancestral practices decreased symptoms associated with Historical Trauma, it is suspected that the reemergence of such practices could help Filipinos in healing (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998). In one such study of a group of Lakota helping professionals, the “wiping of the tears” grief ritual was used in conjunction with psycho-education about Historical Trauma and genocide, finding that hopelessness, anger, helplessness, shame, and guilt were reduced between 45 to 55% and pride and joy increased 30% (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998). Such results are quite compelling for further study both in and out of Native communities regarding the potential healing the psychological harms due to colonization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

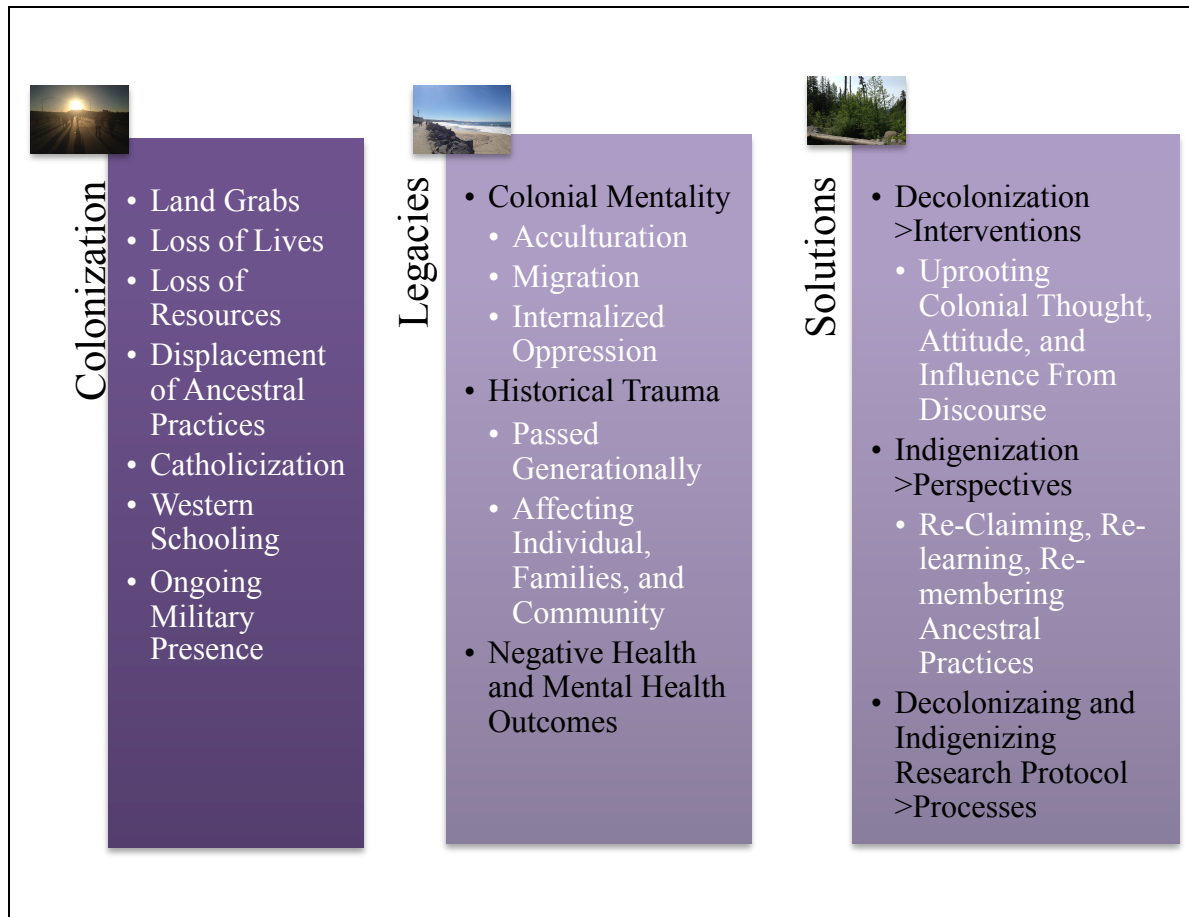
Colonization in the Philippines has been carried out primarily by Spain and, later, the U.S., which continues to have a military presence in the archipelago (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-Canilao, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002). During the Spanish colonial period

Spaniards executed indigenous leaders and healers to subjugate the indigenous peoples and displace ancestral spiritual practices in favor of Catholicism (Mendoza & Strobel, 2013). During the U.S. colonization of the Filipinos they installed Western schools, curriculum, and teachers throughout the Philippine Islands. These factors, among others, have created harmful legacies of Historical Trauma, Colonial Mentality, and, as a result, negative health and mental health outcomes.

The problem is understood through the lens of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP), or Filipino Psychology (Church & Katigbak, 2002; Mendoza, 2002; San Juan, 2006; Strobel, 2001; de Guia, 2005; Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; & Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Dr. Enriquez utilized decolonizing and re-/indigenizing research protocols, collaboration with indigenous Filipinos, to articulate indigenous Filipino knowledge, values, and wisdom that was present prior to colonization and still exists (2001). This work is assumed to be both an act of resistance and an act of liberation because it challenges the colonial narrative and presents a model by and for Filipinos. As such, SP is considered both a critical and emancipatory discipline. SP was developed by Dr. Enriquez through surveying indigenous Filipinos to locate and define some of the central personality traits and motivations of Filipinos. His findings were presented as alternatives to the Western personality concepts that were promulgated upon Filipinos during colonization and which, he posited, were biased by the world-views of the colonizers and therefore inaccurate. Such conceptions, Enriquez argued, reinforced supposed Filipino inferiority as ascribed by colonizers. In short, they served the motives of the colonizers and did not address the true nature of Filipinos.

SP is a decolonizing practice because it rejects colonial definition of who Filipinos are and what it means to be Filipino. It creates space and attempts to more fully explain Filipinos through the process of colonization. This process uproots and de-centers the colonial narrative from representations of Filipino personality. SP disrupts the epistemic violence by defining Filipino personality and seeks to disrupt the one-dimensional and paternalistic view Westerners have imposed upon indigenous Filipinos. SP is also considered to be re-/indigenizing as the practice of research and knowledge formation is a collaborative process with indigenous Filipinos, that focuses on codifying and therefore bolstering indigenous and ancestral wisdom. It assumes that the Filipinos have the expertise needed to define Filipino personality and works to invigorate the knowledge held by Filipinos. This insider's perspective is part of a process of seeking and recovering traditional personality traits as well as the cultural values of native Filipinos (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013).

This study seeks U.S.-based leaders in the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos to help identify and define decolonizing and re-/indigenizing interventions, being used by diasporic Filipinos. Knowledge gathered will be co-created by research participants and will emulate decolonizing and re-/indigenizing protocols and seeks to centralize participant expertise in research findings. In this manner, the study is both research and praxis.



*Figure 1. Colonization: Legacies & Solutions.*

For the purposes of the proposed study, it is acknowledged that colonization has had lasting impacts, or legacies, on the collective Filipino psyche. These impacts are defined as Colonial Mentality (CM), Historical Trauma, and negative health and mental health outcomes. Decolonization and indigenization as well as decolonizing and indigenizing research protocol may help to correct and heal the harmful impacts of colonization. Figure 1 provides a useful framework for understanding the entry point of this study.



### Definition of Terms

In addition to the following list of terms, the researcher uses concepts and words in Tagalog throughout the paper and defines them within the text based on her existing linguistic abilities.

1. *Colonization* is a process that involves subjugation of indigenous peoples for the purposes of land acquisition and resource appropriation (Smith, 1999).
2. *Historical trauma* results from catastrophic events intentionally inflicted on entire groups of people. Historical trauma impacts individuals, families, and communities and is thought to be transmitted generationally (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Sortero, 2006).
3. *Colonial Mentality* is a system of beliefs of inferiority held by the colonized people and consists of five factors: 1) a sense of cultural inferiority; 2) discrimination against other Filipinos; 3) preferring typically White physical characteristics to Filipino ones; 4) a sense of shame and embarrassment about culture; and 5) “colonial debt,” a belief that Filipinos are indebted to the colonizers for bettering the culture (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006).
4. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is a school of psychology developed to define the psychology of Filipinos by centering indigenous Filipino values and systems of knowledge in the theories, inquiries, and understandings of Filipino people (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-Canilao, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002).
5. *Decolonization* is a process of uprooting colonial impacts from knowledge, theories, thoughts, methods, and protocols (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-

Canilao, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002; Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006; Smith, 1999).

6. *Re-/Indigenization* is a process of returning to ancestral practices through centering surviving cultural bearers in revitalization of protocols (Barbaran-Diaz & Paredes-Canilao, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002; Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006; Smith, 1998; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998).

### **Assumptions**

For the purposes of this study, it is also assumed that the colonization process of the Philippines had harmful effects on the Filipino people. Paulo Freire presents a valuable lens with which to understand the way Filipinos were treated during colonization in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2006). Freire illustrates his banking model of education, which, he contended, underlies all interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. Within this model, the colonizer imparts knowledge to the colonized in a directional flow that assumes the colonized are devoid of knowledge worth sharing, and, he argued, that both are dehumanized in this process. This attitude can be identified in both Spain's and the U.S.'s treatment of Filipinos (e.g., Spanish missions and U.S.'s schools). Freire advocated for a collaborative approach to liberation work wherein knowledge and responses to domination can be co-created by the colonized and the colonizer.

Freire's model nicely compliments SP and the work of Enriquez (1992). SP gives voice to the colonized and elaborates some of the pre-colonial knowledge needed to begin to enter in to the collaborative liberation, for which Freire advocates. From such

work, Filipinos in the Philippines and in diaspora have continued the articulation of the harmful impacts of colonization as well as the codification of indigenous Filipino concepts and values. Enriquez's work is an answer to the colonial assumption that Filipinos are empty vessels to be filled with knowledge.

It is therefore assumed that Filipino minds were not empty and able to be filled with Western knowledge but had vibrant, living cultures prior colonial presence and it is further assumed that they extensive violence required to cause indigenous Filipinos to submit to the civilizing forces of Spain and the U.S. caused substantial harm to Filipino minds, psyches, bodies, cosmologies, families, communities, as well as physical landscapes.

### **Social Work Research Justification**

The proposed study enhances social work by exploring healing efforts addressing colonial harms inflicted on Filipinos. The social work profession is mandated by the *Code of Ethics* (NASW, 2008) to advance cultural competency and engage in social and political action against injustice. Inherently, social work must, therefore, aim to enhance social justice efforts and understanding the ways in which harms have been inflicted on underserved communities. Historical Trauma and Colonial Mentality are relevant lenses for such work within the social work profession as they strengthen cultural competency and increase understandings and provisions of support for chronically underserved and oppressed communities. These emerging frameworks increase responsiveness of treatment models for impacting troubling disparity experienced by communities such as Filipinos in the U.S. As well, by identifying and exploring decolonizing and re-

/indigenizing practices in the Filipino community, inquiry into effectiveness and potential improvements could emerge. This study aims to deepen the analysis and practice of cultural competency, illuminating existing decolonizing and re-/indigenizing interventions within the Filipino community in the U.S. Research and knowledge production in these areas is gaining momentum and this study will add to the growing body of work on decolonizing from populations worldwide and will provide a focus on Filipinos living in the U.S.

This study also seeks to provide an example of utilizing decolonizing and re-/indigenizing methodology for research, an underrepresented research method. Decolonizing and re-/indigenizing research methods have also been emerging, especially within the previously stated knowledge base. This study also aims to identify potential areas for further study in order to best serve Filipino families, individuals, and communities an underserved and understudied community.

## **Chapter 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Colonized peoples, such as Filipinos, experience psychological and physical consequences resulting from processes of colonization such as physical, spiritual, and epistemic violence. Harms due to colonization include resource depletion, displacement, extraction of wealth from communities and landscapes, coerced labor, and the extermination of people (mass murder) and culture. Scholars have developed frameworks such as Historical Trauma (HT) and Colonial Mentality (CM) to understand the psychological harms, which pass from generation to generation, of catastrophic and intentional violence that disrupt communal, familial, and individual mental health (Evans-Campbell, 2008). This study examines the impacts of colonization on diasporic Filipinos living in the United States (U.S.) utilizing decolonizing and indigenizing methods and is an example of praxis. In a review of the literature, the following themes are prominent: 1) Historical Trauma; 2) Colonial Trauma Response (CTR) and Colonial Mentality (CM); 3) decolonizing and indigenizing practices; and 4) health and mental health disparities for Filipino Americans.

#### **Colonization of the Philippines**

Filipinos have endured historical harms due to hundreds of years of colonization by both Spain and the U.S., from 1565 and 1946 respectively, and have experienced an ongoing colonizing process and accompanying mental/health effects, including Historical Trauma and Colonial Mentality (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Sortero, 2006). They have experienced loss of people, spiritual beliefs,

medicine, science, history, and land (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013). Violently losing these cultural practices disrupted communal, familial, and individual lives and shifted Filipino psychology towards a collective sense of inferiority (David & Nadal, 2013). Recent empirical research has also linked negative mental health outcomes with negative health outcomes (David & Nadal, 2013 & Maj et al 2007).

The Philippines endured extensive periods of colonization including approximately 300 years by Spain and 50 years by the U.S. (Strobel, 2001; Williams, 1980). These colonizations were marked by violence against the bodies, minds, and psyches of Filipinos and have caused significant and on-going damage, leaving a legacy of colonization that continues to unfold (San Juan, Jr., 2006; Strobel, 2001). [For an expanded historical analysis, see Ileto (1998) and Rafael (1988).]

Colonial projects in the Philippines imposed the faulty idea that Filipinos are inferior to the colonial powers, similar to practices utilized against Native Americans by the U.S. (Mendoza, 2013; San Juan, Jr., 2006). The imposed inferiority was the basis for justifying for the violence necessary to exact land grabs, cooptation of resources, deprivation, disenfranchisement, and disempowerment of pre-colonial Filipinos. A central component of these policies was epistemic violence, a system of defiling Filipino knowledge and elevating colonial knowledge (San Juan, Jr., 2006; Strobel, 2001). The harm caused in manufacturing this inferiority has ongoing impacts on the Filipino *diwa* or psyche in addition to the other legacies of colonization such as resource depletion and destruction of land, and the resulting widespread poverty.

Colonial education, a feature of colonization by the U.S., contributed to a psychic split between mind, body, spirit, soul, and the land (Strobel, 2010). The U.S. systematically deployed Western models of education throughout the Philippines that supplanted existing learning systems (e.g., oral traditions, epic chants, & elder lead knowledge transmissions; Nono, 2013). The U.S. imported thousands of teachers to the Philippines to spread Western knowledge systems and set up school houses in the Western style, modeled after Western classrooms. These teachers also trained Filipinos to replicate this system so that it could continue after the U.S. pulled their teachers out (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Strobel, 2010).

Prior to the arrival of the U.S., the Spanish had been colonizing the Philippines for approximately 300 years. Spain's colonial project was premised on moral superiority and the spreading of Catholicism through missionaries. Filipino shamanistic and animistic spiritualities, as well as the existing social structures, were determined to be sinful and in need of extinguishment. Spanish missionaries relied on their supposed divine direction in assuming a superior position, which granted them access (in their estimation) to land and resources, upon which native Filipinos lived (see Ileto, 1998, or Rafael, 1988).

The colonial projects of Spain and the U.S. used elaborate narratives and reasoning, for example Spanish depiction of Filipinos as savages and the U.S. casting of Filipinos as their "little brown brothers," to position the colonizers as superior and therefore gain access to resources in the Philippines (Mendoza, 2002 & 2013; Pe-Pua, & Protacio-Marcelino 2000; & San Juan, Jr., 2006). Some of the myriad effects of

colonization can be attributed to specific harms inflicted, for example, Spain was responsible for spreading Catholicism, the U.S. was responsible for the spread of Western schooling. Both forces were used lethal force in to aid in the submission of Filipinos.

Overall, Filipinos were left to deal with the residue of colonial attitudes and the policies of subjugation, in addition, the U.S. military has had an ongoing presence, despite recent decades of so-called “freedom,” and deployed over a thousand troops to the Philippines in 2001 during the War on Terror (San Juan, 2003). Other examples of this residue include impact on Filipino languages, first, the imposition of Spanish and then English language as national languages. The Filipino ways of dressing and tattooing were demeaned by Western ideas about purity and devoutness and contemporary Filipinos dress in the Western style. The Filipino knowledge of interacting with the earth and natural environment in sustainable ways was subjugated by ideas of extraction, capitalism, and consumerism (Strobel, 2010). The Filipino sense of *kapwa* or “self in the other” was subjugated by the colonial concepts of individualism, Whiteness, and beauty ideals (David, 2013; Nadal, 2009). Orality and oral traditions were replaced by literacy. All of these and more are exemplify traumas inflicted on Filipinos that continue to bear consequences on the psyches of Filipinos.

Scholars such as Fanon (1961) and Memmi (1965), among others, have provided rich descriptions of the impacts of colonization on the mind. Fanon (1961) argued that colonization impacts the minds of both the colonized and the colonizer such that the roles ascribed can only be over turned via violent revolution. He believed that such a violent process is pivotal for colonized in reclaiming self-respect lost during colonial violence.



Memmi (1965) described privilege as being central to the minds and experiences of the colonizer and the colonized. While colonization certainly employs resource extraction, not all colonizers actually benefit from this transfer of goods, however the colonizers as a whole get to occupy a superior position to the colonized regardless. So, for example, in the U.S. though significant numbers of White settlers were economically disadvantaged, they, due to the colonial construct, viewed themselves as superior to the Native Americans. Such analyses inform emerging constructs addressing modern, ongoing impacts of colonization.

