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Towards a Community College Pin@y Praxis: Creating an Inclusive Cultural Space

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by

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I started writing my acknowledgements in my head as soon as I knew that I was going to start my doctoral studies. I've written and rewritten this in my head many times throughout this journey. Each time that I would start my fantasy of giving acknowledgements, I would mention that I started it in my head right at the onset of my doctorate program. That was the one of the few constants of my writing fantasy as the acknowledgements would differ from one fantasy to the next. In retrospect, I now see that the fantasy of articulating my acknowledgements was an avenue for me to visualize the completion of my doctorate program. But what it also provided for me was affirmation that not only was this journey my journey but also that there are many that have journeyed with me and continue to journey with me. Thus, this work is their work. This achievement is their achievement.

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work and sacrifice. You have just earned a doctorate. Your support and love is a big part of this achievement.

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Much love and I look forward to continuing on this journey with you all.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lola, Dolores Bato Ocampo. To my Lolo and Lola, Manuel Tejedor Custado and Dolores Marinda Custado. And to my parents, Athenus Bato Ocampo and Nellie Custado Ocampo. #pavedtheway

Of course, this dissertation is dedicated to Trinidad Augusta Paez Ocampo, Nari Aya Ocampo, and Diem Lores Ocampo. #myfamily

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ABSTRACT

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Darder (2012), in *Culture and Power in the Classroom,* argued that a system of educational inequality is promoted through the consistent production and reproduction of contradictions between the dominant culture and subordinate culture. More significantly, she noted that these dominant and subordinate culture contradictions create a necessity for bicultural individuals to navigate the dialectical tensions between dominant and subordinate cultures and the processes by which education perpetuates dynamics of unequal power and reproduces the dominant worldview. Hence, she urged educators to challenge prevalent power structures and re-imagine the process of schooling as a more inclusive form of pedagogy, geared towards establishing and sustaining cultural democracy in the classroom.

This study responded to the call to work with a Pilipino/a student organization in creating an inclusive space in the schooling experience. The learning process for many Pilipino/a students has historically been steeped in a colonialist mentality and directed toward assimilating these students into the practices of mainstream culture in order to survive. This qualitative research intended to address the unjust issues rooted in the dominant structure of schooling and the persistence of a form of colonizing education that fails to incorporate Pilipino/a sociohistorical

knowledge and practices of knowing. More specifically, it addresses issues and tensions related to the process of biculturalism, which Pilipino/a students are required to manage in order to utilize their voice and lived experiences as a basis for action. The methodology of this study was influenced by Pagtatanung-tanong—a Pilipino/a equivalent to participatory action research. In utilizing this approach, the study was formulated through the voices of Pilipino/a students at a community college engaged in community building actions toward cultural affirmation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Driving home one day, my daughter tells me of a game they played in school called *around the world*. She explained that in this game one student would stand up next to the desk of a fellow classmate in her class. The teacher would then give the two students a math problem to solve. If the student standing up gets the answer correctly first, she/he gets to continue to move on to another classmate's desk. If the classmate sitting down is the first to answer, then that student would get to stand up and move on to another desk while the original student would then have to sit down. A student that gets to go around the whole classroom is crowned the winner of the game. My daughter conveyed this story with great excitement. She thought that it was a fun game. As we arrive home, I am happy that her experience playing this game has left a positive impression on her.

In my first year attending school in the United States, I also played this game. I had just arrived from the Philippines a few months earlier, and we played it in my second-grade classroom. My memory of playing this game is not as fond as my daughter's account. I remember doing well answering the math problems. But I also recall that when I would blurt out the word "three" for my answer, making my fellow classmates chuckle or giggle. It seems that my classmates thought my pronunciation of "three" with my noticeable Pilipino accent at that time was amusing. I understood then that the students were laughing because of my accent—an experience that historically has been only too common for many immigrant students who are forced to navigate the assimilative terrain of U.S. schooling.

I begin here in that this study is extremely personal. I am a Pilipino immigrant. I have lived with this identity ever since I moved to the United States. My identity as a Pilipino has singularly embodied great potential, along with many frustrating limitations. The other part of that identity, being an immigrant, has raised similar dichotomies, linked to both possibilities and barriers. Thus, in my goal to examine the Pilipino/a student experience, I, in many ways, was also re-examining my own lived history. I relived my story, with the hope that college students, living a similar path, could put the experiences and lessons learned to positive use.

I arrived in the United States at the age of seven, fluent in my native Pilipino language of Tagalog. Although I also spoke English, I spoke Tagalog with greater fluency. I do not speak Tagalog now 26 years after emigrating from the Philippines. I often wonder why I am no longer competent in my native language. What prompted me as a youth to disregard my first language and completely immerse myself in the English language? My recollections lean the rationale toward feeling the need to assimilate. Although this study will not focus on language, it will focus on the issues related to assimilation and erosion of culture that can occur in the process. Hence, I would argue that in my life this separation from my native language reflects an unfortunate aspect of the assimilative process, reinforced by my education in U.S. schools.

Today, I am the faculty advisor to a Pilipino/a student organization at the community college in California where I work. The Pilipino/a student organization at this community college had been dormant for over 10 years. It was during the Fall of 2013 that a group of students decided to revive the Pilipino/a student organization. One student in particular stated that he believed that Pilipino/a students needed to be better represented on campus. Thus, we pursued the revival of the Pilipino/a student organization.

Given my concerns for the manner in which assimilative educational approaches have been at the forefront of academic and social difficulties experienced by Pilipino/as, this study is an exploration of how the work of a community college student organization, guided by its intention to create a place for the bicultural expression of Pilipino/a cultural sensibilities, can support the unfolding of a Pin@y praxis. Given my own cultural and academic experiences, first as a Pilipino student and now as an educator, I acknowledge that I came to this study with particular assumptions—assumptions that I consistently evaluated throughout the course of my study.

First, I believe that this Pilipino/a student organization has great potential to positively affect student lives. Student involvement theory has suggested that involvement in clubs and organizations is related to higher degree completion, retention, and persistence measures (Derby, 2006). Second, I believe that through my role as advisor to this student organization, I can provide support to Pilipino/a students so that they may achieve the success they desire. Thus, my pursuit of this research is aimed at providing the students and myself as their faculty advisor the tools necessary for the empowerment of their bicultural identities as Pilipino/as and their academic formation as community college students.

Also central to my aims is an assumption that students can learn from the experiences of others in the organization and that they can utilize their community of Pilipino students for emotional support in navigating the academic process. Furthermore, the organization can provide academic support through the knowledge and insights that students gain from their engagement with others in the organization. My ultimate hope has been that the activities and programs that

arose from establishing this organization have and will continue to provide students a culturally affirming community college experience.

Lastly, it is important to note that, throughout this study, I will be utilizing the term Pilipino/a in reference to individuals with Pilipino/a backgrounds. This choice stems from an understanding that indigenous languages in the Philippines did not utilize the /f/ sound but instead would contain a /p/ sound (Leonardo & Matias, 2013). Furthermore, Leonardo and Matias (2013) argued, "The very term that Pilipinos use to identify themselves is part of colonialism" (p. 6). Thus, in an attempt to process this study in a decolonizing manner while being keenly aware of the politics of assimilation, I intentionally use the P instead of an F throughout the presentation of this study. Furthermore, it is intentional that the masculine term Pilipino is not privileged in this writing. Thus, I will be utilizing Pilipino/a to reference the Pilipino/a people. Similarly, I will be utilizing the term Pin@y as an inclusive term for Pinoy and Pinay. A Pinoy refers to a Pilipino American male while a Pinay refers to a Pilipina American female (Mabalon, 2013). Dawn Mabalon, in her work chronicling Pilipino/as in the United States, stated that these terms were initially developed to describe a Pilipino/a living in the United States. She also stated that currently, the term is widely used for any Pilipino/a regardless of his/her geographic location. Maria Root (1997), in her work also on Pilipino/a history in the United States, stated that these terms also carried class (poor), geographic (United States), and attitudinal (aggressive) connotations. Thus, the terms Pilipino/a and Pin@y will be utilized in situations that are not in reference to a specific person but are in discussions of the general Pilipino/a population.

Statement of the Problem: Cultural Imposition

Immigration, socioeconomic status, and the process of racialization play a significant role in postsecondary access to education. Many Pilipino/a students in the United States are in a unique position, in that all three factors are highly prevalent in their experiences (Bailon, 2012; Buenavista, 2010; Tintiangco-Cubales, Daus-Magbual, & Daus-Magbual, 2010). There are nearly 3.4 million Pilipino/as living in the United States, making them the second largest Asian subgroup in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). More than half of U.S. Pilipino/as are immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). This statistic indicates that Pilipino/as are the second largest immigrant population in the United States (Bailon, 2012). By and large, Pilipino/as are classified as low SES due to conditions of underemployment and demands made upon them as contributors to family finances, which lower per capita income (Buenavista, 2010). U.S. Pilipino/as, moreover, are generally racialized as Asian Americans who in turn are subjected to the model minority stereotype. This is due primarily to their perceived ability to be successful in light of many minority challenges (Bailon, 2012; Buenavista, 2010). The intersection of these markers, however, creates a unique experience for Pilipino/a students, often affecting or interfering with their ability to pursue, persist, and complete higher education (Buenavista, 2010).

As a subordinate cultural group in the United States, Pilipino/as experience conditions of cultural imposition and neocolonialism. For example, I discussed earlier the loss of language that occurred in my particular process of biculturation, as I attempted to assimilate into the culture of the United States. Antonia Darder (2012), in *Culture and Power in the Classroom,* critically defines biculturalism as "the process wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct

sociocultural environments: their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live" (p. 45). In my case, I was arriving with my Pilipino/a cultural practices and language intact as I tried to figure out how to operate within the cultural practices of the United States, where I was living. Similarly, Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of cultural invasion was at play during this my own experience with assimilation. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire described cultural invasion as the dominant culture's systematic delegitimization of subordinate culture's practices and values. It is the process of imposing a dominant culture over a subordinate cultural population, in which only the dominant culture is presented as valid and worthy of reproduction within the dominant culture of schooling and the larger society.

Many Pilipino/a immigrants that arrive in the United States are prone to disconnect from their Pilipino/a customs and values as they assimilate to ways of life in the United States (Litton, 2001; Prado & Church, 2010). Tracy Buenavista (2010) and other scholars (Constantino, 1970; Halagao, 2010; Leonardo & Matias, 2013; Nadal, 2008) have argued that Pilipino/a acculturation can be traced to the Pilipino/a peoples' colonized roots. The Philippines was under United States colonial rule from the late 1890s to the early 1950s and were under Spanish colonial rule for over 400 years previous to that (Buenavista, 2010, Leonardo & Matias, 2013). During this time of U.S. colonialism, as scholars such as Renato Constantino have argued, the mis-education of the Pilipino/a occurred. As a consequence, Pilipino/as had to adapt to the practices of the colonizers and abandon some of their customs in order to survive. The legacy of that historical moment of cultural imposition persists in continued practices of assimilation in the United States today.

Further issues addressed by this study are linked to the cultural imposition associated with the notion of Pilipino/as as model minorities (Buenavista, 2010). According to education achievement data on Pilipino/a students, 45.9% of Pilipino/a Americans age 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher, which is above the national average for all Americans of 28.2% (Bailon, 2012). Although these statistics illustrate that Pilipino/as are achieving in higher education at rates greater than the general population, Buenavista argued that the data mask issues of access and cultural imposition. Language barriers, immigration issues, and socioeconomic status are significant factors that impact success in higher education for Pilipino/a students (Buenavista, 2010). Yet, these issues are seldom considered in discussions regarding Pilipino/a student educational achievement (Buenavista, 2010). Furthermore, often ignored are the ways in which Pilipino/a values, beliefs, and ways of being are distinct from other Asian groups (Prado & Church, 2010). Thus, examining the experience of Pilipino/a students specifically outside of the amalgamating construct of the Asian American label provides the necessary contextual specificity to better address Pilipino/a student needs.

Research Questions

The aim of this research was to provide practical knowledge of how a community college faculty advisor can best serve a Pilipino/a student organization and to consider how a culturally relevant student organization can best serve Pilipino/a students in their quest for success in higher education. An important assumption that underlies this study is that a Pilipino/a student organization should provide a space for its members to experience a sense of bicultural affirmation and a greater sense of their history as members of the Pilipino/a community. With this in mind, the research questions that informed this qualitative study were:

1. How do Pilipino/a students perceive the overall impact of their participation in a Pilipino/a student organization to their community college experience?
2. What do Pilipino/a students identify as effective cultural resources, experiences, and activities provided by a Pilipino/a student organization?
3. In what specific ways do they express that these cultural resources have had an impact on their understanding of themselves as bicultural individuals?

The Purpose

The purpose of this participatory action research was to examine and address Pilipino/a community college student issues with respect to both their bicultural experience and success in higher education. This effort entailed a participatory process of creating an organization that fosters bicultural affirmation in ways that address the actual needs of Pilipino/a students. For the purpose of this study, I refer to this bicultural process as *Pin@y* praxis. It entails listening and responding to the voices of Pilipino/a students and their cultural experiences. It was a work of self-exploration on my part as the researcher and the students' part as members of our Pilipino/a community. In turn, the goal was to produce effective bicultural principles of practice for our Pilipino/a student organizations. Hopefully, the principles presented at the end of this study can be utilized by other ethnic student organizations also seeking to create conditions for culturally affirming experiences in higher education.

The Significance

Darder (2010) has stated in her work that sometimes people of color who are in positions to affect change are unaware of their ability and opportunities to resist practices that produce cultural imposition. Hence, this study was my own way of engaging and expanding my ability to

have an impact, as well as provide me the tools to affect change. As is evident by my earlier discussion, I equate losing my native language to losing a part of my native culture. In many ways, this study gave me the opportunity to regain cultural perspectives through my participation and leadership of the Pilipino/a student organization on my campus. Yet, I acknowledge that it was only through communal processes of group engagement that an authentic culturally affirming experience could emerge for the members of the Pilipino/a student organization and myself, as their advisor. In turn, the students felt a sense of ownership in the participatory process of this research. They benefited from learning about themselves and their ability to affect their community. Their experiences helped to provide principles, grounded in practice, for other ethnic student organizations to enact activities that affirm their biculturalism and, thus, provide a context for personal and social transformation.