### **Historical Trauma and Colonial Trauma Response**

Historical trauma (HT) is an emerging framework for understanding the trauma legacies set forth by intentional harms against whole classes of people (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Lawson-Te Aho, 2014; Sortero, 2006). The HT framework was first conceptualized in the 1960's in order to understand the ongoing trauma and un/diagnosed posttraumatic stress responses of survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants, some of which have resulted in the diagnoses of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD (Beltran, 2014 & Sortero, 2006).

PTSD is a psychiatric diagnosis used to describe a cluster of symptoms, such as hyper-arousal, hyper-vigilance, negative alterations, and disassociation, that can be traced to a particular traumatic event (van der Kolk & Najavits, 2013). Such symptomology was found to be present in descendants of Holocaust survivors, who did not directly experience such a trauma but rather were carriers of, what is now known as, HT.

Studies have since applied the concept to various oppressed populations including Japanese American internees, Mexican Americans, and Cambodian refugees, though the largest body of research has been conducted with American Indians and Alaska Natives (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Sortero, 2006; Estrada, 2009; Kinzie, Boehnlein, & Sack, 1998; Nagata, 1991). The framework has also been used to look at various other colonized peoples worldwide including the Maori, Mexicans, and Algerians (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Hilton, 2011; Laweson-Te Aho, 2014; Sortero, 2006).

HT is considered to have three levels of impact: individuals, families, and communities; and, it is transmitted generationally (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Expressions of HT at the individual level may include physical and mental health symptoms such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression. At the familial level trauma may become an organizing concept for families where children assume roles of caretaking parental emotions about catastrophic loss. At the communal level, symptoms may include loss of traditional cultural practices and ancestral knowledge (Evans-Campbell, 2008). All three levels of impact interact, perpetuate, and amplify each other (Beltran, 2014; Evans-Campbell, 2008).

HT is transmitted interpersonally and societally (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Interpersonal trauma transmission occurs directly, through stories passed on, and indirectly, through parenting styles negatively impacted by consequences of HT, for example. Societally, HT is transmitted through the continued on-going lack of cultural practices and losses of cultural knowledge. The communities are thought to continue to

experience the vacancy created through the colonizing processes (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Colonial Trauma Response (CTR) theory, which is based on HT theories, was developed by Evans-Campbell and Walters (2006) and articulates the interplay between historical and contemporary trauma responses in specific connection with harm due to colonization. CTR has been primarily explored in relation to American Indian and Alaska Native populations, though prominent scholars exploring this topic have stated that translations into and implications for other indigenous and colonized populations, such as Filipinos, warrant further study (Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006).

Those experiencing a CTR manifest symptoms similar to clinically-diagnosable posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in response to contemporary and on-going events (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Sortero, 2006). Similar to PTSD, CTR causes emotional and physiological responses in the present due to events that occurred in the past; however, in CTR, the events that cause distress either happened prior to the person's birth or are part of an ongoing multi-generational trauma, such as the effects of Native American encounters with European settlers wherein they lost 95% of their total population as well as their land and traditions (Mendoza, 2013).

Genocide and colonization initially caused the CTR but contemporary events trigger CTR for individuals. For example, an anti-Native American racial slur uttered present day, or a microaggression (see Sue, 2010) such as a nonverbal slight, can ignite in the mind and emotions of the recipient the overarching history of systematic genocide, oppression, and injustice perpetrated against their people. Another example of CTR for

Native Americans is the way in which the familial structure is impacted by the trauma and grief of colonization, for example when family members are incapacitated by distress. The distress experienced could be misconstrued as an over-reaction if the HT and CTR are not accounted for (Evans-Campbell, 2008). This theoretical framework could be further applied to the experiences of other colonized groups such as Filipino Americans, though this is complicated by immigration and resulting dynamics such as pressures to assimilate, acculturative stress, and enculturation (David, 2013; Nadal, 2009).

### **Colonial Mentality**

Parallel to HT and CTR, Colonial Mentality (CM) situates itself within the Filipino experiences of colonization by and immigration to the U.S. and was set in motion at the onset of colonization (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006). CM describes five effects of colonization on the Filipino psyche: 1. cultural inferiority, 2. cultural shame, 3. discrimination against other Filipinos, 4. preference for typically White physical characteristics, and 5. colonial debt, a belief that Filipinos owe colonizers for advancing the culture (David & Okazaki, 2006). According to the framework, when Filipinos experience contemporary expressions of racism, their reaction may include responses to centuries of colonization and reflect compounded effects of ongoing loss. These are found to contribute to negative mental / health outcomes (David, 2008; Mendoza & Strobel, 2013; Strobel, 2003, 2010). HT, CTR, and CM are related and help to understand the mental / health disparities of colonized populations.

CM measures the harmful legacy of colonization, denoting a system of beliefs of inferiority held by the colonized (David & Nadal, 2013). CM is related to both internalized oppression and acculturation; however, distinct from these, CM commences at the onset of colonization as opposed to other experiences of racism or acculturative stresses after immigration (David & Nadal, 2013). This means that acculturation, for example, which generally begins once a person has immigrated to a new country, is already in effect in Filipinos in the homeland due to colonization and the correlating promotion of U.S. culture and values. Further, the acculturation process of Filipinos is not directly comparable to that of other immigrant groups, such as Chinese or Mexican immigrant groups.

Similar to HT, CM stems from the impact of the purposeful harm conducted during colonization and is transmitted intergenerationally through the three levels of impact: individual, family, and community (Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006; David & Nadal, 2013). As aforementioned, HT is transmitted interpersonally, through stories passed person to person, and societally, through social formations (i.e., families) organized around trauma. Therefore, trauma experienced by Filipinos during the years of active colonization and active extermination continues to impact contemporary Filipinos. In addition, similar to HT and CTR, it may be passed on from generation to generation and this warrants further study.

Filipino scholars have documented such harms due to colonization in personal accounts and have begun the work of correlating these to health and mental health disparities related to colonization (David, 2008; Mendoza & Strobel, 2013; Strobel, 2003,

2010). When Filipinos experience modern expressions of racism and bias, their reaction may be inclusive of ancestral traumas of centuries of colonization, subjugation, and imposed inferiority and their societal position over time. For example, contemporary racist remarks may call up colonization. These, in turn, are being correlated with negative health and mental health outcomes.

### **Colonial Mentality Scale**

The Colonial Mentality Scale for Filipino Americans (CMS), developed by David and Okazaki (2006), to measure the five CM factors discussed in the previous section. David and Okazaki's (2006) original study that developed the CMS gathered Filipino participants via the internet and used a computerized data splitting technique, creating two subsamples to test for validity. In addition to the five CM factors, the survey also used the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), Schedule of Racist Events (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996), and the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus 2000) to measure the population's depression, self-esteem, collective self-esteem, exposure to racism, and acculturation respectively (David and Okazaki, 2006). The CM construct illustrates the intricacies of internalized oppression set forth by the colonial projects and literature has begun to correlate psychological impacts on Filipino people (David & Okazaki, 2006).

The study found that CM is a distinct psychological construct from depression, self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and acculturation though correlations were noted. For example, all CM factors had statistically consistent negative correlation with self-esteem

except for colonial debt, which means that CM increases as self-esteem decreases.

Filipinos who had no CM factors had both higher self esteem and lower depressions scores and CM (David and Okazaki, 2006).

### **Immigrating to the United States**

Colonization has led to CM in Filipinos such that many experience their own culture as inferior to that of the colonizers, namely that of the U.S. (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006; Enriquez, 2001; & Strobel, 2001). The idolization and idealization of Western culture and the U.S. therefore, contributes to the desire of many Filipinos to immigrate to the U.S. Looking at the long term effects of colonization on the mind, psyche, body, and spirit of colonial subjects challenges dominant immigration narratives, which purport that immigrants leave their homelands because of some void or lack within the original culture. This narrative is consistent with the superior position colonizers assume in relation to colonized societies and is put forth as the underlying reason for immigration trends. However the void was, in fact, created and propagated by the colonizers and was not an original feature of the cultures prior to contact.

As previously discussed, contrary to colonial narratives, pre-colonial Filipinos, had functioning, autonomous societies. That is not to say that the cultures were perfect prior to contact, but they consisted of rich cultural formations, practices, customs, and world-views. They had vibrant arts and lived in collaboration with the Earth, not denuding the landscape past its capacity. The Filipinos did not need colonization to advance, civilize, or missionize them. This was a falsely and brutally enforced colonial construct.

When considering the impacts of the U.S.' education project in the Philippines on the Filipino mind, psyche, and spirit, for example, the relationship between the desire to leave the Philippines as well as the desire to immigrate to the U.S. and the systematic implantation of ideas of inferiority is revealed. Filipinos, for example, leave their homeland for a "better life" in the U.S., and suggests CM, and therefore colonization itself, as a potential causal factor for immigration (David, 2006, 2009).

The assessment of success of Filipino immigrants achieving a "better life" relative to those who remain in the homeland is difficult to measure and relates back to colonization and corresponding resource depletion. Within this researcher's own family, for example, immigration to the U.S. did yield increased access to resources including food, money, and education while relatives who remained in the homeland lacked such opportunity. However this migration to the U.S. has also caused cultural distortion, low retention of cultural knowledge or values, loss of language skills, and physical distance from family and traditional family structures. Confining the measure of a "better life" to resource acquisition alone is incomplete at best and continues the capitalistic colonizing devaluation of culture, ancestral knowledge, and traditional ways.

Many Filipinos leave the homeland in search of this "better life" and do find work and access resources now deplete in the Philippine Islands due to the colonial extraction of gold, spices, and presently petroleum, wood, and minerals (San Juan, 2003). However the high numbers of Filipinos leaving the Philippines is also partially explained by CM. It is now quite common for Filipinos to live in diaspora in order to support the family and "remit" income to those living in poverty and abject poverty. In fact, this system of



remittance accounted for \$24.5 billion dollars, or 10% of the Philippines' gross domestic product in 2012 alone (Migration Policy Institute, 2014). In addition, close to a million Filipinos depart the homeland every year in search of such opportunities (San Juan, 2003). These migrations then impact cultural transmission and retention and family structure by physically shifting the family constitution and access to cultural knowledge.

### **Health and Mental Health Disparities**

Several health disparities impacting Filipinos in the U.S. have been documented in the emerging research, though, as discussed later in this literature review, Filipinos are poorly represented in the research. Concerning mental/health disparities experienced by Filipino Americans include hypertension, suicidal ideation, HIV/AIDS, depression, tuberculosis, and diabetes. Scholars have become interested in how such disparities may be linked to colonization, racism, and discrimination (de Castro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008; Gee, Delva, & Takeuchi, 2007; Nadimpalli & Hutchinson, 2012).

### **Health**

Heart disease, cancer, and stroke, in that order, are the top three causes of death for Filipinos in the U.S. (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum Health Brief: Filipinos in the United States, 2006; Center for the Study of Asian American Health, 2007). In fact, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (2003), heart disease and stroke accounted for over half of Filipino American deaths. A study consisting of a focus group, key informant interviews, and in-depth community member interviews in San Francisco and Daly City, California, identified heart disease, high

blood pressure, and diabetes as the top three health concerns in the Filipino community (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2003).

Cancer is the leading cause of death for Asian Americans in California, comprising nearly 30% of deaths, compared with 23% of Whites (Tseng *et al.*, 2010). The broad category of cancer holds several nuanced disparate outcomes. For example, the type of cancer that causes death can vary based on place of birth and other factors, for example Philippine-born women in the U.S. had thyroid cancer at a rate of 3.2 times Caucasian and U.S.-born Filipina women (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum Health Brief, 2006). Similarly, Filipino men born outside the U.S. had liver cancer 11% of the time, U.S.-born men at 7%, and Whites had liver cancer on 3% of the time. In addition, several disparities exist with regard to cancer such as Filipinos having the second worst survival rates of colon / rectal cancers in the U.S. At the same time, in a California study, almost 60% of Filipinos were noncompliant with colorectal cancer screenings, which are shown to drastically improve mortality rates (Tseng *et al.*, 2010). Filipino Americans suffer from hypertension at 79%, compared with 61% of Whites (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum Health Brief, 2006). In the first ever national, population-based study of Latinos and Asians yielded important health disparities information collected from 2002-2003 (Huang, Appel, Nicdao, Lee, & Ai, 2013). Filipino men had the highest rates of high blood pressure, asthma, high body mass indexes (BMI), and alcohol and drug uses of all Asian American subgroups.

Additional concerning disparities include diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. Disparities in type 2 diabetes were alarmingly high in Filipinos, who have one of the

highest rates in California and, in particular 32-26 % of Filipinas either had either significant risk or had the disease compared with 6-9% of White women, depending on the study (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum Health Brief, 2006; Cousins 2014; & Tseng *et al.*, 2010). Filipinos have been noted as having the highest number of AIDS cases within the Asian Pacific Islander demographic comprising 32% of cases in San Francisco and Hawaii in 2006 and 2001 respectively. HIV screening rates for adult Filipinos in California are lower than their White counterparts by 5% for women and 9% for men (Tseng *et al.*, 2010). In San Diego County, California 80% of tuberculosis cases identified between 2001-2003 were found in Filipino immigrants. Filipino adults also have a 5% hepatitis rate, higher than Whites at 3% (Asian American Justice Center & Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2011). It is also important to point out that type 2 diabetes, HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis are all preventable diseases, which points to potential lack of effective health education within Filipino communities.

### **Mental Health**

CM was tested against the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale and found to have a direct relationship with depression where those who manifested at least one of the five CM factors had higher rates of depression (David & Okazaki, 2006; David, 2013; & Nadal, 2009). One study found that 25.8% (compared with 17% of the general population) of Whites experienced major depression in their lifetimes and, of those, 18% had attempted suicide (Greenwald, Lizardi, Mann, Oquendo, & Weissman, 2004). The National Institute on Mental Health (2013) reported that 7.3% of Whites, 4%

of Asians, and 6.7% of the general population had diagnosable Major Depression within the last 12 months and that dysthymia affects around 1.5% of those in the U.S.

The implications of such data are significant when overlaid with emerging trends in medical research, which indicate that mental health is a pivotal factor in health outcomes (Maj *et al.*, 2007). Depression has been linked with major diseases such as cancer, strokes, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and heart disease wherein receiving a diagnosis may elicit depression and, in turn, depression can negatively impact outcomes of the diseases (National Institutes of Mental Health, 2011). Moreover, experiences of discrimination have been correlated with negative health outcomes for Asian Americans, which adds additional depth to the emerging analysis (Hutchinson & Nadimpalli, 2012). Further study is needed to define the scope of health and mental health impacts as they relate to CM, HT, and modern day experiences of discrimination by Filipinos.

Analysis of the FACES data set has found correlations between heavy drinking and drug use, and immigration status and discrimination (Delva, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2007; Kim & Spencer, 2011; Kim, Kim, & Nochajski, 2010). Immigration, acculturation, or the process by which culture changes via contact with another culture, and enculturation, or the learning of one's primary culture, are known factors impacting health and mental health outcomes (David, 2013; Duldulao, Nicdao, & Takeuchi, 2015).

### **Discrimination Against Filipinos Impacts Health**

Multiple studies within the last 10 years have increasingly linked discrimination and health outcomes for Filipinos (see de Castro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008; Gee, Delva, & Takeuchi, 2007; Nadimpalli & Hutchinson, 2012). Upon arrival in the U.S., Filipinos,

who had been indoctrinated with notions of the U.S. as the land of opportunity, faced racism and degradation upon arrival (see Bulosan, 1943). The Filipino American Community Epidemiological Survey (FACES), conducted from 1998-1999, found that Filipinos reporting experiences of discrimination reported more negative health outcomes in the Honolulu and San Francisco based (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum, 2006; Gee *et al.*, 2006).

Sadly, in a California study, Filipinos reported perceiving discrimination at higher rates than all other Asian Americans and at over three times that of Whites (Tseng *et al.*, 2010). This inequality as perceived by Filipinos, is substantiated by an income comparison that found Filipinos received lower pay per capita by nearly \$7,000 compared with Whites, despite the fact that both populations had the low unemployment rate of around 6% (Asian American Justice Center & Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2011).

Anti-Filipino discrimination varies by what is called a phenotypic bias, where darker skin and typically Filipino physical characteristics were correlated with lower pay by Kiang & Takeuchi (2009). Additionally, the FACES data set, which surveyed approximately 2,000 Filipinos revealed that lower health and lower income correlated with darker skin in a study where skin tone was measured via self-assessment and by the interviewer on a five-point scale (Takeuchi, 2011). Income, physical health, and psychological distress were collected via self-report. Another interesting finding from Kiang & Takeuchi (2009) is that darker skin in women with low ethnic identity had higher rates of psychological distress, which suggests that having a strong ethnic identity

can offer some protection. This study is consistent with a body of work correlating skin tone with negative health and mental health outcomes in other ethnic groups including African Americans and Mexican Americans (Codina & Montalvo, 1994; Tyroler & James, 1978). These studies have demonstrated that racism has tangible impacts on the Filipino American community, specifically when it comes to measurable health and economic disparities.