Moreover when discussing the broader scope of education, a significant element of pursuing this study is that Pilipino/a student experiences are underrepresented in research and literature even though Pilipino/as are the second largest minority group behind Latino/as (Bailon, 2012). As such, exploring research specific to Pilipino/a students was necessary to bring greater exposure to the challenges and barriers that prevent them from succeeding in postsecondary education (Buenavista, 2010). As these issues were explored, the lessons learned can provide educators and students with the tools to better navigate the pitfalls of the educational experience. Key to the significance of this research is an understanding that the Pilipino/a student experience is unique (Prado & Church, 2010). Thus, their experience should be addressed as being distinct, in that generalizing Pilipino/as as similar to other Asians must be acknowledged as a dangerous and distorting practice. Hopefully, this educational research anchored in the specificity of lived

experiences can provide Pilipino/a students and the Pilipino/a community great benefits, as issues of assimilation have been historically considered to affect the education achievement of Pilipino/a students in the United States (Prado & Church, 2010).

Relationships to Social Justice

As evidenced by the literature, many educators relate social justice to the promotion and practice of equitable conditions (Baltodano, 2009). The core of my beliefs as they relate to social justice resides in the notion of personal responsibility to co-construct a reality that is based on the principles of equity and public good. In his writings, Freire (1970, 1983, 1998a, 1998b) stated that schools are not neutral sites. Instead, he argued,that schools could either function as hegemonic spaces that perpetuate dominant values or emancipatory spaces that enact democratic ideals of participation (Freire, 1970). In her analysis of John Dewey's work on the purpose of schooling, Darder (2012) stated, "Schooling in the United States should function to develop in students an ethical foundation for their participation in a democratic process and a critical understanding of democracy as a moral ideal" (p. 59). To that end, schooling as a democratic experience and space is critical to creating a democratic society (Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006) and hence, a Pin@y praxis.

Yet, several popular works of literature suggest that schooling as commonly experienced by students is a process that reproduces the antidemocratic power relations of the larger society (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). Zeus Leonardo and W. Norton Grubb declared, "Schools are supportive of the larger society, but more particularly, its class divisions between capitalists and workers" (p. 98). Their statement debunks the myth that schooling is an unbiased enterprise unattached to the realities of the oppressive nature of society.

In other words, the current process of schooling acts to segregate students based on societal markers of class, race, and gender dictated by dominant ideology for the means of producing an efficient labor force (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). This results in an experience that inherently creates inequitable opportunities for students. Horace Mann once stated that education is "the great equalizer of the conditions of man" (cited in Oakes et al. 2006, p. 7). Yet, as many critical scholars have argued, the process of schooling is antithetical to commonly held liberal notions regarding the purpose of education (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2012; Freire, 1970, 1983, 1998a; Giroux, 1981; hooks, 2003; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014).

The current condition of schooling is an inequitable experience perpetuated by societal and material conditions, as well as institutional factors that have become normalized and commonplace processes and procedures (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). The principles of social justice intend to reclaim equitable spaces for students so that education may be experienced as emancipatory rather than oppressive (Baltodano, 2009). Yet social justice is a complicated concept that incorporates issues of culture, power, and resources into its pursuit of practice (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2012; Scanlan, 2013). Educators working toward social justice must first define its meaning in order to be able to take action toward its ends.

Martin Scanlan (2013) asserted that the meaning of justice is individually contextualized but has surveyed that educators most commonly attach the value of equity as a defining quality of social justice. Yet, Marta Baltodano (2009) has argued that educators are limited in their understanding of social justice because they lack understanding of its philosophical principles and its connection to the global economy. This limitation in the understanding of social justice,

she further surmised, leads to incomplete knowledge that could fail to acknowledge the illusion of impartiality and the myth of equality, which hinder well-intentioned work toward social justice. Educators with limited knowledge could also fail to address the way schooling reproduces structural inequalities in society, which promotes advantages for certain groups of people whilst ensuring other groups remain oppressed (Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 2011).

Thus, it is critical for educators to adopt social justice standards as a means to establish goals and investigate the proper avenues to reach those goals (Andrzejewski, Baltodano, & Symcox, 2009). Social justice standards then could also serve as the starting point for theory to move into practice. In turn, this process of praxis symbolizes the movement of educators toward creating a more democratic educational system (Freire, 1970). This was the goal of a community college Pin@y praxis examined in this study. The culturally relevant practices of the Pilipino/a student organization, therefore, were explored with respect to bicultural principles that enhance greater social justice practices with Pilipino/a community college students.

Theoretical Framework

This research utilized a combination of two theoretical frameworks: critical theory of bicultural education (Darder, 1991, 2012) and *Pinayist Pedagogy* (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). First, a critical theory of bicultural education offers individuals the opportunity to explore their world as they deal with issues tied to the tensions of dominant and subordinate cultural differences. This theory is relevant when hoping to expose students to the possibilities of their individual and collective actions. To that end, it promotes understanding of each individual's role as a social agent of change (Darder, 2012).

In his writing, Freire (1970) asserted that our true vocation is to be human. To that end, Darder (2002) emphasized that the goal of educators is to struggle with others to create counterhegemonic pedagogical spaces that encourage bicultural students to enter into a process of empowerment in which they can develop their voices and social agency. This entails a process that supports their full democratic participation within the classroom and their communities. Moreover, Darder's (1991; 2012) critical theory of biculturalism is grounded in a critical pedagogical perspective that affirms the cultural lived experiences of students and their communities and counters the cultural assimilation and economic oppression of subordinate cultural populations.

Pinayist Pedagogy, according to Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009) refers to an individual and communal process of decolonization, humanization, self-determination, and relationship building described as creation of communities that humanize and liberate Pilipino/a students. Thus, the process of Pinayist Pedagogy as a theory and praxis is very much relevant to building a Pilipino/a student organization at an institution. Pin@y praxis, as conceptualized through this study, is where a critical theory of bicultural education and Pinayist pedagogy intersect to provide a relevant pedagogical framework for supporting Pilipino/a students in a culturally affirming manner, through their active participation in the co-construction of a community. In this case, the community is that of a Pilipino/a student organization in a community college setting.

It is important to note that a constructivist perspective undergirds both theoretical frameworks. Constructivist frameworks acknowledge that the realities of each individual are created through their own personal vantage point (Hatch, 2002). Thus, constructivist knowledge

of humanity can differ from person to person. Yet, constructivist frameworks also acknowledge that realities for each person are created in relation to another. Amos Hatch stated "that the truth is, in fact, what we agree it is" (p. 15). Thus, creating a reality that is sensitive and accommodating the needs of every individual in order for them to reach their full human potential (whatever that may mean to the individual) is possible if it can somehow be agreed upon by all of its participants.

Past critical pedagogical works have argued that schools produce and reproduce societal inequalities (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2002, 2012; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1981). Meritocratic ideals promote individualism and do not address the structural inequalities that may prevent someone from pursuing his/her true potential. Individual and collective student backgrounds, histories, and cultures are seldom considered within education in meaningful ways (Darder, 2012). Hence, this study supports Darder's notion that issues of biculturalism must be critically engaged throughout the process of schooling for bicultural students.

In combination, a critical bicultural Pin@y research paradigm will guide my research questions in a direct way. Although many educators are well intentioned in their practice to support students in their academic quests, many still believe in the myth of meritocracy, which focuses on instrumentalized measures of student achievement as the predominant determinant factor to success (Darder, 2012). A critical paradigm challenges this notion because of the abundant evidence suggesting that there are structural forces that play a significant role in student success (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2012; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). Thus, a critical bicultural Pin@y research paradigm guides my intention to challenge the processes of education that reinforce assimilative notions of meritocracy and perpetuate structural inequalities

within Pilipino communities. The findings of the research will be used to inform a critical bicultural approach to supporting Pilipino/a students through a Pin@y praxis anchored in the authority of their experience (hooks, 2003).

Furthermore, Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has had a significant impact on critical pedagogical theorists. Freire's notion of *conscientization* is a key principle of critical pedagogy and thus, to any critical bicultural perspective focused on the cultural integrity of those viewed as *other* (Darder, 2015). Inherent to this view is a process of understanding the world in order to create a more liberating reality—a key principle that guides my practice as a researcher and educator. I believe that individuals arrive at their realities through their sociohistorical experiences; but simultaneously their realities are constantly evolving and being reimagined and reinvented according to the social and material conditions they must face in their lives. Thus, I embrace a critical constructivist paradigm in an effort to support an educational context that can support the voice, participation, self-determination, and humanity of all people, with the hope that this study can support Pilipino/a students to move one-step closer to that reality.

Methodology

The aims of this qualitative study involved engaging the collective voices of students and myself, as the faculty advisor, to create the foundation for a Pilipino/a student organization. In doing so, it was necessary to utilize a critical research design and methodology that delineates the researcher-subject model. Accordingly, this study utilized a critical methodology rooted in a collective process of engagement. To that end, the methodology employed to answer the research questions was participatory action research (PAR). Participatory action research "seeks to

understand and improve the world by changing it" (Baum, MacDougal, & Smith, 2006, p. 854) and thus draws heavily from Freire's (1970) concept of praxis—the cyclical nature between reflection and action. As stated earlier, the process of praxis is necessary in supporting individuals to shape the world around them. Participatory action research is in line with this ontological stance. It is a process that includes the researcher and research participants to reflect and take action together while considering historical, cultural, and local contexts (Baum et al., 2006; Mountz, Moore, & Brown, 2008).

Participants in this study were and are members of a Pilipino/a student organization at a California community college and myself, as the faculty advisor and researcher. This work focused on the individual and collective voices of its participants. The "action" from this participatory action research was in the development of the Pilipino/a student organization and in the individual and collective action of organization members while pursuing this growth. The research process was the shared experiences in which the members of the Pilipino/a student organization engaged, with the intent to construct and transform the Pilipino/a student organization.

A critical theory of bicultural education grounded this practice so that participation in the Pilipino/a student organization was a biculturally affirming one. In concert with this approach, members of the Pilipino/a student organization and I participated in a process of continued reflection and action. This Freirian process of praxis aligns with the frameworks of Pinayist Pedagogy, which promote a decolonizing experience for Pilipino/as through community building. As stated earlier, the intersection of critical theory of bicultural education and Pinayist Pedagogy is what I have termed *Pin@y praxis*.

Participatory action research methods were used to engage the Pilipino/a voices of the members of the Pilipino/a student organization. Additionally, I engaged with each member of the Pilipino/a student organization as a group and individually. In doing so, the research process allowed participants to share their experiences and insights about their participation in the organization and to work together to develop protocols and establish activities for the future practices of the organization. The study also included opportunities for student interactions to be documented along the way. Finally, I kept a journal to record my on-going observations and my own experience in this process.

Limitations

The personal nature of this study may be seen as a limitation. Yet, I did not shy away from it. As I mentioned in describing my personal research paradigm, I believe in the co-creation of social conditions. Furthermore, Hatch (2002) stated, "Researchers are part of the world they study; the knower and the known are taken to be inseparable" (p. 10). Thus, I embraced this notion through my participatory action research design. Moreover, Darder (2012) argued that the bicultural educator's participation could provide a vital sense of bicultural affirmation and support for the formation of the bicultural voice among students from subordinate cultural communities.

Participating in a research study with Pilipino/a students as a faculty member also yielded several limitations. Because most of the data from this research was from a participatory process, the responses of the Pilipino/a student participants were affected by the dynamics of the faculty/student relationship. Furthermore, institutional policies that govern student organizations also played a role in the manner in which the students could approach their participation in this

study. In turn, the dynamics of power associated with my role as a faculty member and its ties to the bureaucracy of adhering to institutional policy were challenges that needed to be addressed in this study. Nevertheless, through the PAR process of our meetings and my general interactions with the students, these issues were intentionally attended to so that students viewed me, although a faculty member and researcher by title, as a participant *with* them throughout the process.

Delimitations

This study is not meant to be generalizable. It is intended to create a narrative of voices from one particular Pilipino/a student organization. The experiences that are shared could provide a glimpse into the Pilipino/a student experience. It is my hope that this study invites other educators to listen to and take action on the insights provided by Pilipino/a student voices. It is also my hope that Pilipino/a students will continue to use their voices and social agency to create collective opportunities in the future aimed at promoting a democratic education and a more just world.

Definition of Terms

Bicultural Affirmation: Central in the sphere of biculturalism in which individuals are conscious of their bicultural reality (Darder, 2012).

Biculturalism: Navigating dual cultures at the same time—one's own lived culture and mainstream culture (Darder, 2012).

Colonial Mentality: An internalized form of oppression resulting from the effects of a sociohistorical colonized past of a people (Strobel, 2001). This form of marginal consciousness adheres to dominant/subordinate power relations.

Cultural Response Patterns: The manners in which individuals respond to their bicultural existence (Darder, 2012).

Inclusive: A deliberate movement or course of action toward practices of solidarity. The opposite of exclusive or marginalization.

Marginalization: Specific ways in which individuals and groups are systematically alienated in the promotion of hegemony (Olsen, 1997).

Participatory Action Research (PAR): Research methodology that includes the researcher as a participant. The aim of this methodology is to enact some form of social change (Hatch, 2002).

Pilipino/Pilipina: A person that has ancestry deriving from the Philippines.

Pinayist Pedagogy: A praxis centered on creating critical Pilipino/a communities (Tintiangco-Cubales, Daus-Magbual, & Daus-Magbual, 2010).

Pin@y: A Pilipino/a typically associated with being an immigrant to the United States (Mabalon, 2013). Can be used similarly as Pilipino or Pilipina.

Pin@y Praxis: The intersection of critical theory of bicultural education and Pinayist Pedagogy.

Summary and Organization of Study

As discussed in this introduction, Pilipino/a students in the United States encounter many challenges in their pursuit of education. Issues of biculturalism play a major role in how schooling affects the subordinate student experience. Cultural imposition and issues associated with the model minority stereotype are also at play. Grounding a study based on the theoretical

frameworks of a critical theory of bicultural education and Pinayist Pedagogy, I sought to foster affirming cultural growth and to promote social change.

Moving forward, in Chapter 2 I focus more substantially on the literature dealing with the issue of biculturalism in education. I review literature that speaks to the marginalization of specific groups along with the silencing effects of cultural imposition. I discuss the process of giving students a platform to share their voice through emancipatory education, which suggests moving away from what Freire (1970) termed *banking education,* whereby students are mere entities into which educators deposit their knowledge. I also review literature that discusses more extensively the role of colonization in the formation of Pilipino/a identity in the United States and the influence that being associated with Asian Americans and the model minority stereotype play. Finally, I review literature that focuses on the support that ethnic student organizations provide for students in higher education.

In Chapter 3, I outline the processes associated with participatory action research (PAR). I also make the case for the use of a qualitative research approach in this study along with describing the methods of PAR that I were employed in this study. In Chapter 4, I present the findings of the research derived from the PAR process. In Chapter 5, I critically analyze data in the form of participant observations and the researcher's journal. Furthermore, I provide a careful discussion of the research findings garnered from the study and posit important claims regarding the establishment of Pin@y praxis within a Pilipino/a student organization. Finally, I provide a summary of the study and include critical bicultural pedagogical and organizational strategies and recommendations for a Pin@y Praxis that can serve the work of other Pilipino/a student organizations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine and address Pilipino/a student issues in education, focusing specifically on the experiences of students at a community college. This chapter reviews literature that facilitates a better understanding of the Pilipino/a student context in education. The underlying phenomenon that this dissertation explored is the manner in which traditional schooling perpetuates the reproduction of social inequities that marginalize those not in the dominant sphere (Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 1991, 2012; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). Hence, it is a necessary to review literature that examines those educational practices that support inequalities in schooling, so that the magnitude of the issues that impact minority students and more specifically Pilipino/a students can be recognized, identified, and engaged.

As reinforced by Freire's (1970, 1983, 1998a) writings on educational inequality, education is not neutral; nor does it operate in isolation from larger societal functions. Education is considered, then, instrumental to the process of both social reproduction and reconstruction. Therefore, political, economic and cultural issues within the broader societal realm must first be explored in order to address issues in education given that education is a direct byproduct of the societal context in which it is produced. To that end, I first review literature that explores the connections among oppression, democracy, and education.

After reviewing the broader context of education and society, I review the literature that is specific to the experiences of Pilipino/a students. Several scholars have noted that the Pilipino/a student experience is unique and must be recognized as such in order to address that

group's specific issues (Maramba, 2008; Prado & Church, 2010). To meet that need, I examine the social and historical context of the Pilipino/a peoples' participation in education. I review literature that explores the history of the Philippines as a colonized nation and people. I then connect this history to the process of identity formation for Pilipino/as living in the United States. I am using the literature in this section to serve as the conduit to better understand the sociohistorical context of the Pilipino/a student experience and to later frame my analysis of the data collected. I then lay out the principles of Pinayist Pedagogy as conceptualized by Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales and Jocyl Sacramento (2005), whose ideas regarding community building in Pilipino/a communities provide a framework in which to critically navigate an educational terrain steeped in colonial manipulation.

Lastly, as stated earlier, this study specifically examined the role that a Pilipino/a student organization can play in supporting student members through the process of creating a bicultural context at a community college. Because this study was specific to a Pilipino/a student organization, I reviewed the literature that discusses ethnic student organizations and their effect on the educational experience of bicultural students in higher education. In doing so, I believe that the totality of the literature review encompasses the necessary background to comprehend the milieu in which this study was conducted. Furthermore, the literature discussed in this section represents relevant works in the field that explore the social and educational needs of Pilipino/a students.

Bicultural Context of Education

Many scholars have argued that education is a political space where asymmetrical relations of power are wielded (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Constantino, 1970; Darder, 1991, 2012;

Freire, 1970; Halagao, 2010). Furthermore, these scholars have highlighted the manner in which education contributes to the marginalization of specific groups of people. This section examines the relevant literature on the process of education and its effect on societal conditions—in particular, the concept of culture and its relationship to power are discussed.

Link Between Culture and Power

In Darder's (1991, 2012) seminal work *Culture and Power in the Classroom,* she explored the process of schooling and pedagogical practices that support and maintain hierarchal dynamics of power in society. She argued that schools, through the production and reproduction of a dominant culture, promote a system of inequality. In articulating how and why a dominant and subordinate culture are perpetuated, Darder (2012) explained:

> Generally speaking the dominant culture refers to ideologies, social practices, and structures that affirm the central values, interests, and concerns of those who are in control of material and symbolic wealth in society. The subordinate culture refers to groups who exist in social and material subordination to the dominant culture. (p. 28)

With this in mind, Darder (2012) has described the role of schooling in the process of social production and reproduction shaped by the manner in which the dominant culture is transmitted through educational practices. Moreover, she posited the necessity for bicultural individuals to navigate the dialectical tensions between dominant and subordinate cultures and the processes by which education perpetuates dynamics of unequal power and reproduces the dominant worldview. Many scholars similarly support the view that education has been used to support the interests of a ruling class (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Constantino, 1970; Giroux, 1981; Olsen, 1997). In light of culturally oppressive practices of education, Darder (2012) has urged educators

to challenge prevalent power structures and reimagine the process of schooling so that it may produce a more inclusive form of pedagogy geared toward establishing and sustaining cultural democracy in the classroom.

Darder's (2012) work is valuable to a critical examination of education because of her analysis and articulation of the deep connection between culture and power. Her utilization of culture as a unit of analysis allows for a significant depth of exploration into the oppressive practices in schooling. Also, it is significant to note that her work emphasizes a dialectical understanding of culture, which moves away from essentializing culture as a static entity. As such, culture can be analyzed and understood as a historical, political, and contextual phenomenon linked to the navigation of dominant/subordinate relations of power. With the groundwork of a dialectical understanding of culture, Darder's (2012) work clearly underscores the need for cultural democracy while addressing a multitude of intersecting elements including class, race, and gender along with social markers of inequality that play a role within the power-based struggles of society. More significantly, Darder's (2012) work urges educators to develop a *critical bicultural pedagogy,* which proposes creating the necessary space for bicultural individuals to address the intersecting variables that affect the structures of domination. Furthermore, Darder's (2012) concept of critical bicultural pedagogy sets a foundation for educators and students alike to address the needs of bicultural individuals struggling to navigate the tensions of dominant and subordinate cultures.

Hegemony and Ideology

As stated, Darder's (2012) ideas have been significant in both linking culture and power to the phenomenon of biculturalism, and articulating a bicultural framework for education to

contest fundamental inequalities experienced by minority students. In order, however, to gain a better understanding of the process of biculturalism and its impact on students' lives, it is important to explore the relationship between ideology and hegemony. Critical scholars have emphasized ideology and hegemony as significant in perpetuating forms of oppression (Darder, 1991, 2012; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1981; Gramsci, 1971). Within this context, ideology is considered to be what gives meaning and structure to people's experiences in relation to the formulation and expression of consciousness. Critical scholars have argued that schools are sites that produce and reproduce biased ideologies that benefit dominant groups (Darder, 1991, 2012; Giroux, 1981; Gramsci, 1971).

Henry Giroux's (1981) *Ideology, Culture, and the Process of Schooling* made a significant contribution to conceptualizing the role of hegemony as a system of oppression. Giroux (1981) has argued that hegemony "refers to a form of ideological control in which dominant beliefs, values, and social practices are produced and distributed throughout a whole range of institutions such as schools, the family, mass media, and trade unions" (p. 94). In other words, hegemony speaks to the larger societal apparatus in which cultural values are promoted and reinforced and to which individual are expected to conform. Hegemony conserves the status quo, allowing the dominant group to preserve its power and privilege in society (Darder, 1991, 2012; Giroux, 1981; Gramsci, 1971). Furthermore, as a result of ideological hegemony, popular perception and understanding of the world are formulated in ways that cater to the interests of the dominant group (Darder, 2012; Giroux, 1981). In light of this knowledge, critical scholars have urged educators to recognize the relationship between hegemony and power, in order to resist the politics of domination and the cultural imposition of assimilative forces on their lives.

Impact of Cultural Imposition

In *Made in America*, Laurie Olsen (1997) explored how schools impose dominant cultural values on students. Olsen's ethnographic work established a point of reference from which to view the manner in which the dominant ideology is transmitted in schools. From her observations, Olsen described the ideological stance of education in the United States, critiquing the ideology that informs the mainstream argument for a common culture. Although arguably a long passage, the salience of her ideas to this discussion warrants inclusion.

> The argument posits the fragility of our form of government, the fragility of our common culture, asserting the role of public schools is to protect that fragile bond by teaching a narrow and restricted set of beliefs as "national culture", to protect a single language (English) from erosion by other languages (specifically, Spanish), to project an individualistic perspective that success is a result of merit, and to maintain an emphasis on a Western and American dominance. It thus involves public schools in mediating, monitoring, evaluating and transmitting one version of public life and culture, while sidestepping other aspects such as equality of opportunity and exclusion. It is, furthermore, an ideology that defines "belonging" in terms of conformity and that relies on public schools to achieve that conformity. It is fundamentally threatened by diversity of culture, race, language, and perspective. It couples a concern with conformity with an emphasis on tradition. Finally, it is an ideology of individualism that defines outcomes as a function of merit and seeks to resolve social problems through the emphasis of individual effort…Together these elements create an ideological system that justifies current power relations. The dirty business of exclusion, of systemic oppression, lies

> outside the realm of this articulated ideological debate unless it is forced on the table. (Olsen, 1997, pp. 248–249)

In other words, schools in the United States are geared toward assimilative practices of exclusion rather than practices of inclusion. Thus, individuals that fall outside of what Olsen (1997) termed as *belonging* must either move toward conformity or face the consequences of marginalization. Furthermore, Olsen's (1997) observations are in alignment with the notions of critical scholars (Giroux, 1981; Gramsci, 1971) who believe that schools are a major player in sustaining hierarchies of power in society. In sum, Olsen's work has shown the ways that schools continue to be spaces in which dominant cultural values and ways of being are singularly promoted.

Expanding on the idea that schools are in support of a dominant culture, Olsen (1997) has suggested that one of the primary projects of schools in the United States is to *Americanize* students. In writing about the Americanization process of students and its practice in schooling, Olsen argued:

> In the lives of the students – immigrants and U.S. born – we have witnessed a social life among the young people on the campus in which their very desires to affirm who they are meet headlong with American racial systems, and where students abandon the fullness of their human identities as part of the process of becoming and being American. (p. 239)

This process of Americanization most impacts bicultural students and leads to a variety of *bicultural response patterns*, as they must now contend with the dialectical tension of dominant/subordinate contradictions in their lives (Darder, 2012). Darder contended that patterns associated with responses of assimilation, dualism, separatism, or negotiation are linked to the

manner in which students attempt to survive the assimilative curriculum of schools and society. In the process of biculturalism, Darder called for culturally democratic contexts in education, which can support affirmative response patterns in bicultural students.

As has been repeatedly stated, critical scholars have argued that the culture of schooling is intended to reflect dominant culture values and ways of being. As such, the mainstream culture reflects patriarchal Euro-centric historical norms, in conjunction with a capitalist political economy (Darder, 2004, 2012; hooks, 2003; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). Thus, individuals, and students, specifically, whose backgrounds and values fall outside of the prevailing patriarchal Euro-centric and class norm are forced to constantly navigate the inherent tensions between their primary culture and the mainstream culture, while contending with the consequences of exclusion. It is this phenomenon that Darder (2012) terms the *process of biculturation* in that it "incorporates the different ways in which bicultural human beings respond to cultural conflicts and the daily struggle with racism and other forms of cultural invasion" (p. 45).

It is also helpful to note in this discussion that although Olsen's (1997) ethnographic work focused specifically on the experiences of immigrant students, her insight into the broad objectives of schooling is significant in highlighting the multitude of ways that students are marginalized in schools. One such way—relevant to the tension of biculturation—is the manner in which schools pressure students to abandon previous national identities and language. In describing the bicultural tensions experienced by immigrant students, Olsen stated:

> immigrants face what feels to them to be polar choices between being accepted by becoming as American as possible (which includes becoming racialized into the lower echelons of an American hierarchy and giving up their own national and language

identities) and remaining marginalized and holding on to their traditional cultural forms (national identity, home language, and home culture). (p. 241)

Thus, bicultural students are forced consistently to navigate the tensions between the dominant and subordinate culture.

Reimagining the Mis-Education of the Pilipino

In this section, I explore the Pilipino/a experience within the context of the bicultural paradigm. I highlight the significant issues that prevail in the education of Pilipino/a students, with an eye toward reimagining Renato Constantino's (1970) seminal and often-cited work, *The Mis-Education of the Pilipino*. Through his research, Constantino laid the foundation from which other studies, which have examined the education of Pilipino/a students in the United States, have evolved. With this in mind, I draw here on writings by scholars who have expanded on Constantino's concepts and explore issues that are particularly relevant to Pilipino/a student experiences. The reimaging of this work is necessary to align the body of literature that explores Pilipino/a issues, so that it may serve as the foundation for a critical bicultural pedagogical articulation of Pin@y praxis. It is also important to note that although Constantino's (1970) ideas are specific to Pilipino/as living in the Philippines, many of the issues raised by Constantino regarding the education of Pilipino/a students is relevant to students of Philippine descent forced to contend with the process of biculturalism.

Colonialism in the Philippines

During the historical time period of the 1400s to the 1900s, many European nations participated in the colonization of territories throughout the globe. Spanish conquistador Ferdinand Magellan landed on the Philippine island of Cebu in 1521. This historical moment is

the starting point of over 300 years of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. It was during this time that the over 7,100 islands that make up the Philippine archipelago became known as *Las Islas Filipinas* named after King Felipe II of Spain. Subsequent to Spanish colonial rule, the Philippines became a U.S. colony from 1898–1946 (Buenavista, 2010). Thus, it is important to recognize the Philippines' colonized past in order to contextualize the contemporary Pilipino/a experiences (Bailon, 2012; Buenavista, 2010; Constantino, 1970; Halagao, 2010; Leonardo & Maties, 2013; Viola, 2014).

Broadly defined, colonialism is the process of expansion by one territorial power to other territories by establishing and maintaining colonies patterned after the societal practices of the colonizer (Halagao, 2010). Colonization provided great benefits to the powerful including the increased resources that expansion to other territories afforded. Although the process of colonization provided great benefits to the colonizers, colonization had negative effects for the people whose land and resources were appropriated and colonized (Barrera, 1979; Fanon, 1963; Enriquez, 1994; Halagao, 2010). Zeus Leonardo and Cheryl Matias (2013), in their discussion regarding this topic, summarized that "colonization encompasses a history of disadvantages, racial discrimination, social injustice, and biased education" (p.5).

Frantz Fanon (cited in Halagao, 2010) posited four general stages of colonialism that underscore its negative effects. The first stage of colonization is when a colonizer intentionally takes over a territory. The second stage is when a colonizer exploits, diminishes, and delegitimizes the culture of the indigenous people. The third stage is when the colonizer infiltrates the indigenous culture and replaces that culture with the colonizer's own dominant culture. The final stage of colonialism is its justification in the name of civilizing the

"uncivilized." In other words, colonialism is not only the process of resource acquisition through territorial expansion but also the process of conquering the minds, cultures, and ways of being of native people (Bailon, 2012; Halagao, 2010). Moreover, the notion of colonialism, as described by Mario Barrera (1979), is relevant to the process of biculturation: "Colonialism is a structured relationship of domination and subordination, where the dominant and subordinate groups are defined along ethnic and/or racial lines and there the relationship is established and maintained to serve the interests of all or part of the dominant group" (p. 193). Thus, understanding the phenomenon of colonialism and its impact on colonized populations is useful in addressing issues faced by bicultural Pilipino/a students in the United States.