In several studies, discrimination and bias against Filipinos has correlated with negative health and mental health outcomes such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, respiratory disease, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidality, and depression (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum Health Brief, 2006; de Castro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2014; Appel, Ai, Huang, & Nicdao 2014). Such studies are supported by numerous studies that link discrimination, bias, and unfair treatment with negative health and mental health outcomes (Harrell, Hall, & Taliaferro, 2003; Pavalko, Mossakowski, & Hamilton, 2003; Krieger, 1999). For example, discrimination has been linked to alcohol and drug abuse and suicidality in Filipinos though causality is still understudied and therefore poorly understood (Gee, Delva, & Takeucchi, 2007; Kuroki, 2015) Scholars postulated that overuse of alcohol and drugs may be a method of coping for Filipinos experiencing distress caused by unfair treatment (Gee, Delva, & Takeucchi, 2007; Kim, Kim, & Nochajski, 2010).

Research on Filipinos aligns with these findings that recipients of discrimination experience serious health and mental health conditions at higher rates than those who do not experience such bias. This is remarkable when taken in the context of strong evidence

correlating economic disadvantage as the most indicative risk factor for negative health and mental health outcomes, while at the same time Filipinos are living below the federal poverty guidelines 4% less frequently than the U.S. population at large yet still experience high rates of discrimination as well as alarming health and mental health disparities (Nurius, Uehara, & Zatzik, 2013; Migration Policy Institute, 2014). As described later in this literature review, such links between Filipinos experiencing unfair treatment and negative health and mental health outcomes suffer from a relative lack of available data.

### **Impact of HT, CTR, and CM on Mental/Health Disparities**

HT, CTR, and CM are closely related are critical models that provide additional helpful frames in understanding the context of mental/health of colonized and indigenous populations. CTR and CM account for the historic harms in assessing trauma responses in colonized peoples, which could provide greater cultural relevancy and therefore accuracy treating and healing trauma in these communities. They can better describe the stressors and distress associated with the legacies of colonization and genocide present in the historical contexts of present day people and therefore may provide avenues for insight into health and mental health disparities. The importance of looking at these underlying factors for mental/health is perhaps most poignant when considering emerging trends in research tying trauma, mental health, and health outcomes together (see studies on Adverse Childhood Experiences). For example, the health outcomes for Native Americans, a community impacted by severe genocidal and colonial violence, when considering HT and CTR models is striking. Sortero (2006) found that Native Americans

have astronomical rates of disease when compared against the U.S. average, with that population being 6.5% more likely to die from tuberculosis and 4.2% more likely to die from diabetes than White people, for example. In addition, Natives are 1.9% more likely to commit suicide than the national average (Sortero, 2006). Such statistics, when considering HT and CTR suggest that the impacts of genocide and colonization are far from being over. CM also provides an important framework for analyzing mental/health disparities within Filipino communities and warrants further inquiry.

### **Social Impacts of Colonial Harm**

The social effects of catastrophic harms, such as class disparities due to practices of resource extraction, continue to impact generations due to the inheritance system where wealth transfers through families, which means that the descendents of those whose resources were stolen do not have access to those resources to this day. A California-based study found that 7% Filipinos above 18 years of age did not have access resources sufficient to ensure food compared with 5% of Whites. However, when restricting the data for people over the age of 65, that number jumps to 16% for Filipinos and 3% for Whites, which could be due to a combination of factors including bias and also wealth inheritance (Tseng *et al.*, 2010).

In extending the logic of the HT framework to CM you would expect that CM is also passed from generation to generation. This means that those most severely impacted by colonial violence are also perpetually kept in economic depletion due to ongoing prevention of access to those resources that were previously forcefully taken. Since whole families, whole communities, and whole generations of Filipinos were impacted



by the extensive physical and epistemic violence of colonization, the Filipino collective psyche adapted and adopted CM for survival and presently the dynamics set in motion continue to play out within the families, communities and therefore upcoming generations. The historic actions therefore play out cyclically, impacting Filipino health and mental health.

Furthermore, the social structures and ancestral practices, including traditional diets, systems of knowledge maintenance, and culturally specific social orders were distorted by the colonial influences such that they may be presently difficult to decipher or access (David, 2013). In addition, CM and the imposed inferiority work to inhibit reviving such practices since traditional ways were deemed as unappealing and the traumatic impact of that continues to play out in colonized communities. Finally, it is also understood that certain health concerns are passed through genetics and family lineages. This then compounds all of the adverse factors mentioned and serves to further widen health and mental health disparities experienced by Filipinos. As well, this could implicate CTR and CM in health and mental health outcomes. For further discussion as they relate to CM please see sections below on health and mental health.

### **Underrepresentation: Locating Filipinos in the Research**

The epidemiological realities of health and mental health outcomes for Asian Americans, particularly Filipinos, are poorly understood. This is due, in part, to inattention from the research community and lack of studies on these populations, which result in a lack of empirical knowledge (Center for the Study of Asian American Health, 2007; Ghosh, 2003; Guillermo & Srinivasan, 2000; Kwon & Tseng, 2015; Yu, Huang, &

Singh, 2004). In addition, there has been an imprecision in categorizing Asian Americans, generally leading to an inability to make meaningful conclusions (Center for the Study of Asian American Health, 2007; Ghosh, 2003; Guillermo & Srinivasan, 2000; Kwon & Tseng, 2015). Less than a quarter of 1% of health-related federal grants found in the CRISP database from the National Library of Medicine from 1986-2000, and one hundredth of 1% of those found in the MEDLINE database from 1966-2000, yielded data referring to Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders (Ghosh, 2003; Kwon & Tseng, 2015).

Filipinos in the U.S., as a group, are even further understudied, and specific data on Filipinos is difficult to isolate due to the practice of aggregating data on Asian Americans into one category (Center for the Study of Asian American Health, 2007; Ghosh, 2003; Guillermo & Srinivasan, 2000; Kwon & Tseng, 2015). This means that when Filipinos *are* included in the research, it is challenging to make meaningful conclusions about the health and mental health of Filipinos as the data is contained within the Asian American category and is not able to be disentangled. In 2007, the Center for the Study of Asian American Health (2007) found that only 0.05% of studies on Asian Americans (searchable within the PubMed database from 1975-2004) contained a Filipino category within the sample. One of the more prominent data sets, the Filipino American Epidemiological Study (FACES), was published recently (Takeuchi, 2011), and is helping to create a foundation for understanding the trends in health and mental health for Filipinos in the U.S.

### **The Problem of Aggregating Data**

In addition to Filipinos being underrepresented in health research, further complications emerge when aggregating data on Asian Americans (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum Health Brief, 2006). There are numerous, distinct, heterogeneous cultures that make up the Asian American category and their health outcomes can vary greatly (Asian Pacific American Legal Center & Asian American Justice Center, 2011). The differences in culture, religion, behavior, and social structure as well as the health and mental health outcomes are significant between Filipinos and other Asian cultures. Lumping these cultures into one category can skew the data, causing misrepresentations and a lack of understanding of each culture and of Asian Americans as a whole (Asian Pacific American Legal Center & Asian American Justice Center, 2011).

For example, while 4% of the whole group of Asian and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander adults have hepatitis, 5% of Filipino, and 6% of Chinese subgroups do (Asian Pacific American Legal Center & Asian American Justice Center, 2011). Because Filipinos and Chinese comprise nearly 40% of Asian and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander people in the U.S., a large proportion of other subpopulations with lower rates bring the average down to 4% for the population as a whole (Asian Pacific American Legal Center & Asian American Justice Center, 2011). In addition, the categories shifted in 1997, when the U.S. Office of Management and Budget split the “Asian or Pacific Islander” category in two: “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders” (National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, 2012). Despite

this, as of 2010, almost 15 years later, some health data was still combined in the former, homogenized category (National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, 2012).

### **What We *Do* Know: The Unique Position of Filipinos?**

Asian Americans make up 6% of the total U.S. population and are the fastest growing racial group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Filipinos comprise 20% of Asian Americans (3.4 million people), the second largest subpopulation within this category, and have grown over 44% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Between 50 to 60% of the Filipino population are immigrants, 20% of whom have limited English proficiency, compared with 13% of the total population being immigrants and 4% of White Americans (Asian Pacific American Legal Center & Asian American Justice Center, 2011; Tseng *et al.*, 2010). This is significant because Filipino immigrants face specific challenges navigating societal structures as well as discrimination from Americanized Filipinos. Filipinos comprise the largest number of undocumented immigrants within the Asian group at 280,000 compared with 200,000 from India, the second largest subgroup (Asian American Justice Center & Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2011).

Among Asian Americans, Filipinos are the only group from a country colonized by the U.S., though a number of East Asian Americans have histories of harmful events (e.g., indentured Chinese railroad workers and Japanese internment during World War II) and several Pacific Island cultures have also endured colonization by the U.S. (e.g., Samoa and Hawaii; Beyer *et al.*, 2014; David, 2008). This fact is a significant point to

consider when analyzing the historical context of Filipinos entering into the U.S. and can help guide the development of empirical knowledge because the epistemic violence enacted against Filipinos during colonization has compounded with other forms of discrimination. This means that while other Asian subgroups in the U.S. experience racism, for example, upon immigration, Filipinos alone additionally carry the psychological effects of being colonized by the country in which they make their new home.

### **Filipino Resistance to the Colonial Project**

The Philippines has a long history of resisting the colonial project ranging in tactics from violence to reframing theories and creating knowledge to dissent to blending their culture with that of the colonizers (Church & Katigbak, 2002; David, 2013). The Tao, or pre-colonial Filipinos, resisted Spanish colonization for 50 years before Spain was able to assert control over the country (David, 2013).

### **Legacy of Resistance Strategies**

Filipino resistance has taken the form of people speaking out against colonial powers in the form of written discourses and political debates, both domestically and abroad. Perhaps one of the most famous Filipino dissenters was Jose Rizal, executed due to his vehement rejection of Spain's colonial rule of the Philippines (Francia, 2014; Valenzuela, 2014). Rizal is now valorized in the Philippines as a national hero for his controversial writings at the time.

One modern folkloric example of resistance was said to occur during Spanish colonization with the creation of the *barong Tagalog*, which is now the common formal

wear for Filipino men. Though the details of this story vary, some say that the Spanish elite required Filipinos to wear white shirts, similar to that used in Europe, to signify members of the serving class. Due to the Filipino expertise with bolos, or knives, the shirts were required to be transparent so that no knife could be concealed. As well, the Spaniards, protective of their stolen riches permitted no pockets so that the silverware could not be hidden in the clothing. Finally, the Filipinos were not allowed to use the cotton since this was a resource that was highly valued and expensive. In response, Filipinos crafted the most beautifully embroidered shirts out of the native *piña*, or native pineapple, fiber. This translucent fiber is abundant in various regions of the Philippines and offers an elegant shimmer to the products created. It is thought that the embroidery found on this article of clothing is an expression of the indigenous soul and an act of resistance (see [www.reflectionsofasia.com](http://www.reflectionsofasia.com) and [www.mabuhayradio.com](http://www.mabuhayradio.com) for accounts of the *barong Tagalog*).

**Violent resistance.** In 1521, King Lapu Lapu of Mactan Island successfully defeated Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer commissioned by Spain, perhaps delaying colonization of the Philippines for around 40 years (David, 2013). The Tao used violence to resist the onset of Spanish colonization successfully for 50 years before Spain finally subjugated the masses through force. In addition to this, Filipinos achieved Spain's cessation in 1898, owing to a mounting revolution, and later received assistance from the U.S. though some report that victory had already been secured. The Philippine-American War, beginning in 1899, also marked a time of violent resistance though the U.S. embarked on the *Pacification Campaign*, an outpouring of troops and resources to secure

the islands, until 1913 (David, 2013). This pacification was achieved at the cost of 200,000 Filipino lives, representing a large movement of resistance to colonization. Such violent tactics continue to play out in various parts of the Philippines, though perhaps the most well-documented is happening in Mindanao.

**Modern resistance: Decolonizing and indigenizing.** Theoretical advances have emerged in the field of psychology that have allowed scholars to re-center Filipino knowledge of Filipinos in the understanding and defining of the Filipino psyche, personality, self, mind, and values (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Church & Katigbak, 2002; Strobel, 2001). Western psychology was part of the colonization projects of Spain and the U.S. in the Philippines and was used to interpret the Filipino mind, personality, values, and self (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013). Psychology itself was introduced in the Philippines in the 1920's by the U.S., whereas other social sciences had been introduced by Spain. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is a counter narrative to the Western psychological constructs (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Church & Katigbak, 2002; Strobel, 2001).

***Re-defining Filipino personality.*** The values ascribed to Filipinos during colonization were rooted in an individualist rather than a collectivist worldview and were based on surface perceptions of outsiders and cast the culture in a negative light (Mendoza, 2002). This means that the Filipino personality was disparaged by the colonial representations that were propagated due to inaccuracy of measures, misrepresentation, and incorrect understandings. The problem with using an individualist lens is that it obscures perception of the underlying motivations for behavior. The application of

Western systems of understanding the mind and self therefore resulted in pejorative misunderstandings of Filipinos (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Church & Katigbak, 2002). The promulgation of these epistemologies was rationalized by a similar logic accompanying Manifest Destiny, wherein divine support justified genocide and theft of land. In the case of the Philippines, the positioning of Filipinos as souls needing to be saved (during the Spanish occupation) and “little brown brothers” needing to be educated (during U.S. occupation) served to excuse colonial violence. This was part of the larger colonial process of subverting indigenous Filipino knowledges, values, and practices. Those values, such as *bathala na* or submissive fatalism, *utang na loob* debt of gratitude/obligation, *pakikisama* or getting along with others/making concessions, and *hiya* or social shame/embarrassment, had negative connotations according to Westerners, which revealed Filipinos go be superficial and presenting a false front to others, preferring “smooth interpersonal relationships” and avoiding conflict to being authentic and strong (Church & Katigbak, 2002; Mendoza, 2002). These definitions then bolstered the rationale the U.S. used in their policies of dominating Filipinos as they were seen as unsophisticated (David, 2013; San Juan, 2006). [For examples of anti-Filipino political cartoons circulated in the U.S. circa 1900 (see Ignacio, de la Cruz, Emmanuel, & Toribio, 2014).]

Initially, resistance to these pejorative representations of Filipino values sought to redefine the concepts in a more accurate light and sought to understand the core of the traits, filtering out the negative slant on Filipinos (Mendoza, 2002). Filipinos may prefer “smooth interpersonal” interactions but this is grounded in a deep desire to honor other



people and not in a desire to be superficial. In recasting the concepts, *Bathala na* became determination, *utang na loob* became commitment to human solidarity, and *hiya* became personal dignity/ honor (Church & Katigbak, 2002).

***Defining Filipino personality.*** This project to redefine cultural values evolved into scholars rejecting the entire colonial understanding of Filipinos instead of retooling it. Opposing the misrepresentation of Filipinos that resulted from the application of Western psychology, Dr. Virgilio Enriquez developed *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP) in the 1970's, a psychology that centers theory on the Filipino and Filipino experiences and was formed by investigations into indigenous peoples of the Philippines (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Church & Katigbak, 2002). SP assumes that Filipinos had a vibrant and rich system of knowledge and culture prior to colonization and values Filipino thought, ways of life, folk knowledge, science, and other knowledges (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013). Some scholars purport that the indigenous healers, or *babaylans*, may have been early practitioners of psychotherapy in addition to the other healing practices they administered (Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Strobel, 2010).

Enriquez's model describes *kapwa*, the shared identity with others or "the self in the other," as being the central Filipino value (Church & Katigbak, 2002; Mendoza, 2002; De Guia, 2005). This crucial difference between the Western and SP views on the values of the Filipino culture is significant in interpreting personality. The implications of being conflict avoidant or motivated by "smooth interpersonal relationships" is very different than being motivated by a shared sense of self or connection. While the resulting

behaviors may be the same, the implications are distinct because within *kapwa* the deeper human connection is emphasized as opposed to a selfish, self-serving, or possibly manipulative avoidance of conflict. The underlying assumption of *kapwa* is much more noble, rooted in respect, and honoring of equality than what was previously represented. Filipinos may act in service to other people because they are literally treating others as themselves, they treat people understanding that we are all one.

Enriquez considered SP as both liberated and liberating, and Paredes-Canilao, & Barbaran-Diaz, (2013) proposed that the development of SP is emancipatory and critical in and of itself because it re-centers the Filipino psyche in the psychology of Filipinos. They state that SP is liberated because it is decolonizing and that it is liberating because it is indigenizing (2010). SP has also been applied to expanding indigenous Filipino knowledge, including indigenous theories and indigenous research methodologies, and efforts have been made to indigenize institutional structures in the Philippines (Church & Katigbak, 2002). For example, as of 1997, over 200 Filipino personality instruments had been developed, many of which center on indigenous concepts such as *pagkamabahala* or anxiety, *pagkarlihiyoso* or religiousness, and *kahustuhang emosyonal* or emotional maturity (Guanzon-Lapeña, Church, Carlota, & Katigbak, 1998). SP research paradigms put forth five foundational indigenous research methods: 1) the quality of the researcher/participant relationship impacts the quality of the data collected; 2) the researcher is equal to the participants; 3) protecting the welfare of the participants takes precedence over data collection; 4) the methods utilized are selected with the benefit of the participants in mind, not for researcher to show off; and 5) study should be conducted

in the participants' primary language when ever possible (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

***Kapwa Psychology.*** *Kapwa* is a central tenet of SP, which conveys the concept of a shared soul or identity (De Guia, 2005). This contrasts with Western soul concepts that emphasize individuals, promoting competition between individuals. *Kapwa*, on the other hand, emphasizes belonging to a larger soul or community, and therefore promotes a sense that harming another is in fact harming yourself. Enriquez articulated *kapwa* or *pakikipagkapwa* in eight graduated levels of interaction dependent on the relationship of the interacting parties, i.e., the level of trust, acceptance, and oneness felt (San Juan, 2006). These are viewed within a collectivist or relational frame of intersubjectivity that is defined by two classes: outsider and insider. The outsider interactions include *pakikitungo* or amenity/civility, *pakikisalamuha* or mixing, *pakikilahok* or joining/participating, *pakikibagay* or conforming, and *pakikisam* or adjusting. The insider interactions include *pakikipagpal-agayang-loob* or mutual trust/rapport, *pakikisangkot* or getting involved, *pakikiisa* or fusion, oneness and full trust (San Juan, 2006). It is important to note that Western psychological constructs of the Filipino personality would likely have been based on the more exterior levels of interaction of the outsider modes of social interaction because the Westerners did not achieve the depth of trust and oneness necessary. For example, when Spanish colonizers arrived and began violently uprooting and restructuring Filipino communities, Filipinos did not permit Spaniards to interact at the more intimate and deep connections of insider interactions such as *pakikisangkot* or *pakikiisa*, nor would you expect this to be the case with regard to the physical, epistemic,

and psychic violence inflicted on Filipinos during the ongoing colonial project. Therefore, any assessments made of Filipino personality, would be grounded in more superficial levels of interaction and analysis of these would be incomplete, to say the least, without the inclusion of the broader historical context. In short, Filipinos protected their deeper cultural formations from the colonizers in response to such violence. Wherein Westerners viewed Filipinos as superficial and accommodating, a more full explanation would include the threat to bodily safety and survival imposed by the colonial presences and the superficiality may be defined more accurately as an act of survival and even defiance.