Colonial Education

> *The most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds. Military victory does not necessary signify conquest. As long as feelings of resistance remain in the hearts of the vanquished, no conqueror is secure.*
>
> Constantino, 1970, p. 21

In *The Mis-Education of the Pilipino,* Constantino (1970) underscored elements of the colonized history of the Philippines and its impact on the Pilipino/a people. One of the significant issues that Constantino examined was the use of education as an effective tool of colonization. "The molding of men's minds is the best means of conquest. Education, therefore, serves as a weapon in wars of colonial conquest" (p. 21), he wrote. Constantino also posited that, on one hand, dominance through fear tactics could lead to resistance and violence, while, on the other, passive subjects could be more easily cultivated through cultural infiltration, whereby power is more subtly attained and maintained through hegemonic practices, and acts of

resistance and violence could be more effectively minimized or avoided. Thus, he argued that the colonial education propagated upon the Pilipino/a people utilized cultural infiltration—in conjunction with an assimilative hidden curriculum—as its primary mode of suppression.

Several Pilipino/a scholars have similarly noted the use of cultural infiltration as an active tool in the colonization of the Pilipino/a people (Buenavista, 2010; Viola, 2006). In concert with Constantino's assertion, Michael Viola (2006), in his article, "Hip-Hop and Critical Revolutionary Pedagogy," linked Constantino's ideas to those of the Italian Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci.

> Gramsci affirms that no matter how powerful or repressive a regime, it could not sustain itself through physical coercion alone. To legitimate control, the ruling class must direct and influence people to consent to their own oppression through a system of coordinated (political, religious, economic, cultural, and educational) alliances. Gramsci referred to the ruling class' combined use of force matched with their exercise of winning the people's consent (so that they will consent to their own oppression) as hegemony. (p. 173)

As previously noted, hegemony is the ideological transference of dominant beliefs and values through an ideological process of consensus rather than physical force (Giroux, 1981). In the case of the Philippines and the Pilipino/a people, Constantino (1970) believed that the United States used education as the primary means for promoting the dominant ideology and, in turn, perpetuating the physical colonization of the Philippines and the cultural invasion into Pilipino/a cultural worldview.

This process of cultural imposition then was accomplished through a system of colonial education that began shortly after the Philippines gained its independence after more than 300 years of Spanish rule. According to Constantino (1970):

> Thus, from its inception, the education system of the Philippines was a means of pacifying a people who were defending their newly-won freedom from an invader who had posed as an ally. The education of the Pilipino under American[1] sovereignty was an instrument of colonial policy. The Pilipino had to be educated as a good colonial. Young minds had to be shaped to conform to American ideas. Indigenous Pilipino ideals were slowly eroded in order to remove the last vestiges of resistance. Education served to attract the people to the new masters and at the same time to dilute nationalism, which had just, succeeded in overthrowing a foreign power. (p. 22)

Hence, Constantino saw education in the Philippines as a formidable ideological tool of U.S. colonization, which helped to produce passive subjects who were willing to cater to American interests. Other scholars (Buenavista, 2010; Halagao, 2010; Strobel 1996; Viola, 2006) have strongly agreed with this view. As such, Viola (2006) insisted, "The successful implementation of colonial education throughout the islands helped to create future generations of Pilipinos that adhered to the 'benevolence' of United States occupation" (p. 175).

Another relevant aspect of the colonial education imposed on the Philippines is that it was based on past models of colonial education previously employed in the racial *othering* of subordinate populations to maintain U.S. dominant group supremacy. Funie Hsu (2013), in her discussion of the history of racial politics in the colonial policy of U.S. education, contended that

[1] It should be noted that when Constantino uses the term "American," he is referencing the United States. I use American in the following sections in the same context.

the colonial education enforced in the Philippines was part of a broader scheme to maintain oppressive distinctions among U.S. subjugates. The educational models imposed upon Hawaiians, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans serve as several examples of the manner in which U.S. educational policy catered to serve the needs of dominant groups while suppressing subordinate populations. Hsu (2013) specifically detailed the models of industrial education that produced a gendered and racialized labor force for the maintenance of U.S. expansion in the Philippines. This mirrored the industrial education prominent in the southern portion of the United States after the U.S. Civil War, which also served to stratify the U.S. workforce through racial markers. In relating these historical practices of colonial education to the marginalization perpetuated by present day educational practices as described by Olsen (1997), it is clear that colonial education has persisted through to the contemporary moment. Thus, Constantino's (1970) assertion that colonial education is used as a weapon of oppression is still relevant in the experience of contemporary Pilipino/a students.

Cultural Invasion

> *Thus, the Pilipino past which had already been quite obliterated by three centuries of Spanish tyranny did not enjoy a revival under American colonialism. On the contrary, the history of our ancestors was taken up as if they were strange and foreign peoples who settled in these shores, with whom we had the most tenuous of ties. We read about them as if we were tourists in a foreign land.*
>
> Constantino, 1970, p. 24

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) expressed an overarching concern for the utilization of cultural invasion in the oppression of subordinated populations. Regarding cultural

invasion, he stated, “The invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter’s potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression” (p. 152). Freire’s statement relates to Fanon’s (cited in Halagao, 2010) four stages of colonialism in which the colonizer imposes the dominant culture over the culture of the colonized. Constantino (1970) also examined the role of cultural invasion by scrutinizing the forced consumption of American ideals by the Pilipino/a people. His work first contested U.S. motives when he critiqued American sociologist Chester Hunt in an effort to highlight U.S. colonialist oppression. In his writing on United States-Pilipino colonial relations, Hunt deduced:

> The programme of cultural assimilation combined with a fairly rapid yielding of control resulted in the fairly general acceptance of American culture as the goal of Pilipino society with the corollary that individual Americans were given a status of respect. (qtd. in Constantino, 1970, p. 23)

In other words, as a result of the promotion of American culture as the best standard of living, the goal for Pilipino/a individuals was not to be Pilipino/a but to emulate American ideals. This is manifested in the actions and attitudes of Pilipino/as. Constantino (1970) viewed this deformed expression of Pilipino/a consciousness as troubling in that it distorted Pilipino/a’s sense of being and identity.

Furthermore, Constantino (1970) declared that creating a Pilipino/a culture that uses American culture as a frame of reference worked to promote United States interests over the necessities of the Philippines and its people, thus subjugating the Philippine people to United States domination and exploitation. As might be obvious now, this movement toward U.S.

hegemony in the Philippines can be related to Olsen's (1997) contention that the principle goal of education for immigrant students in the United States is to Americanize them, thus supporting the idea that the Americanization of students is not specific to any one group of people, but rather is tied to dominant/subordinate power relations as Darder (2012) contended.

Language as a Tool of Dominance

> *English became the wedge that separated the Pilipinos from their past and later was to separate educated Pilipinos from the masses of their countrymen.*
>
> Constantino, 1970, p. 24

As previously discussed, education and the process of schooling serve as a platform upon which the production and reproduction of culture can be accomplished (Constantino, 1970; Darder, 2012; Freire, 1970). *The Mis-Education of the Pilipino* (Constantino, 1970) highlighted the role of language in this process. Many scholars have also noted that language has the capacity to create new possibilities (Buenavista 2012, 2014; Darder, 2012; Freire, 1970; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003). Yet, in the case of the Pilipino/a people, language was used as a tool toward distancing them from their indigenous culture (Buenavista, 2010). Constantino (1970) specifically explained how the use of English in education promoted American values and ideals.

> English introduced the Pilipinos to a strange, new world. With American textbooks, Pilipinos started learning not only a new language but also a new way of life, alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model. This was the beginning of their education. At the same time, it was the beginning of their mis-education, for they learned no longer as Pilipinos but as colonials. They had to be disoriented from their nationalist

> goals because they had to become good colonials. The ideal colonial was the carbon copy of his conqueror, the conformist follower of the new dispensation. He had to forget his past and unlearn the nationalist virtues in order to live peacefully, if not comfortably, under the colonial order. The new Pilipino generation learned the lives of American heroes, sang American songs, and dreamt of snow and Santa Claus. (p. 24)

The last line in the passage describing Pilipino/a's dreaming of snow and Santa Claus clearly illustrates the distortions that occur in the process of colonization. The image of Santa Claus possibly arriving on a snowy rooftop in the Philippines is as close to reality as the actual existence of Santa Claus itself, given that the Philippines never experiences snowy weather because of its geographical location. Thus, in such analogies to other aspects of the U.S. cultural imposition on Pilipino/a culture, it is evident that certain values and ideals will be culturally incongruent and incoherent. But with the use of English as the primary language of education, the native culture and sensibilities of Pilipino/as will continue to be in danger of erosion (Constantino, 1970).

The content of the last passage is also key in its assessment that Pilipino/as are coerced into espousing American sensibilities in their ways of being, instead of practicing authentic Pilipino/a culture or resisting domination. In light of this propensity, Edmundo Litton (2001), in his discussion regarding the loss and maintenance of home languages for Pilipino/a immigrants, suggested that instead of adhering to a colonialist and hidden assimilationist curriculum that "language needs to be seen as a vehicle for transmitting values and cultural identity" (p. 29). Yet, Litton (2001) also contended that the opposite holds true in the case of Pilipino immigrants, as many tend to lose his or her native language instead of maintaining it in the process of

assimilation. Litton (2001) concluded in his research that, often times, maintaining a home language is undervalued, typically as a result of a colonial mentality that endorses the superiority of English over other languages. As a result, the loss of language has been a major factor in distancing Pilipino/as from their heritage based on the manner that the English language is hegemonically promoted as the dominant language in the United States.

To counter the effects of English hegemony, Litton (2001) has suggested that language be valued as not only a tool for communication but also as an apparatus for teaching and conveying values and cultural heritage. In turn, Pilipino/as are able to have a greater sense of ethnic and cultural affirmation when language is valued and utilized in this manner. In discussing the pressures associated with assimilation, Viola (2014) further explained the significance of language when he stated, it "is an important social practice that cannot be divorced from identity formation" (p. 7).

In agreement and to sum up both arguments from Litton (2001) and Viola (2014), Leny Strobel (1996) concluded that language is still relevant in conveying ethnic identity for contemporary Pilipino/as. Furthermore, key to understanding the significance of this issue with language, is the Philippines has between 100 to 150 languages in use at present (Galang, 1999) including Tagalog, Visayan, Ilocano, and Pangasinan, with each language conveying its own regional context and ways of being (Constantino, 1970). Thus, removing the cultural context, in essence, eliminates and invalidates the cultural integrity of Pilipino/a worldview (Buenavista, 2010; Constantino, 1970; Strobel, 1996). Consequently, the more distanced that Pilipino/as become from their native languages, the more distanced they become from the cultural values and ideals that their native languages express and uphold (Darder, 2014).

Pilipino/a Identity

> *Colonial education has not provided us with a realistic attitude toward other nations, especially Spain and the United States. The emphasis in our study has been on the great gifts that our conquerors have bestowed upon us.*
>
> Constantino, 1970, p. 29

This section examines Pilipino/a identity formation through the work of several scholars that illustrate the effects of the Philippines' colonial past and its continued influence on contemporary Pilipino/as. As noted by Halagao (2010), the colonial past of the Philippines greatly influences present day Pilipino/as in a variety of ways: "Although the political act of colonialism is gone in the Philippines today, the psychology of colonialism exists internally among many Pilipinos today" (p. 506).

Colonial mentality. To voice the significance of connecting Philippine history and current Pilipino/a consciousness, Viola (2014) used the words of Pilipina activist, Melissa Roxas, (as interviewed by Viola):

> The relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines is still very much influenced by its colonial past. Who we are as Pilipino Americans, our identity and culture, is shaped by our history and our past. We can't erase this fact, erasing it would be like denying you are a Pilipino altogether. (p. 13)

Thus, it is important to recognize the connection between Pilipino/a identity and the persistence of a *colonial mentality* resulting from the colonial history of the Philippines. Kevin Nadal (2008) defined colonial mentality as "a form of internalized oppression, in which the colonizer's values and beliefs are accepted by the colonized as a belief and truth of his own, that

the mores of the colonizer are superior to those of the colonized" (p. 158). As discussed in a previous section, this notion stems from colonial education processes that utilize the hidden curriculum as cultural infiltration and imposition to promote American ideals (Constantino, 1970; Hsu, 2013; Olsen, 1997).

Furthermore, E. J. R. David (2013) suggested that colonial mentality affects Pilipino/as in three ways. One form of colonial mentality is displayed when Pilipino/as subscribe to a perception of American superiority. David suggested that this mindset appears when English language proficiency is utilized to signify social standing or intelligence. The second display of colonial mentality can also be attributed to this belief in American superiority. As a result, Pilipino/as affected by colonial mentality will seek to distance themselves from the perceived inferiority of their heritage. An example would be when a derogatory term such as *FOB (fresh off the boat)* is utilized to discriminate against other Pilipino/as whose traits are distanced from American standards of being. The third is an internalization of the need for colonialism and oppression as a legitimate means toward a developed society, which David (2013) noted could cause self-directed hostility. This can take shape in actions related to a sense of indebtedness to the colonizer, which may lead Pilipino/as into complicity with their own discrimination.

Strobel (2001), in her short essay on "What is a Pilipino?", discussed the challenges that the internalization of colonial mentality present in the process of Pilipino/a identity formation:

> To be a Pilipino is to feel, in the depths of one's being, where words are not enough, that one is Pilipino. Oftentimes it is difficult to articulate just what it means to be Pilipino because the name itself was imposed from the outside. To be Pilipino is to feel a deep connectedness to one's fellow being, to the Creator, to the country, to one's self, and to

> everything else outside of the self. To be Pilipino is to feel connected to the country's history - past, present, and future. This connectedness remains even when the Pilipino leaves the Philippines. In fact, this connection deepens more on foreign soil where its authenticity is often challenged. Sometimes, it is other Pilipinos who challenges this identity, especially those who have not yet escaped their colonial consciousness, and therefore continue to believe the Pilipinos come from an impoverished culture, without hope of progress or change. (pp. 11–12)

Strobel (2001) highlighted an ongoing struggle in navigating the effects of colonialism in the process of Pilipino/a identity formation. On one hand, being Pilipino/a meant a connectedness to the Pilipino/a diaspora. While on the other hand, much of Pilipino/a identity is based on an imposed standard by other entities. In essence, a Pilipino/a identity is that of a colonial identity (Leonardo & Matias, 2013). As such, Strobel (2001) concluded that a tension remains in the process of identity formation for Pilipino/as due to the varying degrees of colonial consciousness that persist. In sum, the persistence of a colonial mentality continues to have adverse effects on members of the Pilipino/a community.

Pilipino/a racialization and the model minority stereotype. As discussed in the previous section, colonialism has had a significant impact on Pilipino/a identity (Nadal, 2008). Relevant here is how colonialism has manifested in the racialization of Pilipino/as as model minorities and its impact on Pilipino/a student experiences. Buenavista, Jayakumar, and Misa-Escalante (2009) stated, "The (neo) colonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines has historically contributed to Pilipino racialization and continues to manifest in the contemporary educational and everyday lives of Pilipino Americans" (p. 76). An inherent flaw in

the concept of Asian Americans as model minorities is that it does not take into account the cultural or class diversity within that group (Buenavista et al. 2009; Omatsu, 2009). Within the racial markings of Asian Americans, there are over 25 different ethnic groups; each with its own diverse history, cultures, languages, and ways of being (Buenavista et al., 2009). Pilipino/as, similarly, have their own unique history and sensibilities (Buenavista et al., 2009; Nadal, 2008; Prado & Church, 2010). Thus, their issues must be addressed with this Asian diversity in mind (Nadal, 2008; Prado & Church, 2010).

Furthermore, several scholars have critiqued the way that perpetuating a model minority stereotype is harmful to Asian Americans. The model minority stereotype suggests that Asian Americans, as a racialized group of people, are able to succeed at higher rates in education due to innate abilities (Buenavista et al, 2009; Omatsu, 2009). This model minority stereotype also suggests that Asian Americans have a greater propensity to overcome minority challenges and succeed, despite inequitable conditions that persist in society. A problematic dimension of this myth is that it obscures many of the important issues that Asian Americans must address in order to achieve success in education (Buenavista et al., 2009; Omatsu, 2009).

Also key to this discussion is the manner in which the model minority myth effectively promotes a meritocratic ideal, which suggests that all marginalized groups can and should be able to attain success—in spite of an unjust social system (Buenavista et al., 2009; Omatsu, 2009). This narrow point of view fails to acknowledge the impact of oppressive practices from systemic marginalization and conditions of economic and social racialization that could prevent minority individuals and groups from succeeding (Buenavista et al., 2009; Omatsu, 2009). This line of thinking suggests that if Pilipino/a students are unable to overcome the challenges paving

the road to success, then it is through their own fault that they did not reach success (Buenavista et al., 2009; Omatsu, 2009). In turn, the system can *blame the victim* (Ryan, 1976) for his/her failure, while the victim is left with no considerable platform to critique the system for its failure to provide equitable treatment to all individuals and cultural groups in society (Buenavista et al., 2009; Omatsu, 2009).

Pin@y biculturalism. As evident from the previous discussion, colonial mentality and the racialization of Pilipino/as have played a significant role in identity formation. Relevant to the overarching issue of biculturalism is the manner in which colonial mentality and the process of racialization yield effects of alienation and marginalization in the experiences of Pilipino/as. Carlos Bulosan (2014) in his seminal work *America is in the Heart,* explained, "I know deep down in my heart that I am an exile in America. I feel like a criminal running away from a crime I didn't commit. And this crime is that I am a Pilipino in America"(p. vii). Bulosan's (2014) work highlights then the struggle of Pilipino/as forced to navigate the duality of their lived experiences.

Furthermore, the cultural response patterns resulting from the process of acculturation as highlighted by Darder (2012) can be linked to the manner in which Pilipino/as react to the influences of colonial mentality. Key to this discussion is the cultural alienation that many Pilipino/as experience, which David (2013) stated, as mentioned earlier, can result in the perceived superiority of American culture and a perceived inferiority of native Pilipino/a culture. In turn, many are pressured to take action to reach American standards of being and to distance themselves from native Pilipino/a culture. Strobel (2001) described this type of alienation in her

work *Coming Full Circle: The Process of Decolonization Among Post-1965 Pilipino Americans,* which chronicled the tensions of biculturalism in her own personal narrative.

> When I arrived in the U.S. in 1983, I didn't know it would be the end of the "little brown sister" era of my life. Like many Pilipinos who have imbibed Hollywood images of the "good life", I had dreamt of coming to live in the white man's land. My assumptions about America were shaped by a colonial education that glorified everything white and American. I mastered English, the medium of this education…hoping that I might win the master's approval…In the land of the white master, I came face to face with my split self. The cultivated outer self who believed she was white, too, except for the color of her skin, began to feel insecure as the mirror that she has always held up to herself proved to be someone else's image. She was not white, the real white people reminded her of that every change they got. (pp. 1–13)

Significant in this passage is an exposing of the dichotomy between the illusion of the American "good life" and the marginalization that exists in pursuit of it, specifically, for minority populations. Thus, many Pilipino/as have been influenced to strive for membership in a community even though they have been consistently sent a message that they do not belong.

Moreover, of great relevance to questions of biculturation in relation to colonial mentality, Nadal (2008), in accord with the concepts put forth by David (2013), has contended that it could lead to a perceived preference of Spanish and American cultural values as opposed to indigenous Pilipino/a values – or a preference for an assimilationist response pattern per Darder's (2012) bicultural categorizations. Addressing the effects of this form of bicultural stress on Pilipino/a students, Nadal (2008) wrote:

> Moreover, maintaining a bicultural identity may be another source of stress for Pilipino Americans. Not only do they have to deal with racial stressors and discrimination, they must also deal with balancing opposing differences between the cultural values they learn at home and the values they learn at school. (p. 158)

Thus, the plight of the bicultural Pilipino/a stems from the constant tension that exists between the different cultural forces that affect their lives. In that regard, supporting the effective navigation of the bicultural reality, as indicated by Darder (1991, 2012) and Olsen (1997), is extremely relevant to the lives of Pilipino/a students.

A Pilipino/a Education for Pilipino/a People

> *The education of the Pilipino must be a Pilipino education.*
>
> Constantino, 1970, p. 35

This and the next section echo Constantino's (1970) call that Pilipino/as deserve an emancipatory Pilipino education, instead of a colonial one. He argued, "Education must be seen not as an acquisition of information but as the making of man so that he may function most effectively and usefully within his own society" (Constantino, 1970, p. 27). This belief in education is in line with Freire's (1970) ideas of an emancipatory education for oppressed populations. An emancipatory education rejects the banking model of education and instead promotes humanity as the vocation of all people. Thus, through this form of education, individuals are able to gain a better understanding of themselves and their ability to transform the world around them. To that end, Constantino (1970) believed that Pilipino/as must be educated in an authentically Pilipino/a way. An authentic Pilipino/a education acknowledges and honors the sociohistorical context of Pilipino/a individuals and addresses the ways in which colonialism

has culturally infiltrated and invaded Pilipino/a indigenous culture. In support of a Pilipino/a education for Pilipino/a people Constantino (1970) declared:

> Under previous colonial regimes, education saw to it that the Pilipino mind was subservient to that of the master. The foreign overlords were esteemed. We were not taught to view them objectively, seeing their virtues as well as their faults. This led out citizens to form a distorted opinion of the foreign masters and also of themselves. The function of education now is to correct this distortion. We must now think of ourselves, of our salvation, of our future. And unless we prepare the minds of the young for this endeavour, we shall always be a pathetic people with no definite goals and no assurance of preservation. (p. 36)

Decolonizing Pedagogy

As should be evident by now, the experience of the Pilipino/a people is steeped in challenges related to their colonized history. Thus, Pilipino/as are forced to survive in their existence under conditions of biculturality compounded by the adverse effects of colonial mentality and their racialization. Of significance in this discussion is the manner in which Pilipino/as engage their survival within the bicultural environment. Additionally, it is important to note here the heterogeneity of the Pilipino/a population. It is imperative to recognize that the survival responses of Pilipino/as can vary across generations, class, subcultures, and so forth. For example, Maramba (2008), in her work exploring familial relations within the college-going experience of Pilipino/a students, discussed the manner in which many Pilipina students are forced to balance their bicultural identity. More specifically, Maramba's (2008) study engaged the tensions that exist between parents and their children who are raised in a different

environment, which highlighted the generational differences of survival within immigrant Pilipino/a families. Further highlighting the variety of survival responses across generations, Litton's (2001) research suggested that as a response to colonial mentality effects, many immigrant Pilipino/a parents oppose educational programs aimed at maintaining their children's Pilipino/a language proficiency for fear it will hinder their ability to learn English. This response is clearly driven by a belief in the superiority of American ways of being—a symptom of colonial mentality, according to David (2013). As evidenced by both examples, the necessity for Pilipino/as to survive in their bicultural environment can lead to conditions of alienation. As such, many scholars have discussed the process of decolonization as significant in countering the effects of colonial mentality and supporting a greater sense of individual and collective cultural understanding (Halagao, 2010; Strobel, 2001).

Constantino (1970) and other Pilipino/a scholars (Buenavista, 2010; Halagao, 2010; Strobel, 1996) have argued that a form of colonial education has persisted in place of a pedagogical process that genuinely incorporates Pilipino/a sociohistorical knowledge and practices of knowing. Strobel (2001) along with other Pilipino/a scholars (David, 2013; Nadal, 2008) have suggested that this could lead to colonial mentality, which is a form of internalized oppression. In light of addressing the deficiency of Pilipino/a content and epistemology in schools, several scholars have highlighted the utilization of the process of decolonization as an avenue for supporting greater student personal and collective cultural growth and development (Halagao, 2010; Strobel, 1996).

Significant to the process of decolonization is the acknowledgement of the effects of colonialism on Pilipino/a identity formation. As discussed previously, colonial mentality is born

of the strong messages aired through the various channels of ideology creation and re-creation, which value American models of being as more desirable (David, 2013). This form of internalized oppression often leads to identity confusion and feelings of inferiority, which can play out in individuals rejecting any aspect of their cultural identity outside of established dominant norms (David, 2013). This is what Darder (2012) has termed as *alienation* in her delineation of cultural response patterns. As has been articulated by many scholars, education heavily impacts the ways that individuals are able to see the world (Darder, 1991, 2012; Freire, 1970). As such, through a colonial mentality, individuals see the world through colonized eyes (David, 2013; Nadal, 2008). In that regard, decolonization is an attempt to recognize, engage, and transform the effects of colonialism on colonized peoples (David, 2013, Halagao, 2010; Nadal, 2008; Strobel, 1996).

Strobel (1996), in *Born Again Pilipino,* defined decolonization as "the process of undoing the effects of colonization on the Pilipino psyche by recognizing the master narratives that constructed colonial identity and replacing them with indigenous narratives" (p. 38). Halagao (2010) added that decolonization is a rediscovery of one's individual and ethnic group's roots and history, in order to enhance cultural identity and community life. In many cases, cultural artifacts are utilized in the process of decolonization as a means to retain and/or regain cultural values or knowledge. Baffoe and Asimeng-Boahene (2013), in their discussion of *cultural artifacts,* stated that they "serve as the transmission of values and the accumulated knowledge of their societies from their original homelands" (p. 92). Although, she did not use the term cultural artifacts, Strobel (2001) pointed out the re-emergence of cultural practices and traditions in Pilipino/a communities as a symbol of cultural rediscovery and preservation. Thus, to utilize

cultural artifacts as a means to regain and maintain cultural perspectives is to engage in an instance of decolonization.

To summarize, David (2013) contended that decolonization is a means of addressing the impact of colonial mentality through a critical examination of Pilipino/as' historical and contemporary experiences of oppression. Strobel (1996), however, also noted that it is important to understand decolonization as an organic psychological process, instead of a "literal return to a primordial or precolonial state of identity" (p. 39). As such, decolonization is intended to be a process of realization of the effects of colonization on colonized peoples (David, 2013). To that end, the process of decolonization is an important means of creating counter narratives to oppose the dominant ideology promoted by U.S. schooling (Strobel, 1996). Most importantly, Halagao (2010) echoing Freire, insisted that "decolonization is the process of humanizing the dehumanized" (p. 497).

Principles of Pinayist Pedagogy

As noted by critical scholars in the previous sections, education has been generally practiced as an instrument for marginalization (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 1991, 2012; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1981; Gramsci, 1971). More specifically, in the context of Pilipino/a students, they have been forced to negotiate the tensions created in the promulgation of a colonial education (Buenavista, 2010; Constantino, 1970; Halagao, 2010; Strobel 1996; Viola, 2006). In light of the challenging premise under which Pilipino/a students must operate, Pinayist Pedagogy has emerged from the concept of Pinayism and is described here to provide a viable framework that supports Pilipino/as students in navigating the complex landscape of education.

Moreover, key to this study is recognizing the impact that communion with others can have on individual transformation and collective empowerment toward social change. In that regard, it is important to track the evolution of Pinayism as praxis into Pinayist Pedagogy, which further addresses the specific needs of Pin@ys to counter traditionally practiced forms of oppressive education through the creation of liberatory communities (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009).

Initially, Pinayism was conceptualized to address the social, political, and economic struggles of Pilipino/a people. Tintinagco-Cubales (2005) explained:

> Pinayism should belong to Pinays and Pinoys who are willing to engage in the complexity of the intersections where race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality/religion, educational status, age, place of birth, diasporic migration, citizenship, and love cross. (p.147)

As such, Pinayism was geared to unveil the intersecting challenges of Pilipino/a people in order to address and, ultimately, take action to create better living conditions for all (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). As it evolved, Pinayism as a pedagogical praxis developed to emphasize the building of communities in sync with its initial conception as a counter hegemonic movement (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). In discussing the current conception of Pinayism termed as *Pinayist Pedagogy*, Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009) explained that it is "an individual and communal process of decolonization, humanization, self-determination, and relationship building, ultimately, moving toward liberation" (p. 180).

Pinayist Pedagogy as a pedagogical principle is closely tied to Freire's (1970) cyclical process of praxis. Pinayist pedagogy frames this process as having five stages (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009).

1. Identifying the problems.
2. Analyzing the problems.
3. Creating plans of action.
4. Implementing the plan of action.
5. Analyzing and evaluating the actions.