Empirical knowledge about the validity of SP is limited due to the early death of Enriquez and the apparent disadvantages faced by the Philippine academe versus Western knowledge production such as insufficient funding and slower publication production (Mendoza, 2002). Research within the Filipino academe has also been limited by availability of funding for scholarly research in the Philippines and the resulting focus on necessary administrative and teaching duties (Church & Katigbak, 2002). The study of SP has landed more firmly in diasporic communities, particularly the U.S. and Canada, though some scholars in the Philippines continue its exploration, study, and critique. Regardless, the framework has proven fruitful in knowledge production and continues to inspire exploration.

### **Cultural Preservation, Decolonization, and Re-/ Indigenization**

A growing body of work is emerging from diasporic Filipinos that attempts cultural preservation, decolonization, and re-/ indigenization. These include works on the

indigenous healing practices, *batek* or indigenous tattoos, orality, epics, chanting, shamanism, dreaming, communing with the *anitos* or spirits and ancestors, and traditional arts such as dancing, singing, and weaving. These efforts both document the practices and form practices inspired by the ancestral ways. Central to these are revitalizing spiritual practices and rituals, reconnecting with the ancestors, and connection with the land.

### **Embodiment as a Practice of Wholeness**

The decolonizing framework is furthered by embodiment (Strobel, 2010), or the practice of letting our bodies speak and listening to and reading our bodies, as opposed to limiting the work of decolonizing to our intellect. Strobel (2010), one of the most important voices of the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in diaspora, describes coming back to embodiment or wholeness, as an integral process in addressing the psychic split between the body, mind, soul, and spirit that occurred due to colonization. This psychic split, she writes, privileges mind, reason, and knowledge, over body, emotion, and passion, respectively, and exiles the spirit. Connection to the land is another key element of embodiment. Strobel describes reintegration of her body, soul, and spirit as well as her thinking mind in addressing colonial trauma. The work she describes restores that which the colonizers drove out of the collective knowing in their effort to civilize Filipinos. The colonial project denies the body and privileges the intellectual mind over all else. Therefore the return to the body is a necessary step, albeit a painful one, in addressing colonial trauma. Strobel further posits the necessity of identifying the connections between colonial and sexual trauma, which represents another denial of the rights and voice of the body (Strobel, 2010).

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Filipinos in the U.S. remain a largely understudied population and much of the existing research aggregates Filipinos in with Asian Americans. Gaps in the knowledge regarding health and mental health make it difficult to perform meaningful analysis, especially as it relates to CM, HT, and culturally-specific interventions. David (2013) claims that there are no interventions developed that specifically address decolonizing and indigenizing healing practices for Filipinos in the U.S. While this may be true within existing bodies of research, there are Filipino community organizations emerging that respond to the impacts of colonization and represent efforts in re-/ indigenizing. The Kapwa Collective, New Filipina, and the Center for Babaylan Studies, are such examples, to name only a few (see [www.kapwacollective.tumblr.com](http://www.kapwacollective.tumblr.com), [www.babaylan.net](http://www.babaylan.net), and [www.bagongpinay.org](http://www.bagongpinay.org)). All three organizations represent movements and discourses of critical responses and healing efforts created by diasporic Filipinos. Recently, the Center for Babaylan Studies held a retreat in May 2015, which culminated in the unveiling of Mamerto “Lagitan” Tindongan’s Ifugao Healing Hut. The event featured leaders in the field, such as, Fr. Albert E. Alejo, SJ, Carmen Manalac Scheuerman, James Perkinson, Grace Nono, Arlene Natocyad, Mamerto Tindongan, Nati Delson, Cynthia Tindongan whose works furthers healing the divide between indigenous spiritualities and Christian spiritualities (see [www.babaylan.net](http://www.babaylan.net)).

Similarly, Lakota communities in (what is now) the U.S. have designed, implemented, and studied interventions focused on healing harms due to colonization and have demonstrated profound impacts on mental health outcomes (Yellow Horse Brave

Heart, 1998). Similar studies applied to emerging interventions within diasporic decolonizing and re-/ indigenizing Filipinos could provide empirical knowledge and bolster the findings emerging from the Lakota. Similar studies are warranted for Filipinos.

Research on the impacts of colonization and HT has begun to contribute to knowledge and to provide direction for potential treatments (David & Nadal, 2013; David & Okazaki, 2006; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006; Smith, 1999; Sortero, 2006; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998). Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1998) designed a culturally-specific intervention to attempt to heal HT, combining psychoeducation with revival of an ancestral grief ritual, which produced remarkably positive results for the test sample of Lakota helping professionals. The study found a nearly 50% reduction in sadness, a nearly 55% decrease in both shame and helplessness, and a 30% increase in both joy and pride amongst participants (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998).

Another study on healing HT was conducted in Aotearoa (known as New Zealand) amongst the Māori using digital storytelling to impact the intergenerational transmission of trauma (Beltrán & Begun, 2014). This study, which used indigenous methodology including tending to relationships between investigators and participants, utilized indigenous healing practices of storytelling and oral traditions through digital methods, to recover and reclaim personal and communal knowledge. This increased understandings of the past and allowed for important reframing to occur, which shifted the blame for present-day expressions of social problems (read HT) away from the

individuals, families, and communities in whom they manifest. Participants found the study transformative and noted that their stories reflected in others, a sense of validation, and hope of the broader healing available for the Māori community (Beltrán & Begun, 2014). These results have profound implications for successful treatment of HT and warrant further investigation as applied to additional populations impacted by HT, such as Filipinos.

Since Native Americans and Filipinos were treated similarly during conquest and colonization by the U.S. in terms of policies, violence, and subjugation as well as attitudes of the degradation of the peoples and cultures (Williams, 1980). These populations were both labeled as heathens, savages, and uncivilized, and the U.S. positioned itself in a paternal role with the burden of “saving” and “educating” these people (David, 2013; Williams, 1980). In addition, both peoples have endured policies of transferring wealth, land, and resources to the U.S. (Williams, 1980). Due to the colonization dynamics, future studies on Filipinos would benefit from taking aligning with other studies on indigenous peoples like the Native Americans. In addition, comparisons with resulting scholarship could lend to important developments for healing HT, CTR, and CM.



### **Chapter 3**

#### **METHODS**

For the purposes of this study, it is acknowledged that colonization has had lasting impacts, on the collective Filipino psyche, defined as Colonial Mentality (CM), Historical Trauma (HT), and negative health and mental health outcomes, which is being addressed within a community-based decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement (see Chapter 1). As articulated by Smith (1999), research was used as a tool to further colonization through practices of epistemic violence, domination, and subjugation being passed off as “science,” and by extracting knowledge from indigenous peoples, similar to the way in which resources were extracted from the land of indigenous peoples. Smith argued that the process of researching in this way is damaging to the people being researched just as the land is damaged in the process of resource extraction (e.g., mining and clear cutting; 1999).

Colonizing researchers purport that they are neutral and unbiased observers rather than participants in the research process and they report knowledge created as if their beliefs, values, and experiences are not reflected in their findings. Furthermore, they fail to recognize that their simple presence in a community has impact and, may in fact, harm individuals, families, and communities they contact. This harm is then overlooked by colonizing researchers claim to have no impact on the communities they have entered (Smith, 1999). Indigenizing research, on the other hand, acknowledges and places importance on the relationship that necessarily emerges during the research process. Another fundamental problem with the modality of Western research is the missionary-

like attitude employed by the researchers, which is supported by the presumption that the benefits of studies are universally useful and can help the indigenous people to better themselves.

To begin the process of remediating such harms from research as a colonial tool, scholars have begun to articulate research practices that are decolonizing and re-/indigenizing, which this study aimed to employ. Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) encourages research protocols that emerge out of indigenous perspectives. To that end, this study centers Enriquez's *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (2001), to understand research within a decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipino framework (Church & Katibak, 2002 and Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013). Within these methodologies, researchers shed the false separation by maintaining their integration and relationship with those being researched and strive to understand that they are implicated in the findings and impact the processes and the communities who host them. Therefore, research becomes a collaborative and generative process as opposed to a process of extraction of knowledge from the community. (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002; Smith, 1999).

Virgilio Enriquez's *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (2001) is a distinctly Filipino answer to the colonial research process, offering theoretical and methodological frameworks for indigenous Filipino research protocols (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013). Enriquez's work lead to articulation of indigenous Filipino research methods used by the researcher, such as *pagmamasid* or observation, *pakikiramdam* or feeling your way through, *pakikilahok* or participation, *pagtatanong-tanong* or informal interview,

*pagkikipagkuwentuhan* or informal conversation, and *samasamang talakayan* or focus group discussion (Paredes-Canilao & Babaran-Diaz, 2010). All of these methods are founded on the core Filipino personality concept of *kapwa* or the shared sense of self and the methods focus on enhancing relational interactions rather than transactional relations. These methods are described as acts of resistance and acts of liberation (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013).

Paulo Freire also articulated a model in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that is used to understand decolonizing research methodologies for this study (2006). Freire's banking model of education, which he contended underlies all interaction between the colonizer and the colonized, is consistent with Smith's (1999) assessment of colonial research practices as well as Enriquez's *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as a decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practice (2001). Within Freire's model, the colonizer imparts knowledge to the colonized in a directional flow that assumes the colonized are devoid of knowledge to be shared and, he argued, that both parties are dehumanized in this process (2006). This attitude is reflected in the colonial attitude towards research participants, which are positioned as inferior subjects rather than as equals or even experts in knowledge on their own cultures. Such protocols can be identified in both Spain's and the United States' treatment of Filipinos (e.g., Spanish missions and United States' schools). This study used a collaborative approach to research, which is consistent with Freire's ideas of liberation wherein knowledge and responses to domination can be co-created by the colonized and the colonizer (2006). Using these libratory frameworks, this study aims to

be an example of praxis, using decolonizing and re-/indigenizing methods to co-create knowledge on decolonizing and re-/indigenizing healing practices of diasporic Filipinos.

### **Study Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to explore the re-/indigenizing and decolonizing practices currently being used by diasporic Filipinos. The study poses the following questions:

5. What cultural commitments motivate leaders to engage with decolonizing and re-/indigenizing work?
6. What cultural practices are they and/or their communities using or developing to promote decolonization and re-indigenization, and in turn contribute to reducing health disparities?
7. What resources and supports are needed to further the movement?
8. How is the work of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing connected to the homeland?

### **Study Design**

This study used a phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, Fisher, & von Eckartsberg, 1971; Moustakas, 1994; Padgett, 2008) combined explicitly with a liberatory approach (Freire, 2006; Smith, 1999). The study focused on the lived experiences of historically colonized Filipinos living in the U.S. and engaged in contemporary decolonizing and re/indigenizing work. Phenomenology is an empirical method that aims to provide comprehensive descriptions of (social) phenomenon and can aid in producing more accurate and in-depth information to complement experimental

and statistical research. This method investigates lived experiences through interviews that form the basis for analyzing behavior and lead to structural understandings (Harré & Stearns, 1995). The interviews are understood within an ecological perspective and are contained within their cultural, social, and historic contexts (Kumar, 2012).

Phenomenology allows the researcher to understand a portion of the participants lived experiences and therefore their internal landscapes. The thoughts, opinions, and experiences shared give a window into the participants' psychological experiences. As well, because the participants are leaders, phenomenological methods affords a glimpse into the social structures and the community meaning-making that is happening within the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement of Filipinos in the diaspora.

This phenomenological study is exploratory and examines the verbal testimonies offered by the participants. Through studying the language use, one can begin to make meaning of the psychology, cultural contexts, motivations, social contexts, and actions of the participants (Harré & Stearns, 1995; Moustakas, 1994; Padgett, 2008). Thus, analysis of the language present in the interviews offers a glimpse into the social and individual landscapes present. The researcher attempted to suspend judgments and preconceptions in order to remain open to delving into participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994); however, the researcher balanced this approach with the fact that she is simultaneously an insider to the community as well as outsider in her capacities as a practitioner and researcher.

This liberatory phenomenological design gathered expert testimony from leaders in the re-/indigenizing and decolonizing movement of diasporic Filipinos, who reside

throughout the U.S. and are affiliated with the Center for Babaylan Studies. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with these leaders to discuss their lived experiences regarding decolonization and re- /indigenization to promote health and wellness. The researcher considered pre-existing conditions, specifically colonization, decolonization, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Colonial Mentality, and Historical Trauma of diasporic Filipinos living in the U.S. when designing and carrying out the study. Further, the investigator centralized the sociopolitical contexts of the participants by relying on their expertise and meaning making to interpret findings both in the initial interviews and in the conference call evaluating the preliminary findings (Kumar, 2012).

The study design was simultaneously decolonizing and indigenizing by utilizing the following emerging indigenous research methods described by Barbaran-Diaz and Paredes-Canilao (2013), Church and Katibak (2002), and Smith (1999):

1. The informants participate in a collaborative meaning making process, for example the researcher conducted a conference call with some of the participants to review the emerging themes.
2. The researcher operated relationally throughout the process, for example, the researcher focused on building relationships through prioritizing rapport and respect over data extraction.
3. The knowledge will be shared with the community, for example in through sharing the results with the participants and providing presentations to the community about the project.

The study also utilized Filipino indigenous research methods based in *kapwa* or shared sense of self: *pagmamasid* or observation, *pakikiramdam* or feeling your way through, *pakikilahok* or participation, *pagtatanong-tanong* or informal interview, *pagkikipagkuwentuhan* or informal conversation, and *samasamang talakayan* or focus group discussion (Paredes-Canilao & Babaran-Diaz, 2010).

In order to increase trustworthiness and rigor, the researcher convened some participants in a self-selected member-check to audit and provide feedback regarding the analysis and emerging themes. The investigator also used audit trails by openly documenting decision-making and analytic processes of the study, in concert with the Thesis Chair (Padgett, 2008). This study was given approval by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento on September 29, 2015 and assigned approval number 15-16-008.

### **Sampling Procedures**

Participants were selected through purposive sampling procedures due to their statuses as adult, self-identified Filipinos, leaders or scholars in the decolonizing, re-/indigenizing movement in the United States. The investigator relied on her existing relationship with the CfBS, a leading, non-profit organization in the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos, and recruited participants from their list of members through the recommendation of director Dr. Leny Strobel. The subjects are, by virtue of their affiliation with CfBS, expert leaders in this movement and have also contributed to the knowledge, art, or discourse in the field.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The investigator communicated with Dr. Strobel via email and telephone and received a list of prospective participants whom the investigator emailed (see Appendix A), telephoned, and text messaged to secure participation. Those who elected to join the study were supplied with the “Individual Consent” form (see Appendix B), and then reviewed, signed, and returned the form to the investigator. As per individual request, some participants received the “Interview Schedule” (see Appendix C) in advance of the interview. The investigator scheduled 1-hour telephone or video-phone interviews at the convenience of the twelve participants. The interviews were semi-structured, utilizing a series of open-ended questions from the “Interview Schedule” (see Appendix C) (Creswell, 2007 & Padgett, 2008). The investigator also used emerging questions during the interview. In some instances, participants elected not to respond to certain questions.

The study also included a member check where participants were invited to participate in a 2-hour conference call to review the study and emergent themes (Padgett, 2008). The interviews and conference call utilized a process of open-ended, collaborative knowledge exchange consistent with indigenous research with a special focus on indigenous Filipino protocols (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013; Church & Katibak, 2002; Smith, 1999). The investigator created audio recordings of the interviews and conference call using a Zoom digital recorder (Zoom, 2006). Participants were compensated with a \$20 gift certificate to a bookstore. At the request of one participant the compensation was applied to a donation towards a community fundraiser selected by the participant.



### **Instruments**

An “Interview Schedule” (see Appendix C) was developed by the investigator and used to collect and personal knowledge of existing interventions addressing collective healing from colonization and Colonial Mentality. The “Interview Schedule” contained questions regarding demographics, personal experience with decolonization and re-/indigenization, reflections on the movement of decolonization and re-/indigenization, and the health and mental health of Filipinos living in diaspora. For example, participants were asked how and when they began to decolonize and re-/indigenize and what decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices they are developing in their communities.