Furthermore, Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009) explained that the principles of Pinayist Pedagogy manifest in the multitude of ways that individuals and collective groups dialogue, critically produce cultural art and performances, and engage in liberating scholarship. As an outcome from these activities, individuals are able to create their own narratives and engage in a process toward self-determination rooted in personal cultural expressions. Thus, Pinayist Pedagogy can play a significant role in how educators engage Pilipino/a students through a communal process enacting its principles and challenging dominant perspectives towards transformative action. Tintiango-Cubales and Sacramento (2009) declared that, in their own personal experiences, it "has created a space where Pinays feel we belong - a place to call home" (p. 185).

Ethnic Student Organizations in Postsecondary Education

Many scholars have noted that difficult issues related to culture persist for minority students in higher education (Bailon, 2012; Maramba, 2008; Museus, 2008). Much of the research produced regarding ethnic student organizations has been conducted at predominantly

White institutions (PWI) (Bailon, 2012; Maramba, 2008; Museus, 2008). The overwhelming conclusion from the literature is that for minority students to reach their academic goals and have a satisfactory educational experience, they must somehow navigate the challenges that are set forth by their school's cultural practices (Bailon, 2012; Maramba, 2008; Museus, 2008).

Samuel Museus (2008) has shown in his work that "the culture of PWIs can be problematic for undergraduates of color because they can convey messages of unimportance, devaluation, and exclusion to those students" (p. 569). Yet, as previously established, the culture of schooling in general caters to the interests of the dominant group (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2012; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). Thus, regardless of school-specific demographics, minority students must navigate the hegemonic context of schooling (Darder, 2012; Nadal, 2008). In discussing student success in relation to college culture, Samuel Museus and Dina Maramba (2011) stated:

> They posited that the distance between students' cultures of origin (i.e., precollege cultures) and cultures of immersion (i.e., campus cultures) is inversely related to their likelihood of success. Inherent in this proposition is the notion that students who come from cultures that are most different than the dominant cultures that are found on their respective college campuses will encounter the greatest challenges as they adjust to higher education…students from cultures that are substantially incongruent with the dominant cultures on their respective campuses must either assimilate to those dominant cultures or find membership in one or more cultural enclaves (i.e., subcultures) to maximize their likelihood of success in college. (p. 236)

Furthermore, Museus and Maramba (2011) observed that minority students participating in postsecondary education are routinely propositioned to commit *cultural suicide* and/or accept contradictory forms of cultural assimilation in order to succeed. In light of this situation, Museus and Maramba (2011) concluded that engaging the cultural backgrounds of minority students is significant in supporting them through successful completion of their postsecondary education. Museus and Maramba (2011) have also linked the importance of a students' sense of belonging to how they perceive their college-going experience. Meechai Orsuwan (2011) defined this sense of belonging as "personal involvement in an environment in a manner that allows persons to feel themselves an integral part" (p.746).

As previously discussed, Pilipino/as have been racialized as Asian Americans (Buenavista, 2010). More recently, Pilipino/as have been categorized within the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) grouping (Orsuwan, 2011). The AAPI label includes more ethnic groups than the previous Asian American labels. Yet, they are still viewed widely as a homogenous group even though a wide range of diversity exists in specific AAPI subgroups in terms of language, culture, and immigration history (Orsuwan, 2011).

Differences also exist between those students born in the US and those who have immigrated here as older children or young adults. Orsuwan (2011) has suggested that, in order for AAPI students to attain a high sense of belonging in higher education, schools must create an inclusive environment that respects and engages different cultures. Museus and Maramba's (2011) and Orsuwan's (2011) ideas are indicative of literature that suggests there is a need for postsecondary schools to engage the culture of minority students with specificity, particularly that of Pilipino/a college students.

To effectively move toward addressing the need for engaging the cultures of students and their sense of belonging, the literature points toward the possibilities inherent in ethnic student organizations. Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, Kim, and Wilcox (2013), utilizing student involvement theory, explained, "Student learning is increased when there is more involvement in both academic and social aspects of the collegiate experience" (p. 251). Thus, Krumrei-Mancuso et al. (2013) have suggested that involvement with college activities, such as student clubs and organizations, is one of the greatest influences on student life satisfaction.

However, there are conservative critics who argue that ethnic student clubs and organizations in higher education promote the disengagement of ethnic students from participation in mainstream activities of the general student population (D'Souza, 1991; Goldsmith, 2004). Pat Goldsmith (2004) suggested that activities separated by race could lead to harmed race relations in a school. Despite these naysayers, there is far more research that speaks to the significant benefits of student involvement in ethnic student organizations (Baker, 2007; Inkelas, 2004).

Christina Baker (2007) concluded from her research that there are many significant social and academic benefits for participation in ethnic student organizations by minority students, including a positive impact on academic achievement. Furthermore, Karen Inkelas (2004) suggested that ethnic student organizations help foster critical engagement with important cultural issues. In her study, Inkelas argued that there is a significant relationship between ethnic student organization participation and a student's sense of awareness and commitment to Asian American issues. In other words, students are more likely to take up the cause of Asian Americans concerns when they are involved in ethnic student organizations. Lastly, Inkelas

posited that ethnic student organizations promote a greater sense of identity, which she suggests leads to future civic and cultural engagement—an important benefit to all communities.

Literature Review Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to provide a better understanding of the context in which this study was conducted. The initial section of the literature review highlighted issues related to biculturalism and education, engaging in particular the link between culture and power. Subsequently, I engaged the work of Renato Constantino while juxtaposing the work of other scholars who have addressed issues of colonization and education, so that the Pilipino/a student context in the bicultural paradigm of education can be better understood. The concepts of decolonization and Pinayist Pedagagy were also engaged in this section to highlight processes that aid in addressing issues brought forth by colonization in education. Lastly, I reviewed the work of several scholars that promote ethnic student organizations as a means to support bicultural individuals in their postsecondary educational experience.

In the next chapter, I will provide a detailed description of the critical methodology that was utilized to conduct this qualitative study. Encompassing Viola's (2006) notion that the transformation of society is not a product of intellectual exercise, but is the result of the cooperative actions of the people, this study is grounded in participatory action research, which provides a much-needed pedagogical space to learn with Pilipino/a community college students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the critical research methodology that guided this study and more specifically provides the participatory action research design in which this study is grounded. Given the nature of this participatory study of a community college Pilipino/a student organization, my positionality as a researcher and the underlying assumptions I bring to this work were key to the methodological approach.

As such, this research is political in nature, in that it echoes Freire's (1970) pedagogical notion that the process of problem-posing or critical inquiry is a political act. Therefore, my study openly engaged the political nature of schooling. As the literature has shown, the process of schooling as currently constructed promotes a system of inequality (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2012; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). In many ways, schools act to produce and reproduce hierarchical structures of society (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Darder, 2012; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014).

Inherent in this hierarchal structure of education is a system in which a dominant culture and a subordinate culture co-exist (Darder, 2012). This work has sought to address and better understand the bicultural issues that are rooted in the dominant structure of schooling. More specifically, it addressed issues and tensions related to the process of biculturalism that Pilipino/a students are required to navigate. Thus, the critical methodology employed is rooted in an emancipatory process of inquiry and change in order to better address these issues. The research approach that guided this study was also accountable and conscientious in carefully negotiating the political nature of the educational process.

Research Questions

The methodology that a researcher utilizes to study social phenomenon must be pragmatically relevant to answering the research questions of that study. Thus, it is important to restate the research questions that guide this qualitative study during this discussion of methodology. The research questions that guided this qualitative study were:

1. How do Pilipino/a students perceive the overall impact of their participation in a Pilipino/a student organization to their community college experience?
2. What do Pilipino/a students identify as effective cultural resources, experiences, and activities provided by a Pilipino/a student organization?
3. In what specific ways do they express that these cultural resources have had an impact on their understanding of themselves as bicultural individuals?

Participatory Action Research

One distinguishing characteristic of participatory action research (PAR) as a critical qualitative research framework is that it acknowledges the political aspect of schooling in its research goals (Mountz et al., 2008). Jarg Bergold and Stefan Thomas (2012) have stated that the goal of PAR is to create a space for marginalized individuals and groups to utilize their voice and have it be heard. In order to comprehend how participatory action research seeks to reach these aims, it is necessary to discuss PAR and how it deviates from traditional research methodologies.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2007), in *Decolonizing Methodologies,* explained one of the significant underlying principles of using PAR:

> Research, like schooling, once the tool for colonization and oppression is very gradually coming to be seen as a potential means to reclaim languages, histories and knowledge, to

> find solutions to the negative impacts of colonialism and to give voice to an alternative way of know and being. (p. 10)

In other words, PAR is a process of decolonization through collaborative work between individuals attempting to solve a problem (Cahill, 2007). PAR as a critical research design is geared toward an emancipatory process that benefits its participants (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Thus, PAR research counters exploitative methods through its commitment to social justice, by way of collaborative projects grounded upon the community needs of participants (Cahill, 2007).

PAR also addresses issues of power associated with who constructs and who legitimizes knowledge (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). In other words, dominant ideology has a strong influence in validating knowledge and how it is constructed from a hierarchal expert standpoint. Moreover, through systemic mechanisms, Western society has promoted and enforced the dominant notion that quantifiable scientific knowledge is the ultimate judge of whether something is "true" (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). This is translated into traditional forms of research with the researcher-subject model. Yet, the process of this study challenges this traditional approach and instead offers a perspective rooted in the voices that are anchored to marginalized experiences of individuals. This study then sought to acknowledge the legitimacy of the voices of Pilipino/a students with its aim of providing a counterhegemonic space for often-repressed experiences to come to the forefront of critical praxis—where reflection, dialogue, and action by participants generates the knowledge produced and the actions that unfold.

PAR incorporates a unique relational approach to the study of social phenomenon, one that traditional methods generally discourage. Most traditional methods encourage researchers to be objective and disconnected from their research participants, where the boundaries between

researcher and research participants are sharply divided (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Alison Mountz, Eli B. Moore, and Lori Brown (2008) stated that traditional practice in research reinforces notions of "us" and "them." Yet, objectivity in PAR is deemphasized. In its place is an emphasis on relationships for addressing social change and the connection between the researcher and the participants is considered vital to affect this change. In this type of study, research participants are not mere subjects but are also meaning makers and decision makers in the process. This aspect of the methodology is also in line with an emancipatory view of education in which educators are not only working for the students, but also *with* students. Thus, an essential component of participatory action research will be the collaborative work of the researcher and the research participants.

Mountz et al. (2008) explained in their discussion regarding the history of PAR that its emergence grew out of the need to "dissolve the academy-community dichotomy" (p. 221). In order to do so, the researcher must also act as participant. Thus, another important consideration in this study is acknowledging that I served multiple roles, which included that of the researcher, faculty advisor to the student organization, and faculty member of the college. Negotiating these different roles was a challenging endeavor. Yet, the principles of PAR promote that the researcher as participant is an effective method for theory and practice to inform each other and to ensure that research is truly collaborative in nature (Strobel, 1996).

Another important characteristic of participatory action research is its fluid nature (Herr & Anderson, 2015). PAR intends to be responsive to its participants and their quest to address the subject of their inquiry (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As a result of its fluid nature, it must be understood that the study will evolve organically from its initial conception (Herr & Anderson.

2015). To that end, the next section discusses the principles of participatory action research and how they guided this study. Yet, true to the nature of PAR, the procedures or plans of action that were noted in the conception of this study changed throughout the process and were shaped by the context and participant needs.

Rationale for PAR

It is important to note that the general purpose of this study was to examine and address Pilipino/a student navigation of the bicultural experience in a community college setting. In order to be effective in addressing the research questions and purpose of the study, the methodology utilized addresses these issues in a direct way. I believe that the methods associated with participatory action research were most effective. As stated earlier, the aims of participatory action research is to afford marginalized voices a platform to be heard (Bergold & Thomas, 2012) and act on behalf of their own lives and communities. The purpose of this study was to provide Pilipino/a students an avenue to utilize their voice and lived experiences as a basis for action. The principles of PAR dictate that the collaborative work emphasizes the knowledge and capacity of participants so that the study is truly informed and addresses the issues of silenced and oppressed populations (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Furthermore, because PAR values a democratic process, it aligns with emancipatory forms of education (Mountz et al., 2008).

In the literature review, it was stated that the learning process for many Pilipino/a students has historically been steeped in a colonialist mentality (Buenavista, 2010; Nadal; 2008; Strobel, 1996). That is to say that Pilipino/a students have been directed toward assimilating into the practices of mainstream culture in order to survive (Buenavista, 2010; Nadal; 2008; Strobel, 1996). Yet, this study sought to move toward a more emancipatory educational experience for

Pilipino/a students. PAR is congruent to this movement as it is a methodology immersed in the process of inclusion (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Qualitative researcher Eve Tuck has described PAR as a "decolonizing project of recovery, knowing, analysis, and struggle" (cited from Cahill, 2007, p. 363).

PAR does not seek to distinguish who is the rightful holder of knowledge (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Instead, PAR seeks to engage the knowledge and experience of marginalized individuals and groups to promote a discourse that offers an alternate point of view to inform practice (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Ultimately, it is being able to listen to the voice of another and accepting that learning from such an interaction is a legitimate process. This process set forth to align itself in the emergent decolonizing pedagogy, which is antithetical to the commonly practiced banking model of education. With the foundation of a critical theory of bicultural education (Darder, 2012) and the principles of Pinayist Pedagogy (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009), this study utilized the methods of participatory action research that Leny Mendoza Strobel (1996) employed in her research design, which she described as the Pilipino equivalent to participatory action research. *Pagtatanung-tanong,* which in Tagalog means to ask questions, "is an attempt to articulate a people's experience in their own voice through stories, myths, folkloric traditions, and cultural practices" (Strobel, 1996, p. 34).

Research Design

The design of this study was originated by taking into account the processes associated with Pagtatanung-tanong and the methods typically associated with PAR. As such, this study did not subscribe to any standardized method in its approaches. The initial concept of the study was to simply chronicle the development of Mabuhay and the manners in which students engaged the

student organization during a specific time period. As a participating faculty advisor to Mabuhay, I viewed our activities as the action in the methodology of PAR, in that we worked together to continue to develop our student organization. Generally, PAR data would have come from observations and reflections from the participants of the study. In turn, the study would have been based on the everyday actions of those involved in the project of maintaining and growing a student organization. As mentioned earlier, PAR is an organic process that grows from the inquiry of its participants. Thus, when members of the student organization wanted to address certain issues or challenges, the study shifted to also engage those issues and challenges. As a result, the design of the study also morphed to include an interview, a survey, as well as analysis of archival data in the form of meeting minutes, newsletters, and e-mails. Combined with the initial conception of observation data, the additional data points were necessary in aligning the study with the actions of developing a student organization. This also enhanced the ability of this study to provide greater clarity toward answering the research questions that framed the inquiry.