These questions contained within the “Interview Schedule” were developed by the researcher and reviewed by the Thesis Chair and Dr. Strobel. These questions were based on the review of the literature as well as the researchers own expertise in the area. For example, decolonizing and re-/indigenizing were prominent themes in the literature and warranted inquiry. The researcher had also learned about decolonizing and re-/indigenizing through attendance at events hosted by CfBS as well as participation in the community. The researcher used the cumulative knowledge gained via this involvement in conjunction with that obtained during the literature review process in order to craft the “Interview Schedule.” During the interviews, the investigator supplemented with emerging questions to prompt elaboration or increased depth as needed throughout the interviews.

Participants were given the opportunity to review and correct the transcripts in order to ensure that participants were correctly represented in the study. Two participants

elected to correct or add to the transcripts produced. The investigator also conducted a member-check during a conference call interviewees were invited to attend. The purpose of the member-check and the participant review of the transcripts was promote accuracy in representations of the participants, to review the preliminary findings, and to refine the meanings made about the data gathered. The participants were provided with the preliminary findings of the study in advance of the conference call. The participants were asked open-ended questions to respond to the findings presented. For example, the participants were asked if the preliminary themes were salient and resonant in their own experiences and if they had any general feedback about the themes.

### **Data Analysis**

The investigator analyzed the interviews to reveal themes in the data collected using a psychology phenomenology approach comprised of five levels (Moustakas, 1994). The investigator transcribed the interviews exactly and used transcription conventions, which consisted of assigned symbols to indicate common connective utterances, such as, “uh,” “you know,” and “like.” During first level of analysis, the investigator re-read the transcripts twice to become familiar with each and to obtain a sense of the whole lot. Significant statements were gathered and arranged by similar meaning through a process of horizontalization to produce a textural description of the data (Moustakas, 1994).

In the second level of analysis, the investigator coded the data using a combination of a closed system based on tenants of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, decolonization, and re-/indigenization and an open coding system (Padgett, 2008). The

investigator coded the data looking for themes that were prominent in the data. The investigator also sought themes prominent in the literature review, such as decolonizing and re-/indigenizing, in order to investigate the perspectives of community studied. The researcher deconstructed the transcripts to flesh out the phenomenon utilizing the work of Bohm (2004) paying attention to the stories in terms of process, intensity, typologies, strategies, interactions, identity, turning point, cultural and social norms, and consensus. This contributed to a structural description of participants' experiences of their conditions, situations, and contexts. As well, this lead to a relational analysis of the data, which revealed, in part, the lived experiences of participants within community. These analyses were then combined with the theoretical orientation of the researcher. This research located themes and meaning units in the data that describe only a part of participant knowledge and experience.

In the third level of analysis, the researcher eliminated redundancies in the themes and meaning units identified. Then the researcher continued to examine the meaning by relating the meaning units with each other and with the whole. During the fourth level of analysis the researcher identified the emerging themes, which approximated the individual and collective psychology of the participants. This phase of analysis included self-reflection and memoing in order to identify the researcher's reactivity, responses, and standpoint in this process and these stories. The Thesis Chair then reviewed the coding schema, and partitioning, deconstruction, and refinement was continued until saturation was met.

In the fifth level of analysis, the researcher conducted an audit meeting via a conference call to increase rigor and trustworthiness, and to review emergent themes. The participants were presented with the themes in advance of the conference call. The researcher facilitated a *samasamang talakayan* or focus group discussion to enhance and determine the meaning of the findings and to provide direction for potential future interventions (Paredes-Canilao & Barbaran-Diaz, 2013). The *samasamang talakayan* is an indigenizing Filipino research protocol that helps to keep the participants' voice central to the process. It helps protect against misrepresenting the community because it allows the participants to correct or give feedback on the meaning being made.

The conference call was attended by five participants and lasted approximately two-hours. The investigator solicited the availabilities of all twelve study participants and selected the time slot that could be attended by the most participants. The participants received the preliminary themes in advance of the conference call and were asked to evaluate their salience and resonance in their own experiences. The feedback collected from the conference call was then used to adjust the themes and helped to deepen the analysis made.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

The researcher submitted an Exempt Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. Approval for the application was given on September 29, 2015. The Human Subjects Protocol number is 15-16-008 (see Appendix D). The individual consent for participation in research (Appendix B) clearly stated the subject's right to stop and conclude their participation in the study at any time.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Several themes emerged from interviews with leaders within the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting approximately an hour each (see Appendix C). Participants were identified as leaders in the movement via the Center for Babaylan Studies (CfBS), whose work is centered on promoting Filipino decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices. Participants were given the opportunity to review and edit the transcripts of their interviews and invited to attend a conference call to review the study and emerging themes from the data.

#### **Demographics of the Sample**

Seven demographic questions were asked. Ten (83%) of the twelve participants identified as female, one identified as male, and one identified as gender non-conforming. Six (50%) participants were *1.5 generation*, a colloquial term used to describe those who immigrated as children or adolescents, with three (25%) who immigrated as a child, five years or younger, and three (25%) immigrated between ages of 10 and 17 years old. Three participants (25%) were second generation and born in the U.S. and three (25%) were first generation and immigrated as adults. Participants were born in California, Hawaii, and in various parts of the Philippines, including Manila, Cebu City, Quezon City, Pampanga, Cebu, Cagayan Valley, Sampaloc, Bicol, and Olongapo City. The parents of the participants were born in diverse regions of the Philippines, including

Davao, Leyte, Cebu, Bukidnon, Manila, Bicol, Pampanga, Bulacan, Iloilo, Quezon City, Cebu City, Ilocos Norte, and Ilocos Sur.

Ethnic identity was complex for many of the respondents as indicated by four (30%) using more than one identity descriptor when asked how they identify ethnically. For example, one respondent stated that they were “Filipino American,” Other, and “Asian/Pacific Islander.” Half of the respondents included Filipino American as their ethnic identity, four included Filipino, and ten (83%) stated that they were Filipino or Filipino American. Two (17%) participants stated that they were Asian/Pacific Islander. One person described themselves as mixed race and two identified as coming from tribal lineages in the Philippines.

The participants had a variety of professions, including, student, clergy, professor, activist, landscape designer, artist, educator, expressive arts therapist, communications manager, public health nurse, administrative coordinator, independent film editor, retail, social work, and community organizing and planner. The majority of the participants, nine (75%), identified as straight or heterosexual, one declined to answer (8%), and two (17%) identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer, although three (25%) participants also described their sexual orientation is “fluid” or “flexible.” All but one (8%) participant, who grew up without a religion, grew up Christian. The majority of participants, eight (67%), grew up Catholic, two grew up Methodist (17%), and one grew up in the *Iglesia ni Cristo*, or Church of Christ, though a quarter (2) of those who identified Catholicism in their childhood homes also stated that animism was also present in the practices. All (100%) of the participants have since departed from their religious

upbringings and currently practice a variety of religions and spiritualities, some of which are established and others of which are personally defined, including Eckankar, Dianic Wicca, agnosticism, “fluid beyond Roman Catholicism,” “universal spirituality,” Buddhism, “life as a spiritual practice,” “eclectic,” animism, indigenous spirituality/traditions, Tibetan Buddhism, spirit guidance, Islam, and “Earth-revering *Katutubo* spirituality.”

The participants were offered the opportunity to select pseudonyms. Those who did not select pseudonyms were assigned names by the investigator. The assigned pseudonyms, ages, and generational statuses, are reported in descending order of age in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*Participant Pseudonyms*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Generational Status</b>
Remijia	63	1
Eugenia	63	1
Libulan	61	2
Bit-bit	45	1.5
Waya	42	1
Ilog	41	1.5
Ell Cee	39	1.5
Ralph	39	1.5
Colibri	36	1.5
Sue Donym	33	1.5
Rufino	29	2
Primotivo	28	2

### **Prominent Themes in the Data**

Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions focusing on three topics, including, personal experiences and knowledge of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing, reflections on the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing, and the health and mental health concerns of Filipinos in the U.S. (see Appendix C). The responses contained prominent themes including:

- Resisting and healing from colonization
- *Kapwa* mentorship in decolonizing and re-/indigenizing
- Trajectory of growth
- Colonial mentality and racism
- Spirituality and the Ancestors

Discussion of these themes is accompanied by selected quotes from the interviews. The researcher attempted to preserve the intended meaning of the quotations and removed connective utterances, such as “um,” “like,” and “you know” as well as instances where a word is repeated several times, for clarity and ease of reading, except in instances where this would obscure meaning.

#### **I. Resisting and Healing From Colonization**

Participants frequently described knowledge or experience of decolonization, re-/indigenization, and survival of indigenous practices of ancestral practices as both resistance to and healing from colonization. Decolonization is defined by participants as the undoing of colonization and uprooting of the internalization of Colonial Mentality or beliefs imposed on the minds of Filipinos by colonizers. Ilog described decolonization as:



...an emptying process, where we empty ourselves, or unpack all the beliefs, identity descriptions or descriptors, of who we're supposed to be. In fact they're usually a bunch of lies.

Re-/indigenization, on the other hand, is defined by the participants as the return to ancestral ways and practices and the seeking out of such knowledge through contact with indigenous Filipinos as well as through ritual, spiritual practice, and listening to perceived messages in dreams, visions, or knowing. Ralph stated that:

...having the space and opportunity to explore...indigenous [Filipino] spiritual practices has been really affirming.

Survival of indigenous practices was observed by the researcher in the narratives as ways in which ancestral practices have continued to exist and be transmitted within families despite the existence of colonization, for example, ritual, healing, animist practices.

Rufino described a specific practice surviving within their family:

On the New Years we would have rituals also...my grandmother would have us open all of the doors, the drawers in the house. Everything had to be open. It was about letting the bad spirits come...and she gathered pennies all year, just picked them up from the ground, and at New Year we would throw pennies everywhere. So all throughout the year you'd find pennies in your underwear drawer, pennies all over the floor, and my grandmother was like, "you can't pick them off of the floor because that's our fortune."

Wayra, who participated on a conference call to review the study, stated that their mentor asserts that language around ancestral ways tended to go underground in the face of

colonial conquest, but that the practices themselves can continue to exist within the culture. This means that parts of the original culture may be able to be inferred and reconstructed through practices that survived in this manner. As such, survival of indigenous ways is framed as a resistance strategy employed by the colonized.

Recovering these practices and seeking to understand the old ways is, therefore, framed as a strategy for healing from colonization.

...[the] decolonization and re-indigenization movement are really deep expressions of wanting to know who we are and where we come from and who our people are...underneath that is deep longing, deep desire, a call to remember who we are. (Ilog)

Ilog's quote emphasizes the void created by colonization and the resulting yearning for knowledge about the ancestors. Participants viewed decolonization and re-/indigenization as practices that aided in healing from the ancestral trauma or wound caused by colonization and the researcher observed that survival of ancestral practices aided in similar healing. The following sections provide participants' experiences or witness of the phenomenon of decolonizing, re-/indigenizing, and survival of indigenous practices. These personal accounts are widely represented throughout the data. All three are ways in which Filipinos and the Filipino soul have survived the colonization.

### **I. a) Decolonizing: "I made this vow, that the trauma stops with me"**

**(Colibri).** Participants expressed their viewpoint that colonization was harmful and that it is something from which to be healed. In order to do such healing a process, one must unpack, or looking deeply into the histories and grieve what you find there. Participants,

like Colibri in the quote above, expressed their interest in healing the trauma in order to change the pattern of colonial harm in their communities and their descendents. The data contained themes of decolonization that included practices such as seeking the knowledge and history of what occurred during colonization, grieving the harms and losses experienced by the ancestors, and articulating the harms in terms physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychic harms. Ilog described their view:

...there's really no other way but to go through and acknowledge the history of colonization, in order to move forward, we need to acknowledge as a people what happened to us. What did our grandparents and great-grandparents and beyond experience? And violent imposition of both Spanish and American rule, they imposed, shoved down our throat. They totally imposed their government, cultural values, religious beliefs, social, and gender hierarchy, which were maybe not there in the pre-colonial times. These were foreign values and beliefs and practices and histories and languages that we were forced to adopt. And alongside that, with that imposition, they violently and systemically, suppressed our indigenous vitalities, they suppressed our indigenous beliefs, our world views, our life ways, our languages, our ancestral practices the wise healing practices particularly by attacking and demeaning and devaluing, the *Babaylan*...

Several participants described decolonizing practices similarly and indicated them to be integral to healing. These decolonizing practices also include critically examining the indigenous ancestors and their collusion with the colonial forces. Waya described the dynamic of colonial ideas persisting beyond the physical presence on the archipelago:

...looking deep into the shadow of our histories, our tribal histories...looking deep into that shadow and looking deep into the stories of, not just how the colonizer came, but how it stayed and even with a physical leaving, how it remains ingrained in us, in me.

This participant, as with others, emphasized grieving the harms of colonization as well as the importance of not oversimplifying the trauma.

Participants also identified colonization to be responsible for the propagation of many oppressive and harmful discourses such as racism, misogyny, homophobia, colonial mentality, and anti-animism, to name only a handful, in addition to the psychological, physical, and spiritual harm caused. Though participants acknowledged that the original Filipino culture was not perfect, several felt that it did not have oppressive forces in the same way it does presently. Sue Donym, for example stated they are:

...trying to unpack...misogyny... homophobia, and all these other isms that I had, that I had inherited because of the colonization process.

Decolonization, as described by the participants is a multi-faceted and necessary process in healing from the trauma caused by colonization.

**I. b) Re-/indigenizing: “Re-/indigenizing was part of healing from the colonization” (Sue Donym).** Participants like Sue Donym, reported a process of re-/indigenization, or a return to ancestral practices, as integral to their healing from colonization. This re-/indigenization primarily commenced after the decolonization process began or alongside it. Several of the participants cited connection with the land as

central to re-/indigenizing as well as connection with indigenous Filipinos. Ilog described their sense of connection with their ancestors and homeland:

...we actually came from a particular place in the Pacific, from an ancient line of people who have their own wise ways, they have their own world views related to the land that they were born out of and lived with and engaged with and sought spiritual sustenance from. So, we are people with roots.

Participants like Ilog, expressed a yearning for relearning and remembering the ways in which their ancestors understood the world. Participants stated that there is a deep wealth of knowledge to be uncovered. Ilog continued:

I wanted to tap into the wellspring of the indigenous models, Filipino culturally rooted, culturally appropriate approaches that would honor the worldview and ways of being in cultural specific practices...that could heal these wounds.

Ilog's insight was reflected in several of the interviews. Many of the participants discussed recovery of ancestral practices as part of healing from colonial trauma but also expressed that they needed to use such practices to effectively heal from colonial trauma. Recovering the ancestral practices seems to serve at least a dual function for the participants. There is an inherent value for them in knowing and reconnecting with the ancestral practices and there is also an overtly utilitarian aspect in that they want to use the ancestral healing practices to remediate the impacts of colonization. In this way it is both a symbolic and functional recovery needed as described in the data.

Participants described exploring and revitalizing ancestral languages, music, arts, healing, dancing, and others to that end. One example of a community-based re-

/indigenizing practice is the Bangka Journey (see <http://bangkajourney.com/>). The Bangka Journey was started by Bit-bit, inspired by the Tribal Canoe Journey, a Native American movement reclaiming canoe building, sailing, and welcoming protocols hosted annually by different Native American tribes along the Northwest coast of the U.S. (see <https://tribaljournays.wordpress.com/>). While attending the 2011 Swinomish Tribal Canoe Journey, Bit-bit was asked by a tribal elder where the Filipino canoe was, to which they stated it was coming.

They invited us to their first time the Swinomish hosted the tribal canoe journey back in 2011. I met [community member] and he asked me, “Where’s the Filipino canoe?” The words that came out of my mouth were, “We’re working on it.”(Bit-bit)

The Bangka Journey is an example of a community-based re-/indigenizing practice because it seeks out ancestral knowledge and is received by the community as a healing movement. The community has gathered together around this project to learn and create together. The project brings together culture-bearers and those seeking to learn the ancestral *bangka* building practices. Bit-bit described the building the *bangka* as healing:

It’s not just building it physically, but also in terms of spirituality and reconnecting and also connecting with other people. To help them build their *bangkas*. Not specifically the physical wood, but our own bodies and our own minds as the vessels, as the *bangka*.

The Bangka Journey also appears to be a re-/indigenizing process for Bit-bit who discussed their process of receiving and following dreams identified as ancestral

guidance. These dreams contained symbols that Bit-bit followed and decoded, which proved to be integral to actualizing the project:

Reconnecting with our ways. How do I explain this? Through visions and dreams. ...connecting ...with indigenous people of this land, opened up their visions to come into my dreams. So I wouldn't say that I was looking to do a decolonizing project, it was things that were coming my way. I was in this space where I was ready to receive it. Trying to figure out the puzzle, so to speak, of the dream and flowing with it. Following messages through dreams and connecting with people who are like-minded and supportive.

Several other participants discussed receiving ancestral dreams or visions (see V. Spirituality & the Ancestors). It seems that decolonization and re-/indigenization are intrinsically linked and are sometimes a parallel process. Participants often discussed them in relation to each other, despite their existence as distinct concepts. Bit-bit's account of following their ancestral dreams appears to be an important part of their individual decolonizing and re-/indigenizing process.

**I. c) Survival of indigenous practices: “It's that silent, insidious seed of love that is the most subversive force of all, I believe.”** Survival of indigenous practices was observed in participant description of practices of animism, healing practices, or other protocols practiced by family members or family systems and were often not spoken about. As Waya described above, these practices survived colonial suppression and are now being recognized by contemporary Filipinos as ancestral practices that were not fully extinguished. The survival of these indigenous practices of practices is notable as they are

expressions ancestral knowledge maintained despite violent attempts by colonizers to remove them from Filipinos and their culture. They remained and are available, able to be explored in the processes of re-/indigenization and remembering.

Many of the study participants described or hinted that their families continued animistic, shamanistic, herbalism, and pre-colonial medical practices. Several, for example, explained that their families practiced animistic Catholicism, creating altars to the ancestors in addition to the Virgin Mary or conducting rituals. Waya stated that their grandmother would heal them using specific prayers and ginger compresses. While this was common in the stories told, as Remijia points out, they are not necessarily identified by the families as cultural practices prior to decolonizing and re-/indigenizing:

[indigenous practices] survived but sometimes they are not acknowledged as this is a practice that is meaningful, or is connected to indigenous knowledge systems, so...a lot of people know that in their families they did certain kinds of things but they don't connect it necessarily to culture.(Remijia)

None the less, the cultural practices have, in many cases, been carried forward into the current generation. One participant, whose family was Catholic, described a practice of burying the umbilical cords underneath the ancestral home. Several participants, like Rufino, talked about setting *atang*, or ancestral offerings of food, beverages, and oils during meal times or holidays:

Like creating *atang*, a plate for the ancestors every single meal, not just at celebrations. My grandmother had an altar in the house that was really scary to me as a kid. I really believed there was something really powerful going on. And



my grandmother, every meal, would take a little bit of the food and place it onto the altar in the house, and then she would chant in the hall and call them to eat. All such indigenous practices evidence the resiliency of the Filipino culture and psyche. Despite violent repression, the culture found a way to survive and is now re-emerging.

## **II. Kapwa Mentorship in Decolonizing and Re-/Indigenizing**

The concept of mentorship was a prominent theme in participant responses both described and explicitly named. Participants shared stories about receiving and seeking mentorship, providing mentorship, and creating intergenerational knowledge exchanges. During a conference call, several participants agreed that there is likely an indigenous term for this mentorship-type of relationship however, further work is needed to correctly and indigenously define and describe it. In the absence of the indigenous concept and language to describe the mentorship relationship, the researcher will refer to it as *kapwa mentorship* as to acknowledge the uniquely Filipino cultural component of this mentorship phenomenon. This concept may be further built upon or shifted as future works elaborate and illuminate the indigenous Filipino mentorship relationships, principles, and concepts. In the mean time, the name *kapwa mentorship* will hold space and intention for such an indigenous concept to be articulated and codified while still appreciating what was observed in the present study.

The mentorship observed in the transcripts and discussed during the conference call seemed to be firmly rooted, if not predicated on *kapwa* (see Chapter 2), or the self in the other, through experiences of connection. Sue Donym describes *kapwa* as requisite in their work and mentorship with young people:

We can't get healthy unless our community is healthy and [this] path allows us to see the grander picture of having a connection to community, in *kapwa* .

Sue Donym's comments exemplify the *kapwa mentorship* modality as it is being practice amongst leaders of the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in diaspora. *Kapwa* actually seems embedded within the leadership and mentorship models, not as a novelty but as a necessary part of liberation. From the *kapwa* worldview, you are the other, you need the other, and you actually cannot heal completely without the other because they are also you.

*Kapwa mentorship* is exemplified by participant accounts, such as practices of providing witness, companionship on the journey, gathering, discussing, guiding, encouraging, and supporting the often painful decolonizing process. There is a sense of togetherness developed and experienced by the study participants. Many reported the importance of other people who helped them in their decolonizing and re-/indigenizing processes. Libulan described that:

Filipinos want to do things together. People want to feel like they are part of a *barcada* (group), they want to feel like they have an extended family, and they do.

*Kapwa mentorship* speaks to this sense that the work is done in connection with others, that the work is done together. Remijia elaborated:

I think...what we provide is sort of...companionship on the journey? Or witness? Just being a witness when somebody is trying to work on something and they just need someone to say 'I hear you, I see you, I see your, I hear you questions. I hear what you're struggling to understand.'

This witnessing seems to be a crucial element of the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement. *Kapwa mentorship*, the process of accompanying each other along the path enhances and enriches the lives of the participants, contributes to building community, and is an expression of the core Filipino personality concepts described in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (see Chapter 2). Several of the participants cited mentorship in aiding in their decolonizing and re-/indigenizing processes as well as the growth of the movement.

The emergence of these mentorship relationships may be connected to colonial violence and the disruption of the pre-contact apprenticeship protocols. The phenomenon of mentorship relationships emerged out of a communal need. In pre-colonial times systems of culturally specific knowledge transmissions were likely dependent on elders that provided guidance and maintained knowledge within a tribal context.

**II. a) Seeking, receiving, & providing Kapwa Mentorship:** “Those four women all embraced this young woman” (Rufino). Participants spoke about their experiences seeking out, receiving, and providing *kapwa mentorship*. A few of the participants reported their experiences shortly after the internet became available, searching for Filipinos engaged in critical discourses through chat rooms and community boards. Participants discussed searching for mentors at their colleges, at conferences, and within activist groups. While some participants received important guidance and support from non-Filipino mentors and also from Filipinos not engaged with decolonizing and re-/indigenizing there seems to be critical or special about connecting in with mentorship within the movement. Rufino reported the moment they found the *kapwa mentorship* they had been searching for:

Those four women all embraced this young woman, who was searching, and I had phone conversations with every single one of them, and emails back and forth, and they recommended books to me, offered me this new perspective of what it meant to learn about my colonial identity, and what it meant to deconstruct that. And then they cracked open this entire thing in me about what it meant to be Filipina down to the core. Not in terms of just histories, but it was really about how Filipina was my identity in my spirit, the way I breathed in the world and walked through the world, the way I saw things, all these values, that were the base of the way that I lived and the way that I questioned the world since I was a child. How it was connected to who we are.

Participants also discussed providing *kapwa mentorship* for other people, both in and out of the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos. These included descriptions of *kapwa mentorship* in work at schools, universities, community organizations, parenting, performance art, and in relationships with peers. Though there are numerous projects lead by study participants, it was difficult to find a quote that depicted the participants directly discussing how they mentor people. This may be due to the Filipino culture of humility, for example, Filipinos are less likely to claim the identity as a mentor than Westerners. Instead, the researcher has selected a quote from Remijia that demonstrates the way *kapwa mentorship* seems to have functioned in community:

I think [Western] notions of leadership [have] to do with the hierarchy, top down. When I come from the indigenous point of view, where they say if I have to tell you what to do, that means I'm not a good leader... leaders have to lead by

example or leaders have to be servants before they are leaders. You know so I think CfBS has grown or is perceived as having achieved something by initiating this movement, helping people in their processes. I think part of that has to do with the way that we practice *kapwa*. We already understand the importance of building relationships before anything else. So we invest in relationships before we invest in anything else.

Remijia's perspective highlights the way that indigenous ways inform *kapwa mentorship*. Remijia is stating that CfBS has, as a whole, mentored, or lead, the community by demonstrating decolonizing and re-/indigenizing values. In this way, *kapwa mentorship*, perhaps, is a method of leading by example while prioritizing relationships over outputs.

**II. b) Intergenerational knowledge exchange: “That's so healing when you can listen to an elder” (Rufino).** The researcher observed participant discussion, for example Rufino in the above quote, of projects and experiences related to healing aspects of intergenerational knowledge exchange. The *Pamati*, an event, organized by CfBS involved the coming together of diasporic Filipinos and indigenous *Babaylans*, or healers, in the homeland. The event focused on the diasporic Filipinos listening to their elders. Eugenia, a participant in their sixties, described:

...we had the *Pamati*, just listening to the elders organized by CfBS and [community member] and we had the *Babaylans* coming to a place altogether... and then we were there to listen to them, diasporic Filipinos. There were some from the U.S. and some from Canada and [we] listened to our elders.

Eugenia's comments point to the fulfillment of underlying community need to have mentors in decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. The group traveled to the Philippines to meet with indigenous *Babaylans* in order to receive such mentorship and in an effort to receive intergenerational knowledge as one might have done prior to colonization. Bit-bit, the founder of the Bangka Journey, stated that the canoe builders used to have an apprenticeship system such that the knowledge was passed from generation to generation. Bit-bit fortunately connected with an elder via a friend who still remembered some of the ancestral protocols during their re-/indigenizing process.

Eugenia also described their projects that involved reconnecting the young and the old through story telling protocols. Eugenia developed a couple of interventions to that end including a project where students retrieved stories from elders and then produced them into staged performances for the community:

I asked my students to interview elders. They [could be] tribal leaders or tribal elders or elders from their families and...transform those stories from the elders to stories that they could stage or tell and share with students from elementary or high school. I was cited for that too because I was...promoting indigenous culture because of the tribes and the stories of the tribes and sharing that with the youth. So it was like transferring of indigenous culture from the elders, tribal elders, to the youth of the city.

Eugenia reported these types of intergenerational knowledge exchanges to be quite restorative and healing. Participants identified the internet as a resource in promoting knowledge preservation and exchange for the younger generations as well as the need to

develop decolonizing and re-/indigenizing children's books to pass on ancestral stories and wisdom.

Conference call participants identified that ancestral apprenticeship systems continue to exist within the Schools of Living Traditions, a government sponsored program that promotes preservation of cultural ways, in the Philippines. They stated that the apprenticeship system currently relies on tacit or implicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge contains unspoken knowledge that is understood within the context of a community by the community members. This is another place that would benefit from indigenizing research to codify and articulate these knowledge systems.

### **III. Trajectory of Growth**

The participants described a personal trajectory of growth with regard to their involvement in the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing work as well as the growth of a movement. Participants shared about where they came from, their initial critical analyses, their introductions to decolonizing and re-/indigenizing, and where they currently reside with regard to critical discourse. Participants also conveyed stories of the early days of the Filipino decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement. Some respondents recounted watching the movement grow over time. Participants also observed a trajectory growth in analysis among their family and friends.

**III. a) Growth in individual critical analysis: “In a formal way, I probably started decolonizing when I started identifying as a feminist” (Libulan).** Several participants, like Libulan, described themselves prior to the time that they became involved in the decolonizing and re-indigenizing movement. Participants recounted their

discovery critical discourses such as racism, sexism, hip-hop, Filipino pride, as well as the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines, to name a handful. Ralph shared:

Being aware of the racial hierarchies here in the United States, and how that has contributed to the continued oppression of African Americans, Latinos, people of color in general. Before I started consciously decolonizing, I started on the path of being aware of the struggles of other communities as well, and drawing parallels. Our shared struggles, we're all in this same boat, because of colonization and the history of slavery, we have a lot of shared histories with Latin American countries, with the native tribal folks here.

Ralph describes their growing awareness of the human consequences experienced globally as a result of the economic strategies of domination employed for wealth accumulation.

Several participants also described a continued growth in analysis, beyond that of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. Participants reported a concern for climate change and for indigenous peoples generally and also specifically those in the Philippines. Many participants reported continued growth or exploration of their spiritual practice, art, and advocacy for others. Ralph continued:

...once you get to that level of understanding, the Filipino psyche, what makes you tick as a people, then you develop this deep concern for advocating for people back home. And inspiring others to deepen their understanding of how we can inspire Filipinos back home too. Not always looking to the West, to the U.S., to Europe, to Canada for trends... It's really powerful when people in the Philippines



see the work that decolonizing and re-indigenizing Filipino Americans are doing...That we are celebrating the T'boli children, that we place value on them, when they see that, it's kind of like a mirror to themselves, that, "Oh, we have value, we don't have to want to be American, or White or whatever." That our own culture, our own traditions have value, to lift that up, and make that a more central piece of what being Filipino is like.

**III. b) Growth of a movement.** The participants described evidence and their sense of a growing movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. Some of the participants had specific knowledge about this history including prior to the use of the terms decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. Remijia described witnessing the emergence of organizations and projects inspired by CfBS:

But you can also see that when we start planting seeds and then people start, branching out and doing their own thing

Sue Donym described their vision for continued growth of the movement:

we also have to stop thinking of ourselves as very strict racial terms and start seeing us as all like products of colonization...and then start making multi-ethnic indigenous communities...that benefit and prosper from the fact that there's all these different...identities that are co-mingling and cohabitating.

Such attitudes represent a growth in the analysis to move beyond identity politics as well as a desire for the movement to benefit people of all races and identities. Several participants also explicitly stated that this is becoming a movement or their desire for it to be a movement. Ralph said:

[I am] hoping that there will be a movement to make it more mainstream, and that people will just get it.

#### **IV. Colonial Mentality and Racism**

The participants also described experiences and witnessing of Colonial Mentality (CM; see Chapter 2) and racism. In many examples, participants referred explicitly to CM in combination with a description of events. Examples of racism were represented as descriptions of specific events. Examples of CM were noted as attitudes and beliefs that emerge from within the person. On the other hand, examples of racism were experiences of encountering racism that happen within the person's environment or social setting.

**IV. a) Colonial mentality: "I grew up...looking to the West for everything" (Ralph).** Participants both explicitly named CM as a factor and also described, as Ralph did, experiencing or witnessing examples of one or more of the five CM factors: 1) a sense of cultural inferiority; 2) discrimination against other Filipinos; 3) preferring typically White physical characteristics to Filipino ones; 4) a sense of shame and embarrassment about culture; and 5) "colonial debt," a belief that Filipinos are indebted to the colonizers for bettering the culture (see Chapters 1 and 2). All five of the CM factors were represented within the participant responses, but the most prominent factor was the sense of cultural inferiority, followed by preferring typically White physical characteristics.

**IV. a) i. Cultural inferiority: "Everything American...was better...than what we have to offer, as a people, as a culture" (Ralph).** Cultural inferiority came through in participant accounts of their lived experiences, as Ralph recounted above. Multiple

immigrant participants described that their childhoods in the Philippines as preparations for moving to the U.S., for example, frequent conversations about their future in U.S., learning English, and consuming media from the U.S. Absent from the narratives provided are was discussions within the families about the rich offerings in Filipino culture or analysis of the colonial forces that caused the impoverishment contributing to migratory impulses. Such positioning is consistent with the cultural inferiority concept and is a consequence of colonial domination and subjugation of Filipino cultures (see Chapter 2). Ralph talked about life growing up in the Philippines:

I've always been aware of colonial mentality among our people growing up back home...I feel like my life, up until moving to the States, was a big preparation for our eventual life here. I learned English in kindergarten, watched American T.V. shows, read American literature, stories and poems, American authors you know, things like that. So I grew up with colonial mentality, with people looking to the West for inspiration, looking to the West for everything. Feeling that everything American, or everything European was better than what's locally made, or what we have to offer as a people, as a culture.

The ramifications of widespread lack of appreciation or love for ones' own culture coupled with the elevation of the Western world point to a deep and tangible psychological harm inflicted on the colonized. The quote above, conveys the visceral and intense quality of idolizing a culture that one does not belong to. The automaticity of and deeply rooted nature of this inferiority is quite problematic and likely contributes to the mental health disparities experienced by Filipinos (see Chapter 2).

***IV. a) ii. Physical characteristics: “[I felt] ugly because of my skin color”***

***(Eugenia).*** The sense of physical inferiority is also deeply damaging to the minds of Filipinos, and encourages harmful practices in attempt to achieve a more White/Western physical appearance. In the physical characteristics CM factor, Filipinos automatically experience and believe themselves to be unattractive and unappealing due to their natural and predominantly unalterable physical traits. Eugenia, quoted above, described being taunted by their peers growing up in the Philippines due to their darker skin. The criticism was common in the participants’ own family as well.

Such constant, repetitive external experiences are then internalized, becoming part of a person’s thought process. This cruel internal reality even affects Colibri, who is consciously decolonizing, re-/indigenizing, and working towards uprooting CM in their own life and mind. Colibri reported the surfacing of a desire to alter their skin color when they learned of a skin-whitening agent prevalent in the Philippines that can be added directly to the blood stream:

I found out...women now inject, into [their] bloodstream, whitening stuff. You can actually just inject it into your bloodstream and become White...I know, intellectually, that this is awful and even in my heart that is not something that I would do. But, because my family had this idea, White is great, even I had that thought “maybe I could try that.” I literally had that thought when I was in the Philippines.”

The deep and insidious nature of CM is highlighted in this example, as it pervades the mind of a person highly motivated to uproot such harmful attitudes still experiences the effects of centuries of demeaning and dehumanizing actions.

***IV. a) iii. Within group discrimination: “I still didn’t like Filipinos” (Sue Donym).*** Participants reported having attitudes of discrimination against other Filipinos as well as observing such attitudes among other Filipinos. The quote above describes the process Sue Donym went through, where they spent the early part of their life disliking other Filipinos, until they obtained education to understand that such an attitude was a product of colonization and CM. Eugenia recounted observing grief in another who realized that Filipinos living in the Philippines also experience within group discrimination:

She cried with the Aeta children, or the youth. She cried with them because...she learned that discrimination is not only something that she suffers here in the U.S. among the Blacks and the Whites and all the colors. But also in, the Philippines among the Aetas being discriminated against by their fellow Filipinos. And they cried together.

This example, highlights the pain experienced by those affected by CM. There was a shared grief, a similarity across cultures, languages, generations, and even across oceans of the wounds caused by being disliked by Filipinos for being Filipino. Eugenia connects the pain experienced with racial discrimination experienced in the U.S. The grief stimulated, for both the indigenous Filipinos and the diasporic Filipino deeply moved them all.