Setting

Bay Cities College was an urban community college with approximately 32,000 student enrollments per academic year. Bay Cities College's physical location was at the intersection of communities that house individuals and families from varying socioeconomic statuses. Students who attended Bay Cities College came from different backgrounds of wealth ranging from high-income to poverty-level families, although about 60% of students qualified for the Board of Governors fee waiver. This statistic signifies that a majority of students needed some form of financial assistance to attend the college. Of relevance to this study is that a predominantly Pilipino/a community was in close proximity to Bay Cities College. In this community, it was

not uncommon for three generations of a family to live under the same roof. In general, families from this community were considered working middle-class in the socioeconomic scale.

Participants

Participants of this study were recruited from current members of Mabuhay, the Pilipino/a student organization at Bay Cities College. Mabuhay had had approximately 30–40 participants within its previous three years of existence. These members ranged in age from 18 to 28 years old. Members were at various stages of their academic program. Some students were first semester community college students, while others had attended community college for several years. Most students were of Pilipino descent; yet, being ethnically Pilipino/a was not a prerequisite to being a member of the organization.

This study included all members of Mabuhay; however, even though the study engaged the general student members, in particular, it focused on the experiences of the organization's board members. These board members, as a product of their official capacity within the group, tended to have a greater influence on the direction of the organization. The board members were also the students that were consistently engaging the student organization. Thus, their interactions were more prominent when chronicling the development of Mabuhay. As will be displayed in Chapter 4, each set of board members had distinct contributions and experiences in developing this student organization. Originally, Mabuhay did not have a fully formed board. Thus, the stories from the first year rely heavily on the perspective of James, the first president of Mabuhay upon its rebirth. The second year includes stories from a board of six students, four male and two female. The last group of students consisted of some of the same board members from the second year with a couple of changes in participants. It is important to acknowledge

here that several students have a more prominent role in the write-up of this study; yet, prominence in this study is not an indicator to the value of their contributions to the student organization.

As previously mentioned, when this study was formalized with its participants, participation in this study translated into their continued regular engagement of the student organization. During their participation, certain events and meetings were recorded and transcribed. The initial club president was also interviewed to gain a broader perspective of the club's existence. Organization members were able to reject participation in the study by not completing an informed consent form. No students declined participation. But several students did not continue to be members of Mabuhay due to varying personal reasons. Some of those students were still included in this study at relevant points. All students included in this study completed a consent form indicating their permission for their inclusion. Pseudonyms were used for the names of the club, school, and participants.

Documenting Data

The methods for data collection in participatory action research are created with the everyday experiences of its participants in mind (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Thus, participatory action research does not involve any standardized practices. Methods of *pagtatanung-tanong* were utilized in harmony with a decolonizing pedagogy to form the methodological structure of this study. According to Strobel (1996), *pagtatanung-tanong* includes the practice of *kuwentuhan* (story-telling), *usap-usapan* (small talk), *padalaw-dalaw* (casual visits), e-mail communication, and *tsismis* (gossip as an informal and indirect way to communication).

The collective processes of the group as they participated in these types of activities encompassed the participatory action toward the aims of acknowledging and addressing their bicultural experience at Bay Cities College. Participants shared in shaping the meaning of this research. Several meetings were recorded and transcribed. It was my role as the researcher to sift through all of the information from these interactions in a meaningful way through *paninilay* (reflection), the result of which was used as analysis of data in this study. Furthermore, archival data in the form of meeting minutes/notes, newsletters, and archived emails were utilized toward gaining a more fully formed perspective of the experience of members with the student organization's experiences. An interview with the original club president was also recorded and transcribed to gain a broader understanding of the conception of Mabuhay toward its current developments.

In addition, answers to survey questions are also used in the analysis of this study. In one of the semesters, the leadership board of Mabuhay, with my guidance, created an eight-question survey that was distributed during the last meeting of the academic year (See Appendix A). The leadership board of Mabuhay intended to use the survey during a summer retreat for the purpose of planning the next academic year's club activities. Twenty students completed the survey. The club members/survey participants were given the option to complete the survey anonymously. Some students attached their name to their answers while others did not.

Furthermore, although the initial intent of this student generated survey was to help in the club's planning process, the students' responses are included here given their significance in identifying student perceptions related to the topics that are central to this study. Further, the students' responses were analyzed and coded as they related to central issues tied to their

expectation of their Pilipino/a student organization. It should be noted that the original survey had a Likert scale intended to measure club effectiveness. The study did not include the data from the Likert scale. Instead, only written responses to the open-ended questions formed part of data in Chapter 4. The written statements by the students provided important insights into their experience as club participants.

Lastly, journal keeping was an important component of PAR as a useful tool for *paninilay*. The process of keeping a journal allowed me to record personal thoughts, feelings, and impressions related to the study. Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson (2015) indicated that it is important for the researcher to track any ethical decisions made along the process, in order to be aware of their consequences. This factor also distinguished this study from my regular responsibilities as the faculty advisor of this student organization. Although it is my belief that effective educators should consistently reflect on their work, journal keeping, as a methodological tool, helped create data that was analyzed toward addressing the research questions. The participatory action research spiral of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting provided another manner in which to visualize the structure of how the study was conducted. This spiral is also useful for illustrating the emergent nature of PAR and that data analysis as an ongoing process.

Privacy

The personal nature of participatory action research requires moral and ethical considerations from all of its participants (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Data collection, documentation, and interpretation must do no harm to participants. To that end, privacy issues should also be addressed when describing the methodology. This study ensured privacy by

allowing participants to remain anonymous. Participants were informed that pseudonyms of their choice, for their names and the college, would be used to ensure confidentiality. The study was cleared with the IRB at Bay Cities College and Loyola Marymount University prior to the Spring 2015 semester. Students were required to submit an informed consent form as their willingness to participate in the study. Students who did not wish to participate were assured that their participation in the group's activities would not be included as part of the study.

Concluding Methodology Remarks

It is important to note that the start of this study was similar to jumping onto a vehicle while it was already moving. The initial conception of the inquiry of this study did not begin when I, as the researcher, decided to pursue it as a qualitative study. Instead, it began when a specific group of Pilipino/a students at this community college decided that they were interested in resurrecting a Pilipino/a student organization. At that time, the students and I were already in the process of addressing their desire to create a space for examining and addressing their educational experience. Formalizing the inquiry with the students is the process chronicled in this study.

It is also important to note that although this study had an ending based on the parameters set forth by certain logistical limitations, the initial inquiry continues to be addressed by current and future participants of the group, as they engage their lived experiences as bicultural individuals. Thus, I am acknowledging that this research was an experience that was not limited to its ending and beginning but, in this case, it was a glimpse into the experiences of a group of Pilipino/a students, during a specific timeline, as they sought bicultural affirmation in the context of a community college.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study is a snapshot of the ongoing process of Pilipino/a students seeking bicultural affirmation in a community college setting. The start of this research was initiated by a specific group of students that was interested in reviving a Pilipino/a student organization on the campus. The nature of the academic calendar inevitably led to a turnover in the participants of the student organization. Thus, several of the students in the inaugural year moved on from participating in the organization and a subsequent group of students took up the torch of maintaining and creating an inclusive space for cultural exploration and expression. This chapter is dedicated to sharing the findings of this research, as experienced by the students and myself as their faculty advisor. Data are presented in a *kuwento-story* format. Korina Jocson (2009) described kuwento as "a way of naming a collective history-present, past, and future- that also served as an opportunity to explore what it means to be 'Pilipino/a American'" (p. 35). Thus, in relaying the data as a kuwento, this study promotes the essence of bicultural counter narratives, which is key to the principles of this study. In this kuwento narrative, key events and experiences are highlighted, starting with the events that led to the revival of the club to its most current iteration. The next section highlights the story of how the Pilipino/a student organization at Bay Cities College was reborn. *Ito ang umpisa ng ating kuwento*—this is where our story begins.

***Ang Umpisa*—The Start**

This research was truly a student-driven process from the beginning. I say this because it was the students who recruited me to join them as their advisor in their journey to create a student organization. This is atypical, as researchers are customarily tasked with recruiting

participants. At Bay Cities College, each official student organization on campus is required to have a faculty advisor. Thus, when James, the first organization president, was putting together the necessary documentation to formalize the club, he approached me on behalf of a group of students to serve as the organization's faculty advisor. As such, this afforded me the dual role of participant and researcher in this study. Being the organization's initial faculty advisor also provided me access to the organization's historical documents to integrate their initial process into this study.

In this section, I highlight the rebirth of the student organization. This section draws attention to the vision of the students as they pursued its re-creation and the expectations among the students of what the club would offer to them. As a means of contextualizing the organization's current processes in relation to its development from when the organization was first reconceived, I pulled together documents in the form of notes and meeting minutes to aid in painting this picture.

Pagkilala kay James—Meeting James

Bay Cities College had had and continued to have many thriving student organizations that encompassed the diverse student interests on campus. Yet, at the time of the study, Bay Cities College only recently had its own active Pilipino/a student organization. A Pilipino/a student club had previously existed at Bay Cities College but had been dormant for over 10 years. James was instrumental in reorganizing the Pilipino/a student organization through his initiative, leadership, resolve, and determination. As a result, it was important to profile James in this study because of his significance in the formation and continued growth of Mabuhay. James served as the organization's first club president.

I first met James when he came to visit me in my office to discuss his desire to restart the Pilipino/a student club on our campus. He tried to restart the club in a previous semester but could not find a faculty advisor. In the Fall of 2013, another faculty member introduced us in the hopes that I might have the time to serve as the club's faculty advisor. James had approached her before but she was unable to commit the time to attend certain club functions. I was also limited in my time but had greater flexibility in my schedule. In our introduction, James informed me that he and several other students were planning on starting a Pilipino/a club on campus. He explained that there had already been a Pilipino/a club on campus but it had not been active for over 10 years. He further explained that because the constitution for the previous iterations of the club remained in the student development office, it was simply a matter of having a faculty advisor to sponsor the club in order for the students to get it restarted. That's when I became the faculty advisor, which I have been for the organization ever since.

James grew up in a neighboring city to Bay Cities College that has a large population of Pilipino/as. He was an immigrant that arrived in the United States at the age of ten. He started education in the US at the fifth-grade level. He had two siblings, one older and one younger. While attending Bay Cities College, James lived at home with his younger sibling and both of his parents. His older sibling had already married and moved out. His goal was to transfer to a four-year university to study architecture. He hoped to be an architect one day because of the creative aspects of the profession and, as he stated, "It makes you feel you're always young."

As mentioned earlier, James was a significant figure in the restarting of the Pilipino/a student club at Bay Cities College. During the time of this study, his impact on bringing meaning to creating a Pilipino/a organization on campus continued to be felt in the club's current structure

and activities. This is what James had to say about what initially motivated him to become involved with restarting the organization at Bay Cities College:

> I guess I'll start off at the very beginning of that. My freshman year at BC, I didn't really care. I just wanted to go to class, and I just wanted to just go to class and leave, and that's it. And then a friend of mine from WCU told me about Asa. Asa, the Pilipino group at WCU. She told me they were having something at Bay Cities. So I was like, "You know what, I'll check it out." So I checked it out . . . What they were offering was good, they were helping Pilipinos at BC or just anybody who's interested to help them out, try to graduate from a community college, and just counsel them. It could be about school, it could be just about personal life, or family life, just something to help them—to help students to just talk.

It is interesting to note from his statement that one of the most significant aspects of his experience interacting with the student group from another school was, as he observed, its intention to help "students to just talk." Furthermore, James explained that after he "checked it out," he realized that "what they were offering was good," and that it was good because they were there to simply help in some way. Thus, James's notion of starting a Pilipino/a club on campus was based on an altruistic notion of providing support for students.

Yet, even with a perceived understanding of the good intentions of the student group from another school, James was resistant to that type of support. He further described his interactions with the visiting Pilipino/a student group at Bay Cities College and how he came to realize that Bay Cities College should have its own Pilipino/a student organization. He explained:

In my personal view, I felt like they just wasted their time with me. During that time, I feel like they just wasted their time with me, because I'm usually not the type to open up. What happened was—at that time, I could see why a lot of people would think that they're actually really helpful. They did help a lot of people, though. I remember from the first year they were there, two people already—two or three people already basically transferred out from BC, and then they're already graduated from State or university. I think, for them, that was the beginning of that. For me, it was the beginning of some counseling because throughout that time, my PA, my personal—my peer advisor, I think he was the director of Asa at that time. So he didn't really give up on me. He was just telling me all this stuff and he didn't give up on me. And then, he was really advocating [for] me to just see why I was the way I was at that time. I guess what happened was [that] for two years, I met up with him every Tuesday or every other Tuesday. And he basically got me to start thinking about the Pilipino community. I started going to the general meetings at WCU by myself. I was the only one from BC that would go. I started trying to think about what they were saying and what they were doing. For some reason, that kind of kicked in—it just hit me. I thought of something crazy at that time. I was just like, "Why do I have to go all the way to WCU for this kind of meeting, when we should have one at Bay Cities, too?" I would want—the thing is, I would want people to have the experience that I had, where they actually went to go to a WCU during the general meetings. But to be honest, I felt kind of intimidated over there, just because that mindset of I was in community college and they were in a university. So I told myself, "We

should probably have something like this closer to home, something at Bay Cities, so other people can experience what I'm experiencing." And that's how it all started.

As evidenced by his comments, James's experiences attending another school's club functions were significant in influencing him to pursue a similar type of student organization at Bay Cities College. James grew to understand that such an organization could have a positive impact on individual participants as well as in the community—although his comments were also insightful in pointing out a negative narrative with which community college students must contend. He stated that he was intimidated when interacting with these students from the university because, in his words, "I was in a community college and they were in a university." Thus, it was implied that because he was attending a community college, he felt he was of lesser status than his university-attending counterparts. This anxiety that James felt about being a community college student also seemed to play a role in his desire for a Pilipino/a student club on his own campus.

Up to this point, the comments made by James were relevant to his own personal reasons for wanting to start a Pilipino/a student organization at Bay Cities College. Although James was a major catalyst in reorganizing the club, other students were also seeking something similar. During his own quest to find a space where he could utilize his voice on campus and be heard, other students were also in search of their own space for expression. James knew this. He mentioned that he had spoken to other students before, and they also wanted to create a student organization. Thus, based on his experience with the Pilipino/a student club from another campus, and his interactions with students from Bay Cities College, James realized that there was a need for something in his community. He explained:

> I believe there are, deep down, these people, they know that it's for a good cause. If we just show them that it's for a good cause, it's not just to put something on your resume, but it's something to actually strengthen the community. Not just the Pilipino community, but just the community itself. Bay Cities is a good way to start it.