***IV. a) iv. Shame & embarrassment: “I want to get rid of my accent” (Colibri).***

Participants described shame and embarrassment as both internal and external processes. Some reported attempting to rid themselves of aspects of their Filipino culture, as exemplified in the quote above where Colibri stated that they shed their accent within one month of deciding to do so. Sue Donym compared their understanding of the Philippines to a situational comedy about immigration dynamics that aired in the 1990s in the U.S., “Perfect Strangers,” stating they:

...thought the Philippines was similar to how Balki described Mypos, super ass backwards and...every time I talked to my family in the Philippines I could hear roosters crowing... I thought the whole island was a farm.

This exemplifies the internal process, such as thoughts of embarrassment and shame about the life in the Philippines. The lifestyle in the Philippines, and by association, the Filipino relatives and ancestors were believed to be “backwards,” a demeaning description that also infers that life in the U.S. is more civilized than life in the homeland.

Other participants described Filipinos being shamed or shunned for displaying their Filipino culture, for example provincial Filipinos immigrating to Manila who were shunned for not exhibiting Westernized cultural traits. Ralph said:

During the 1980s in Manila, newcomers from the villages were often shunned and belittled for being “native” or “promdi” (from the province) – shamed for speaking Tagalog with an accent, not having the sophistication of city-dwellers, nor the taste for everything foreign, or even a Taglish (Tagalog-English) vernacular.

Ralph's experience of growing up in Manila demonstrates the external process of the shame and embarrassment factor of CM. It demonstrates the way in which Filipinos are shamed by other Filipinos for their cultural expressions and how such social processes are learned, reproduced, and perpetuated by communities.

***IV. a) v. Colonial debt: "I'm so grateful that the Spanish came and colonized us" (Colibri).*** The colonial debt CM factor was the least represented of the five factors in this sample, though it was present. Participants described observed complacency or gratitude for the colonizing forces that visited the Philippines. Colibri, cited above, reported that their father stated he appreciated Spain's colonization of the Philippines because it lightened the families skin tone:

I grew up with a dad that said, 'I'm so grateful that the Spanish came and colonized us...' well, he didn't say 'colonize us,' 'because otherwise we would have had really dark skin'.

Another participant observed many Filipinos not caring about or critiquing the fact of colonization in the Philippines. Colonial debt, as a CM factor, is particularly disturbing because it not only excuses the violence and brutality that occurred during colonization but actually idolizes it (see Chapter 2). It also asserts that pre-colonial culture was inferior to that of the colonizers and that it was in need of improvement, even if such "improvement" efforts were extremely destructive and harmful.

***IV. b) Racism: "As soon as I understood race, I totally knew that I was different" (Sue Donym).*** Participants reported experiencing and observing anti-Filipino discourses and list the potency of racism and an understanding marginalization as a

result. These experiences of racism are, at the very least, conjoined with, and may contribute to and reinforce CM. Sue Donym, quoted above, described being treated differently in the classroom growing up.

My White peers would get a lot more praise. And then, me and my Latino and African American peers, [were] shunned in the classroom from our teachers.

Eugenia observed that adult immigrants experienced the:

U.S. as a very hostile, very foreign, very alien environment, in part due to the racism experienced upon arrival, though this may also be partially related to acculturation.

In addition to these direct experiences of racism reported by participants, there are also indirect consequences of the overarching racist foundations of colonization, such as the impoverishment created through wealth extraction. The overall attitudes of colonizers were grounded in beliefs and actions of superiority, such as racism, and used such attitudes to justify brutally violent appropriation of land and resources. These effects of racism, though not frequently discussed as such, have material consequences on the minds, body's, and psyche's of Filipinos. One participant noted that their childhood peers in Manila, remain impoverished and as a result do not have time or space to engage in critical discourses such as decolonization and re-/indigenization. They further stated that their peers were not able to maintain familial histories, narratives, or stories due to their attention to survival necessities. Ralph described how the poverty experienced in the Philippines impacts contemporary abilities to engage with critical discourses:



...most of the people I'm still in contact with back home, are the people I went to school with, during high school. A lot of them are...grew up poor... so I don't think a lot of them have any energy to recognize this. To recognize decolonizing and re-indigenizing work, because they're so wrapped up in trying to make a living.

**V. Spirituality and the Ancestors: “You go Back to Your Ceremony. You go Back to Your Ancestors. You Trust Your Ancestors” (Waya)**

Many participants, like Waya, spoke of the importance of spirituality and receiving guidance from the ancestors. Participants reported experiences or knowledge of receiving messages through ancestral dreams, practices of asking for ancestral guidance, and relationships with specific ancestors in life and after their death. Waya continued:

I believe in the guidance of the ancestors.

This guidance from the ancestors, is not an abstract concept for participants, it is tangible and can occur directly through dreams and visions. For example, Bit-bit talked about, what they termed, a “dream-puzzle” that contained symbolic representations of elements and connections that would later be revealed in their decolonizing and re-/indigenizing work. Bit-bit described their process:

Through visions and dreams. Through connecting with mixed native and mixed Filipino, Visayan people and meeting up with indigenous people of this land [who] opened up their visions to come into my dreams. So I wouldn't say that I was looking to do a decolonizing project, it was things that were coming my way. I guess I was in this space where I was ready to receive it. Trying to figure out the

puzzle...of the dream and flowing with it. Following messages through dreams and connecting with people who are like-minded and supportive.

Bit-bit's "dream-puzzle" served as guidance and also a kind of map on their pathway, highlighting important pieces as they searched for ancestral knowledge and practices.

Remijia recounted that four leaders within the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement discovered that they had been having the same dream, which would eventually inform their work. For the study participants, the ancestors and communication with them, is not seen as an abstract concept, rather they are tangible guiding forces to be heeded and respected.

Receiving the guidance of the ancestors seems to rely on an intuitive knowing, which emerges in concert with ceremony, asking, and remaining open to receiving such guidance. Participants spoke about ritual practices that involved creating offerings or altars for the ancestors. This included both personal practices as well as practices observed in family or community members. Waya described their process of staying close to ancestral guidance,

You go back to your ceremony. You go back to your ancestors. You trust your ancestors. You trust that knowing. And as long as you keep the ceremonies going, and the ancestral connections strong, then it will unfold. And it will unfold inwardly and outwardly.

Several of the participants described ancestral guidance and wisdom unfolds in this way. The ongoing dynamic process of seeking to follow this wisdom was seen as highly important.

Another notable dynamic regarding spirituality and the sample was that 92% of participants grew up Christian and 75% grew up specifically Catholic. Interestingly, they have all departed in some sense from their spiritual beginnings and 100% now report a non-dominant or indigenous spirituality/religion (see section on demographics). This strong correlation may be due to the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing requiring unflinching analysis of the role of the church, particularly the Catholic Church, in colonizing the Philippines and the brutal and torturous treatment of practitioners of indigenous spiritualities. Though none of the participants spoke directly about this dynamic, it could be important for further studies to identify the relationship between decolonizing and re-/indigenizing and spirituality.

### Summary

Within this chapter, the demographics of the sample were reported as well as the themes that emerged from qualitative interviews with twelve leaders in the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement of Filipinos in the U.S. These themes were then compared with literature reviewed on the topic. The emerging themes were: 1) decolonizing, re-/indigenizing and survival of indigenous practices promote healing from and resistance to colonization 2) *kapwa mentorship* as well as promoting intergenerational knowledge exchange are important to the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos; 3) decolonizing and re-/indigenizing individuals and the movement they comprise are experiencing a trajectory of growth; 4) the five CM factors and racism impact leaders in Filipino movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing in the U.S.; and 5) spirituality and connection with the ancestors is an important and

tangible part of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing for Filipino leaders in the U.S. Further discussion on these themes can be found in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study documents the existence and growth of a decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement of Filipinos in the U.S. Five themes emerged from the data. First, decolonizing, re-/indigenizing, and the survival of indigenous practices are strategies for resisting and healing from colonization. Second, *kapwa mentorship* is practiced within the movement including, seeking, receiving, and providing *kapwa mentorship* as well as promoting intergenerational knowledge exchanges. Third, the individuals as well as the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing are experiencing a trajectory of growth. Fourth, Filipinos in diasopra are experiencing racism and all five of the Colonial Mentality (CM; see Chapter 2) factors. Fifth, and finally, spirituality and connection with the ancestors are important to the leaders of the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. This study and the emerging themes demonstrated that these leaders experience decolonizing and re-/indigenizing as healing protocols to remediate the trauma from colonization, CM, and racism.

The emerging themes add to the growing body of work on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP), CM, and Historical Trauma (HT; see Chapter 2). For example, the existence and recognition of *kapwa mentorship* practices builds upon the work of previous scholars, such as, Virgilio Enriquez (1992), Katrin de Guia (2005), and Leny Strobel (2001, 2010), who are among those to articulate and define indigenous Filipino core personality and values concepts. As well, the lived or observed experiences of CM, articulated in this

study, is consistent with the findings of E. J. David and Sumie Okazaki, who developed the five CM factors and the Colonial Mentality Scale (2006). Finally, this study also contributes to the growing body of work on HT and is among the first to utilize the HT framework specifically with Filipinos living in the U.S.

The trajectory of growth theme was not initially conceived of in the research design, however, in retrospect the researcher is unsurprised that it exists. There is a natural flow of expanding ideas embedded in decolonizing. For example, decolonizing by analyzing the harms caused by colonization naturally leads to the question of what existed prior to contact, thus commencing the re-/indigenizing process or exploring and returning to ancestral ways. Furthermore, returning to ancestral ways illuminates the ways indigenous Filipinos lived sustainably, in collaboration with the natural world, which then calls into question the ongoing environmental degradation and destructive practices of modernity (see Chapter 2). The trajectory of growth of the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in diaspora is also unsurprising and fits within the context of social work frameworks such as strengths, social justice, and resiliency. It is expected that impacted communities would reach for and achieve healing as individuals and communities. Healing from colonial harm by decolonizing and re-/indigenizing is a particular healing modality available and demonstrates resiliency of colonized Filipinos and, as it demonstrates effectiveness, would naturally expand and grow into a movement.

### **Summary of Study**

This study set out use decolonizing and re-/indigenizing research methods combined with phenomenology (see Chapter 3) to contribute to documenting and describing the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing diasporic Filipinos. Leaders within this movement were interviewed regarding both their personal lived experiences of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing as well as their experience of such methods within their communities. As community leaders, the participants' testimony also demonstrates some of the ways the community is responding to HT and CM. These leaders were then asked to review the themes that emerged from the interviews during a conference call with other participants. To approach this knowledge, the researcher started with the following research questions:

1. What cultural commitments motivate leaders to engage with decolonizing and re-/indigenizing work?
2. What cultural practices are they and/or their communities using or developing to promote decolonization and re-indigenization, and in turn contribute to reducing health disparities?
3. What resources and supports are needed to further the movement?
4. How is the work of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing connected to the homeland?

### **Cultural Commitments as Motivation to Decolonize & Re-/Indigenize**

Embedded within the emergent themes from interviews are some of the cultural commitments that motivate engagement in decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. Re-

/indigenizing, for example, demonstrates a significant cultural commitment, or a desire to know and understand the culture both in the present and also prior to colonial contact. Re-/indigenizing necessitates contact with surviving indigenous people, connection with the ancestors, and, in some cases, piecing together indigenous practices that survived within colonized / non-indigenous contexts or culture preserved and hidden within Filipinos and Filipino communities. Seeking indigenous ways is sometimes difficult and presents challenges due to hidden or less accessible information. Thus, the leaders choosing to re-/indigenize are thereby demonstrating their cultural commitment simply by continue this path.

Decolonizing also represents the cultural commitments of the participants. Several respondents described deeply painful processes of grieving the historical realities their ancestors endured. A few also mentioned the discomfort of analyzing and grieving the ways the ancestral may have colluded with the colonizers. Choosing to pursue decolonizing shows willingness and ability to tolerate grief and is seen by participants as contributing to individual and communal healing. Both the act of reaching back to reinvigorate ancestral ways and the act of grieving difficult realities illuminate the high levels of motivation and cultural commitment of these leaders.

### **Cultural Practices**

The twelve participants in this study, who are all leaders in this field and movement, described using and witnessing cultural practices, revival of ancestral practices, and discussed their expressions of indigenous Filipino personality concepts. The participants are contributing to and leading the movement of decolonizing and re-



/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. Several participants described community-based projects within the diasporic community that are focused on learning the crafts and arts of indigenous Filipinos. In addition to the example of the Bangka Journey (see Chapter 4) participants also described the Ifugao Healing Hut, a project lead by *mumbaki*, or shaman, Mamerto “Lagitan” Tindongan (see <http://www.bridginghomes.com/>). Lagitan’s project is helping to restore pride in ancestral science, engineering, and architecture as he is articulating and codifying the wisdom contained within the indigenous Ifugao hut design. For example, he describes the use of the pyramid contained in the hut’s roof design, which provides structural integrity and strength to the building. His work illuminates the ancestral practices and is seen as healing because it counters the colonial narrative, depicting Filipinos as inferior to colonial forces (see chapter 2).

Other community efforts to preserve cultural practices in diaspora mentioned by participants included individual and community work around weaving, tattooing, dance, *Kali* (a martial arts practice), *hilot* (a healing modality), and *kulintang* (a type of music based on graduated gongs). Participants seemed to value these projects for their contribution to knowledge revival and preservation as well as the healing they provided for the community. Participants also stated that the diasporic Filipino interest in ancestral practices may also heal communities in the homeland as it sends the message that there is value inherent to indigenous Filipino culture and knowledge. Ralph said:

As Filipinos in the homeland continue to look to the West for inspiration, CfBS exemplifies the clamor of Filipinos in the global diaspora to connect more deeply with our indigenous roots and support our indigenous communities in the

Philippines. Through the work of CfBS, I look forward to collaborations that amplify the voices of indigenous peoples in the homeland – across all 7,107 islands – and draw attention to the forces and circumstances that make it difficult for tribes to preserve and honor indigenous knowledge and traditions.

Ralph's comments were also echoed within other participant testimony and point to the desire of the leadership to promoting healing for Filipinos in the homeland.

### **Resources and Supports Needed**

Participants identified resources and supports needed in decolonizing and re-/indigenizing such as financial support, land, volunteers, and various training materials such as children's books, curricula, and a stronger internet presence, which is consistent with the work of other scholars [see, for example, Beltrán, & Begun (2014) or Duran & Walters (2004)]. Some respondents expressed that the resources needed already exist but need to be tapped into further. For example, the initiators of the movement are aging and moving towards passing leadership responsibilities to the younger generation of leaders. These newer leaders need to use and expand their networks of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. Other resources mentioned included strong communication, conflict resolution, cross-cultural, and leadership skills development. Finally, there was acknowledgement that poverty plays a role, especially for those still living in the Philippines, and that basic human needs, such as clean food, water, land, and housing, among others, are requisites for accessing discourses such as decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. The researcher also identified a need to make scholarly works, such as this one, more accessible to the broader population. It will be important to work with the

community provide the knowledge produced in formats that can be used by the community.

### **The Homeland & the Movement of Decolonizing and Re-/Indigenizing**

The homeland of the Philippines seems to be strongly in the minds of the leaders interviewed in this study. All of the participants expressed concern for the well being of Filipinos in the Philippines and included concerns, such as, climate change, which has begun to change the crop output in parts of the country, poverty, pollution, human trafficking, and CM. Participants expressed the importance of seeking the wisdom and listening to the existing indigenous leaders and culture-bearers. These indigenous Filipinos still hold the cultural knowledge and also still know how to live sustainably and in collaboration with the natural world. The leaders interviewed seemed to hold indigenous Filipinos in high regard and sought to work towards justice on their behalf. This included attending the *Pamati*, the event where diasporic Filipinos gathered to listen to the *Babaylans* (healers), organizing fundraisers to mitigate crop failures due to global warming, and advocating for the needs and concerns of the indigenous.

### **Implications for Social Work**

Social work, as a discipline, is a helping profession focused on aiding historically and persistently oppressed populations like Filipinos in the U.S. The movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing people is gaining momentum and credibility in indigenous populations and those advocating for them around the world. During a conference call with study participants, leaders within the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S., discussed the importance of this work as it relates

to social work practice. They asserted that decolonizing and re-/indigenizing are important interventions to heal the trauma of colonization and how this had the potential to affect micro, mezzo, and macro levels of social work. Participants stated that in order to make such impacts on all three levels, individuals at the micro level must do the work to decolonize and re-/indigenize themselves and that this will naturally change the mezzo and macro levels. The consensus was that you cannot share something you do not have.

There is a tension between perspectives that center change in the individual level and those who are interested in large-scale societal or policy changes. For example, questions of scalability arise when confronted with the sheer numbers of Filipinos in the U.S. who may be suffering CM and the other associated health and mental health consequences. If, as the participants suggested, decolonization necessarily begins at the micro level then effecting policy level change would be difficult to implement until a quorum of individuals have already commenced decolonizing and/or re-/indigenizing. However, it seems unlikely that it would be possible to mandate social workers to engage in any particular healing modality, theoretical framework, or perspective.

Another consideration is the favor given to “evidence-based” practices when determining best practices in social work settings. While social work concerns itself with cultural competency the data constraints around Filipinos in general and decolonization and re-/indigenization specifically currently limit the scope of influence available at the macro level of practice. For example, more data and documentation are needed to impact policy level changes.

Social work, as a profession, traces its roots to affluent, White, Western women, whose accumulated wealth is likely attributed to unjust global economic dynamics such as colonization. Social work is, therefore, also implicated in the colonial project discussed throughout this paper. Further analysis of this is needed and calls forward questions about the necessity of decolonizing of social work in order to advance social justice. At the University of Hawaii, the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work has approached decolonizing and re-/indigenizing through promoting indigenous social work throughout their program (University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2016). According to their annual bulletin, "indigenization involves a process of re-examining, re-orienting and decolonizing our perspectives in order to be more culturally inclusive, relevant, and contextual" (p. 5). Institutions such as the University of Hawaii have power to shape conversations about social justice and in particular the emerging discourses on decolonization. The bulletin touts their work with indigenous Hawaiians, as the original occupants of the islands, in moving towards decolonizing and indigenizing their social work department. Similarly, decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in diaspora must also turn their critical eye towards the occupation of the U.S. and their role within that. For example, how does the colonization and genocide of Native Americans in the U.S. relate with the colonization of the Philippines? Further, how does one make sense of the immigration and settlement of Filipinos in the colonized U.S. when the immigration dynamics were, in part, set forth by resources extracted from the Philippines during colonization? Most importantly, how can Filipinos in the U.S. best work towards justice on behalf of and alongside Native Americans. Finally, what other critical lenses must be

included in order to approach justice wholly (e.g., #blacklivesmatter, anti-transgender bathroom legislation, & we are the 99%)

Presently decolonizing and re-/indigenizing seem to be occurring primarily on micro and mezzo levels. Continued work on the part of individuals and communities is needed for greater impact. Decolonizing and re-/indigenizing are dynamic processes that are occurring within defined communities and as these movements continue to grow, the implications for social work will continue to evolve.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Filipino health, mental health, and interventions are exceptionally understudied, though the population experiences troubling disparities (see Chapter 2). The implications of this paucity of information dictate that many and various studies are needed to illuminate the true scope of the problem, the intricacies facing this population and its subpopulations, and to assess the efficacy of interventions before we can meaningfully shift the inequities faced. This research study has focused on an existing movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. who are currently practicing community-based interventions. Recommendations will be specifically aimed at research that can support and fortify the work already being done within the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement.

### **Document Healing Within Communities of Those Decolonizing and Re-/indigenizing**

For the study participants, decolonizing and re-/indigenizing were important parts of healing from historical trauma, CM, and racism. As several fields begin documenting the intergenerational transmission of trauma and other mental health concerns as well as

comorbid health impacts, identifying effective responses and interventions will become paramount to promoting health with those affected by historical trauma. Documentation of the interventions utilized as well as their effectiveness could aid in recognition of and implementation of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing as healing practices.

Participants believed there to be something specifically important about revitalizing ancestral practices as it relates to healing the effects colonization because they felt reclaiming their culture to be remarkably healing in and of itself. Other studies have given validity to this type of thinking, for example one study of helping professionals within the Lakota tribe in the U.S. substantially reduced feelings of shame and grief and increased a sense of pride utilizing a method combining ancestral grief practices with psychoeducation about HT (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1998). This reflects a desire to reinvigorate and relearn their ancestral ways that is consistent with the findings in this present study. Such a study could be replicated in the Filipino community and lead to further understandings of effectiveness of revitalizing ancestral healing protocols and rituals. This would both broaden the data across cultures and provide insights specific to the Filipino population.

The Colonial Mentality Scale (David & Okazki, 2006) could be a useful tool for further studies in evaluating the effectiveness of such healing interventions within the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing Filipinos in the U.S. as this scale was developed specifically for Filipinos. The scale could be used in a pre-test / post-test design, measuring CM before and after decolonizing and/or re-/indigenizing interventions. This could lead to insights into the clinical effectiveness of decolonizing

and re-/indigenizing interventions. Since the Colonial Mentality Scale measures specific factors related to the harms Filipinos endured during colonization, utilizing this tool could substantially enhance knowledge about healing HT and CM specific to Filipinos.

### **Indigenizing Research: Filipino Concepts, Social Structures, & Healing Practices**

Those who participated on the conference call repeatedly expressed the importance of seeking, defining, and understanding indigenous Filipino concepts, social structures, and healing practices. For example, while Western therapy can be helpful to process trauma, participants asserted that using ancestral practices would be more beneficial. This idea was also reflected in the interviews. Participants identified the need to further recover indigenous Filipino knowledge and language for mentorship practices, death and ancestor practices, and trauma-healing practices. These needs emerged from loose conversations and a more thorough needs assessment would benefit this knowledge recovery project. Great care must be taken when approaching such an endeavor. One of the contemporary harms indigenous people continue to experience, is cultural appropriation, or the taking of cultural ideas, art, or artifacts and using them as decoration or as a fashion statements. In order to avoid decolonizing and re-/indigenizing in a culturally appropriative way, it is important to approach inquiry with regard for one's own culture. The researcher, for example, is half Filipino and half White and attempted to operate transparently and respectfully throughout the process. As well, the researcher would benefit from conducting similar such inquiry into the other cultures and lineages from which she comes.



In any attempt to define these indigenous knowledge systems it is paramount to approach with indigenizing research protocols. As thoroughly discussed, this population has been harmed physically, spiritually, emotionally, and psychically by colonization and, specifically colonial research projects (see Chapter 2). Indigenizing research could help to remediate such harms and help to further define indigenous Filipino concepts and practices. One crucial element of indigenizing research processes is that the knowledge generated returns to benefit the community. This moves away from the extraction based research protocols used in colonizing research. Indigenizing research also seeks uphold and empower individuals and communities research rather than dominate and subjugate.

The member-check portion of the study identified a need to articulate and codify the practices around *kapwa mentorship* and what was previously fulfilled through eldership practices. Such eldership and mentoring systems were likely disrupted during the colonial projects. It was identified that the Center for Babaylan Studies is fulfilling a role of mentoring the community in decolonizing and re-/indigenizing. As well, an example was mentioned of an intact apprenticing system currently exists within the Schools of Living Traditions in the Philippines. The group discussed that such apprenticeship systems are presently relying on “tacit knowledge” systems or unspoken understandings. Articulating and codifying this knowledge would best be accomplished through decolonizing and re-/indigenizing research efforts.

### **Decolonizing and Re-/Indigenizing in a Multi-Cultural Context**

As populations continue to migrate and relocate around the world, the modern context is becoming more and more multi-ethnic. Decolonizing and re-/indigenizing is

also happening within many different ethnic contexts around the world (see Chapter 2). Jurgen Kremer (2013) has even developed decolonizing protocols specifically for White people, which he terms “unlearning Whiteness.” Many helpful frameworks for White people exist to engage in such work to advance social justice such as DiAngelo’s (2011) *White Fragility* and Nieto’s (2010) *ADDRESSING* models. Study participant, Sue Donym stated that decolonizing and re-/indigenizing in a multi-ethnic context is becoming more relevant and needed:

we also have to stop thinking of ourselves as very strict racial terms and start seeing us as all products of colonization and then start making multi-ethnic indigenous communities that benefit and prosper from the fact that there’s all these different identities that are co-mingling and cohabitating.

Documenting and evaluating multi-ethnic contexts of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing could also bring insight to HT and healing from HT on a global level.

In an upcoming conference, leaders from the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing diasporic Filipinos are looking at the intricacies of now living in colonized lands interacts with the effects of having been colonized as well (see [www.babaylan.net](http://www.babaylan.net)). This conference seeks to collaborate with indigenous people from North America in order to sharpen the analysis and critique of the multi-layered impacts of colonization. Such continued advancement in discourse warrants further study, inquiry, and documentation. For example, how could such endeavors enhance healing for both populations and how could this be applied to other multi-ethnic and complex contexts? Further inquiry could

begin to contribute to important advances in healing for colonized and disenfranchised people around the world.

### **Study Limitations**

Qualitative methods seek not to be generalizable but rather aim at producing understandings about the rich and complex picture human experiences (Padgett, 2008). As such, this study has obtained in-depth personal testimony that offers a window into the motivations, commitments, and psychology of the participants. As leaders within a community, their words also offer knowledge and insight into those with whom they commune and their voices guide and influence the larger constituency. Qualitative studies are, by design, rooted in the subjective and therefore do not produce objective results. In order to produce a reputable study, researchers employ strategies to increase trustworthiness and rigor. The researcher utilized audit trails (recording decisions made) and member checking (soliciting participant review of findings) to increase trustworthiness and rigor (Padgett, 2008).

Though the literature and the participants in this study suggest the importance of using Filipino languages and particularly indigenous Filipino languages as an indigenizing practice, this study was conducted in English only due to the researcher's minimal lingual abilities. One participant stated that the ancestral languages offer insight into the ways in which the ancestors viewed the world and made sense of their surroundings. Had interviews been conducted in Tagalog or another Filipino language, the participants may have altered their answers or may have been able to more eloquently describe cultural factors and values. Furthermore, as with many culturally specific

concepts, there may be no wholly accurate translation. This factor is partially mitigated by the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing methods employed in this study. Certain important texts on decolonizing and indigenizing work of Filipinos are only available in Tagalog and, therefore, the researcher could not access such resources.

Throughout the own researcher's decolonizing and re-/indigenizing process, leaders in the movement have encouraged pursuing further skills in the Filipino languages. This suggestion has been heeded however, the researcher's own familial language is Ilocano, not Tagalog in which much of the Filipino academic discourses are conducted. It seems that in order to both access the documents in Tagalog and return to the researcher's own ancestral language of Ilocano, two languages must be learned. In addition, the study was developed and produced in English, which will limit access to those with English proficiency. These limits related to the researcher's lack of language proficiency also impact the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the findings. Language shapes understanding, conceptualization, and, of course, description and analysis.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored the experiences of Filipino leaders in the U.S.-based decolonizing and re-indigenizing movement. The study aimed to be an example of praxis, utilizing the theoretical framework within the execution of the methodological approach. Based upon the volunteered comments of study participants, this aim was successfully approximated. Several participants stated that studies like this are much needed by the community and also stated that the process of the study itself was restorative.

The success of this research is likely predicated on previous scholarly work on the subject and within the community, as well as the existing relationships the researcher had with most of the participants, particularly that of Dr. Strobel, the director of the Center for Babaylan Studies. Dr. Strobel generously offered her social capital in support of this endeavor and guided the development of the project to be relevant and useful to the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement. This, combined with the growing relationships the researcher had with the majority of the participants, likely added to the depth and honesty of the testimonies shared. The researcher hopes that the knowledge produced in collaboration with the study participants may be useful to the impacted community.

## Appendix A

## Email Recruitment Letter

Dear [Name],

I hope you are having a great day. You have been recommended by \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name) at the Center for Babaylan Studies as someone who may want to participate in a thesis study regarding leaders within the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing movement of Filipinos in the United States. I am interested in talking to you to see if you might want to join the study, which would involve an individual interview with me for about an hour, as well as an opportunity to participate in a conference call with other participants to give feedback on the study.

About the thesis study: I am looking at the decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices utilized by Filipinos in diaspora.

A little bit about me: I am currently a second year master of social work student at CSU Sacramento. I am half Filipina and half Caucasian and have been involved with the Center for Babaylan Studies since 2011.

Should you be interested or if you have any questions about the study, please contact me via [joannalatorre@csus.edu](mailto:joannalatorre@csus.edu) or (650) 400-XXXX.

*Salamat Po,*

Joanna La Torre  
MSW Candidate, Division of Social Work  
California State University, Sacramento  
[joannalatorre@csus.edu](mailto:joannalatorre@csus.edu)  
(650) 400-XXXX

\*This thesis study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento on September 29, 2015. Approval # 15-16-008.

## Appendix B

### Individual Consent

#### **Project Title:** Decolonizing and Re-/Indigenizing Practices of Diasporic Filipinos

Researcher: Joanna La Torre  
 Master of Social Work (MSW) Candidate  
 Division of Social Work, California State University, Sacramento  
 Tel.: +1.650.400.XXX; Email: joannalatorre@csus.edu  
 Thesis Chair: Tyler Argüello, PhD, DCSW

#### Decolonizing and Re-/Indigenizing Practices of Diasporic Filipinos

You are invited to participate in a research study of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices of diasporic Filipinos. My name is Joanna La Torre, and I am a master's student at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), in the Division of Social Work. I am the biracial daughter of a Filipina immigrant from Nueva Ecija, Luzon, and a Caucasian from Washington State. Since 2011, I have been involved with the Center for Babaylan Studies, an organization "that seeks to promote all indigenous and spiritual traditions from all parts of the Philippines" ([www.babaylan.net](http://www.babaylan.net)). You were identified as a possible participant in this study because of your involvement as a leader or scholar in the movement of decolonizing and re-/indigenizing diasporic Filipinos.

The purpose of this research is to explore the processes, methods, and perspectives pertaining to re-/indigenizing and decolonizing healing practices of Filipinos. If you decide to participate, you will be asked for an approximate 1-hour interview, conducted by myself. You will also be offered the opportunity to participate in a conference call with the other study participants in order to review emerging themes in the interviews; this call should last about 2 hours. The interviews and conference call will be digitally recorded.

There are minimal risks to participating in this study, as the interviews could elicit a variety of emotions. There are some benefits to this research. Immediately, you will be compensated for your participation with a \$20 gift card to a book store. Also, the study is intended to add to the social work and allied health fields' knowledge base pertaining to culturally competent practice with diasporic Filipinos, and to increase the knowledge of cultural values of Filipinos related to decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices. Therefore, participants may derive a sense of pride from contributing to the advancement of such knowledge.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at (650) 400-XXXX, or contact my Thesis Chair, Tyler Arguello, PhD, DCSW, at (206) 353-XXXX or [tyler.arguello@csus.edu](mailto:tyler.arguello@csus.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant

in this research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, CSUS, (916) 278-5674, or email [irb@csus.edu](mailto:irb@csus.edu).

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your confidentiality will be maintained and identifying information will be accessed only by the myself and my Thesis Chair, as well the CSUS IRB in the unlikely event of a breach or audit. All data will be maintained in a secure, password-protected location and will be destroyed three years after the study is completed. In cases where interviews are conducted in an agreed-upon public setting (e.g. coffee shop or library), your confidentiality may be compromised.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be discontinued at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Joanna La Torre

Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent	Signature	Date
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### **Participant's Statement**

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I agree to be audio recorded for the purposes of the study. I have had a chance to ask questions. I may withdraw my consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask researcher listed above. I agree that the researcher may contact me via phone for the duration of this project to discuss further any information I have provided. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (916) 278-5674. I will receive a copy of this consent form. I can receive the results of this study by emailing the reseacher at [joannalatorre@csus.edu](mailto:joannalatorre@csus.edu).

Printed Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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Copies to:     Investigator  
                      Participant

\*This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento on September 29, 2015. Approval # 15-16-008.



## Appendix C

### Interview Schedule

*As these interviews are exploratory in nature and qualitative in method, these following questions are starting points for the interview and will necessarily be followed up for clarification as needed.*

#### Demographics

1. What is your gender identity?
2. How old are you? \_\_18-30 \_\_31-40 \_\_41-50 \_\_51-60 \_\_61-70 \_\_71-80 \_\_81-90 \_\_91-100 \_\_over 100
3. Where were you born? (If born in the Philippines) How old were you when you immigrated?
  - a. How did you / your family immigrate to the U.S.?
4. Where were your parents born?
5. How do you identify ethnically?
6. What is your profession?
7. What religion/spirituality did you grow up with?

#### Personal Experience / Knowledge on Decolonizing and Re-/indigenizing

8. How and when did you begin to consciously decolonize? Re-/ indigenize? Were you unconsciously engaging in these practices prior to that time? Say more.
9. What led you to become interested in decolonizing and re-/indigenizing work?
  - a. Is there a significant event(s) that stands out in your mind about it?
10. To the best of your knowledge and experience, what decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices are Filipinos in diaspora using?
11. What decolonizing or re-/indigenizing practices have you / are you developing in your community?
12. What do your community members say about the healing aspects of such decolonizing or re-/indigenizing practices?
13. Who in your family also resisted colonization?

#### Reflections on the Movement of Decolonizing and Re-/indigenizing

14. Why is it important for people to engage in decolonization and re-/indigenization?
15. What unique qualities of the Filipino culture could contribute to healing locally, nationally, or worldwide?
16. How are your decolonizing and re-/indigenizing practices connected to the people of the Philippines?
17. What additional resources are needed to advance decolonizing and re-/indigenizing for Filipinos?
 

For example.....

#### Health / Mental Health

18. What are the top health and mental health concerns for Filipinos in the United States?
19. How can these best be addressed?

## Appendix D

## Human Subjects Approval Letter



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK

To: Joanna La Torre

Date: September 29, 2015

From: Research Review Committee

**RE: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPLICATION**

Your Human Subjects application for your proposed study, "Decolonizing and re-indigenizing practices of diasporic Filipinos", is **Approved as Exempt**. Discuss your next steps with your thesis/project Advisor.

Your human subjects Protocol # is: **15-16-008**. Please use this number in all official correspondence and written materials relative to your study. Your approval expires one year from this date. Approval carries with it that you will inform the Committee promptly should an adverse reaction occur, and that you will make no modification in the protocol without prior approval of the Committee.

The committee wishes you the best in your research.

Research Review Committee members Professors Teiahsha Bankhead, Maria Dinis, Kisun Nam, Francis Yuen

Cc: Arguello

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