The desire for "something to actually strengthen the community" prompted James and the other students to take the steps necessary to restart the club on campus. Although they didn't know what those steps were specifically, James and the other students were moved toward taking action to meet the need of their community. They considered their actions, according to James, as the power of the collective voice of a community addressing an issue.

Paggawa ng Tahanan—Creating a Home

As stated earlier, it was James that first approached me about being the faculty advisor for a Pilipino/a student club on our campus. Up to that point, although my role as a faculty member on my campus put me in direct contact with groups of students, I had never had the opportunity to work in an advisory role for a student club. In light of this, I was very much interested and excited to participate in this experience with the students. Yet, similar to the experience that James and the other students had in not knowing what steps to take to get the student organization started, I was unsure of the process and what my role would entail. Thus, after our initial contact, I invited James to meet at a local Pilipino/a restaurant to discuss our future course of action pertaining to reforming the club. We also discussed James's vision and motivations for organizing this type of student club on campus. This meeting laid the foundation for how we would approach the club's rebirth.

James, by default, would be the club's initial president as it rebooted. Up to that point, James was the only student that I had contact with from the group that would initially form our club. He had informed me that there were other students interested but I had not met with these students. I didn't even know how many of them wanted to form the club. My immediate focus at that time was to fill the void of not having a Pilipino/a student organization on campus. It didn't occur to me to have a meeting with all of the other students before I signed any of the documents that would proclaim us as an official club on campus. Thus, I put my trust in James and his vision for starting this club. In retrospect, it seems that the other students also put their trust in James in organizing the club. James was passionate about what having a Pilipino/a student club would mean on campus. He said:

> I guess, for me, if we have all these organizations, and organizations in school or the clubs at school, not just for Pilipinos either, for different ethnicities, if they have something like that, and they're on their campus, they have a sense of home. They have a sense of—they know that this is where they belong. They can know their own history based on the organization, without actually getting in the way of what they're learning in school or on campus. The Pilipino club at BC—we can learn about our history, our culture, our dances, our music, without getting in the way of what they're learning on campus.

So we started on this journey as a student organization with a minimal understanding of how we should proceed. Regardless, we moved forward with a sense of purpose that whatever the outcome of our efforts, somehow the experience would prove to be beneficial to us all.

Unang pagtitipon—The First Meeting

I remember the first Wednesday meeting of Mabuhay. We had reserved a conference room in the building where my office was located. It was the first time that the students would meet as an official organization on campus. It was also the first time that I was meeting many of the students that would form our student organization. Up to that point, my involvement in the club was signing documents and that initial lunch meeting with James to discuss his broad vision for how it should be run. I was not involved in the recruitment of students or any planning of activities for that semester. My expectation was that the students would plan this as a group. Thus, in entering that first meeting, I was not aware of any specific agenda or objective aside from simply getting everyone together. Organically, the meeting was planned to be an avenue for everyone to express his/her hopes and expectations for the club.

The student development office did not reactivate the club until more than a month into that semester. Thus, that semester was already well underway when the club was allowed to meet officially for the first time. Because of the late start, the club was unable to formally recruit students during start of the semester events like other clubs, which included a club rush. Regardless, 11 students attended that first meeting. One way or another, these students had met James and wanted to be a part of this refounding group for this Pilipino/a student organization. So, even though it was our first official club meeting, the students had a general sense of familiarity with each other and were willing to participate in discussions openly. Another faculty member and myself also participated in the meeting. To start, the students sat around the rectangle table configuration and one by one introduced themselves. Along with stating their name, each student stated this/her reason for joining the club or discussed what he/she would

want out of the club. From my perspective of not having met some of the students, it was exciting to hear them express their motivations for engaging in this type of activity.

Based on my role as a faculty advisor, I decided to take notes during the discussion, in that these might be relevant to reference for future meetings. I condensed those notes to a one-sentence summary of each student's stated expectations or motivations for joining Mabuhay. Table 1 below summarizes the comments made by each of the students in the first meeting regarding his/her expectations for the club. Understanding these expectations was important to establishing the foundation for the club's existence and the development of the organization. These expectations served as important reference points in guiding the actions undertaken later as part of this study.

Table 1

Student Expectations

Student	Comment regarding club expectations
Carolina	Expected to bond with Pilipino/a Americans
Clarice	To be comfortable with new experiences because she was an immigrant
Cory	To promote the Pilipino/a culture on campus
Dolores	To learn about their identity as Pilipino/as
Don	To grow together as a family
Gary	To meet new people
James	To represent the Pilipino community at Bay Cities College
John	Wanted to learn Tagalog
Manuel	To see familiar faces
Shaun	What does it mean to be Pilipino?
Vicki	To bond like a family in their experiences

Paghahanap ng Aming mga Paraan—Finding Our Way

As illustrated above, students had a variety of reasons for participating in Mabuhay, including a desire to participate in culturally relevant activities. Yet, the late start of the club during the semester did not allow for much planning or organization in the way of accomplishing these activities. Furthermore, I was also unable to engage the club in a more active manner due to other obligations. In light of this, much of that first semester's activities were done on the fly.

Regardless, with minimal guidance from me, the students stuck together as a group and continued in their process of building their student organization. The original constitution of the club required an executive board that would execute certain responsibilities necessary for the club to function. Thus, board members were assigned through informal processes. The students were able to work together to figure out appropriate roles for each other. In assigning board members, the club was also able to have representation on the governing body for student organizations. Thus, students in Mabuhay now had a voice in the at-large activities on campus.

The most consistent and significant activity that the students participated in during that semester was the general meetings. The club had eight general meetings that semester. The structure to the meetings was generally relaxed. My influence in planning the general meetings was minimal. It was the students who put together their meetings in meaningful ways. Several guest speakers from local organizations presented at a couple of the meetings regarding culturally relevant issues.

The students also engaged in many discussions that varied across a spectrum of topics. Through their discussions, the students were able to engage their college-going experience in ways that they had not done on our campus before the club. As Dari, one of the members of the

group, stated on the meaning of participating in a Pilipino/a student club: “It means we get to interact with others, we learn from each other, discover new things.” That first semester was a learning experience for all involved, including myself, in the process of engaging a Pilipino/a student organization. As the next sections highlight, this learning experience would be ongoing for us all.

Hinahanap ang Kultura—Seeking Culture

The initial semester of the club passed. The spring semester would pose new opportunities as well as challenges in our process of building a Pilipino/a student organization. As mentioned in the previous section, the general meetings were one of the most significant activities that the club offered to members. Yet, there was a general sense that the students were seeking avenues for alternate ways to engage the Pilipino/a culture. Many students were interested in participating in Pilipino/a cultural events. Some had heard about or watched cultural nights at neighboring university campuses. These cultural nights would typically include plays or skits that related to the Pilipino/a experience in the United States. Sometimes of these events would highlight aspects of Pilipino/a history or heritage. They would also include Pilipino/a cultural dances. Although, our membership and financial resources would not allow us to produce a cultural event at a similar scale, the students wanted to find a way to bring this type of event on our campus. Thus, when an opportunity arose to host a neighboring university on our campus for a preview of their cultural night event, the students were excited at the possibility.

James, as mentioned previously, had a connection to Asa, the Pilipino/a student organization at WCU. Asa, as part of their preparation for their cultural night on their own campus, was interested in performing certain parts of their cultural night program somewhere

within their local community. James brought this information to the club members. Together we decided that, if possible, we would host this cultural night preview at Bay Cities College. Many of the students saw this as the club's opportunity to bring a marquee Pilipino/a cultural event on our campus.

Up to that point, although the club was functioning, it was very much still a growing process. This was understandable, as the club had only reformed the previous semester. The club was functional enough to have our general meetings, but putting together such a big event on our campus would require tremendous effort on our part. We would need to reserve a venue on campus, as well as manage the logistics of other bureaucratic tasks. This would require the club members to work together more intensely, in ways that they had not done before.

Initially, the club members were unsure how to proceed but a meeting with the board resolved any hesitancy in moving forward. The students were able to figure out what actions were necessary to host this event on our campus. Responsibilities were assigned to certain members once the students were able to take inventory of the necessary tasks. The urgency of hosting the show brought a greater sense of cohesion to the club. Board members met to discuss issues pertaining to the event outside of club meetings, and students were in greater communication with each other and with me as well. I even remember meeting the students for lunch and feeling their excitement in hosting the event. It was clear that the students were motivated to host this event on our campus.

Yet, what we failed to see at that time was that planning an event of that nature required a longer timeframe. Ultimately, we were unable to host the cultural night event on our campus. But our club benefitted greatly in that it moved us to be more cohesive and intentional in our

operations. The club would not always accomplish its intended goal but we had a greater understanding of the necessary effort required to be an effective club and the process of working together, irrespective of the outcome, seem to fuel a greater sense of solidarity.

Dalawang Taon—Year Two

James was instrumental in getting the club started but it would now be up to others in the club to continue its development. The following sections highlight the transition from James's leadership in the first year to the processes of a new board assuming leadership of the club moving onto its second year. The second year of the club was also when we formalized the club's activities as a participatory study. Although it is important to note that the study was not formalized until the second semester. I will discuss this formalization process in a later section.

Going into the second academic year of the club, James would be unable to participate in the club as an officer due to his pending transfer and his need to work. Others would have to take up the torch of moving the club forward. Although disappointed at not being able to host the cultural event on our campus in the previous year, the rest of the club members had great hope for the future of our organization. The students were more engaged in the club, as evidenced by their meeting and activity participation. The club was also able to run its first election for board members. As mentioned earlier, the formation of the initial club board was a product of its infancy of operations. The club officers were assigned informally either by the president or by each other with minimal democratic considerations.

Thus, the first election was a major event in the club's history because it was the first time in the club's re-creation that members were able to nominate and vote on their leadership. In this way, the students worked to operate cooperatively instead of hierarchically, which was

important to me as their faculty advisor. I recall jotting down on my notes from that time that students should be able to "exercise a democratic process." The election was a positive step in that direction. Over 20 students participated in the voting process, which resulted in Mabuhay electing six board members. The board consisted of: Carolina—president, Don—vice president, Cory—secretary, John—treasurer, Vicki—historian, and Tim—club council representative. Each of the students elected would help to shape the club in its second year.

Misyon na Pahayag—Mission Statement

One of the first orders of business that the board undertook was creating a mission statement. From the restart of the club, it seemed necessary for club members to review the club's constitution and revise, if necessary. Yet, this was a task that was not accomplished during the first year. Thus, the review and revision of the constitution would be a project club members undertook during the second year. This project ensured that the voice of the current students within the context of their experience was represented in the club's living document. Reviewing the constitution would be a time-consuming project, which necessitated a piece meal approach.

One of the first areas of the club's constitution that we wanted to review was the mission of the club. Club members were repeatedly asking similar questions to one that James asked of the club in one of the first meetings, "What do we want to get out of it?" Thus, the board set forth to prioritize trying to answer this question by creating a mission statement. We did not give any deadlines to accomplish this task. Yet as the first meeting rolled around, I was emailed a newsletter announcing the club's first general meeting of the semester. For one, I was surprised that the board created a newsletter. This was an action that had not been discussed with me but I

was impressed that the members took the initiative to create one. I noticed something else at the end of the newsletter, which read:

> **About Mabuhay Club:**
>
> The BCC Mabuhay Club teaches students more about the Pilipino culture and the similarities between it and other cultures around the world. The mission is to embrace all races and include them into our family, plus extend that helping hand to the Pilipino community and other surrounding communities.

The board had discussed creating a mission statement and the above was the outcome of their efforts. After I read it, I asked the board members if they agreed with the statement. For the most part, the members were satisfied with what was produced and felt it represented their intentions for the club. Thus, that statement remained on future newsletters and stood for the club's mission. We revisited the mission statement again later but what was written reflected the board's understanding of its club's purpose at that time.

Iistrukutra Yong Katiponan—Structuring General Meetings

Although I still felt limited in my ability to engage the club, I noticed several operational issues that needed to be addressed, one of which was the general structure of our meetings. I mentioned earlier that the students were able to run the meetings in a meaningful way during the first year. Yet, from what I gathered, there was minimal planning to the weekly meetings, which resulted in a scattered and inconsistent structure to the meetings. From my observations, some meetings were rich in content and were engaging to the majority of the meeting participants. Other meetings were minimal in content and would lead to early adjournments.

Thus, the new board and I discussed the need to set up a weekly gathering to plan outside of the general meeting. Yet, there were issues with the time that the board could afford during the week to hold these meetings. Outside of their school responsibilities, the board members had to contend with the pull of work, family commitments, and other time-necessitating functions. These issues echoed similar challenges that the general membership had in their club participation. A couple of students even mentioned their immigration status as impacting their participation in the club. In light of these circumstances, we also discussed establishing a more consistent structure to the general meetings. This would ensure that club members knew what to expect each week and would hopefully provide a more engaging experience for the meeting participants. It would also provide board members a consistent framework for the meetings, necessitating lesser time for planning.

Ideally as part of formulating this framework, I had hoped that we could somehow come up with some sort of needs assessment in order to gauge what the students were seeking from the general meetings. Yet, there were time limitations to doing a formal survey at that point because it was the summer, and we were not in contact with the majority of the club members. Thus, the board members laid out a structure together based on what they thought other students would appreciate out of the general meetings. They planned to conduct the general meetings with the following structure:

- A Welcome—An introductory portion to welcome everyone that attended. This introductory portion would also serve to recap the past meetings events.
- A Pilipino "word/phrase of the day" that was relevant to current events or anything that the students were interested in during that week.

- Club Council Report—This portion of the meeting would be reserved for the club council representative to report back on the at-large campus activities.
- Open Discussion—An open discussion regarding relevant Pilipino/a issues or topics that club members wanted to talk about.
- Icebreaker—The last portion of the meeting would be held for an interactive activity. Although this was done mostly at the start of the semester.

In addition on the planned meeting agendas, the board came up with a general set of objectives for each meeting. The objectives read:

- To have the members be aware of upcoming events
- To let the members understand what the Club is for
- To give a chance to the members pertaining to improving the club
- To give a comfortable safe space to our members

Thus, the board went into the second year adhering to the new meeting structure, with the general objectives guiding their activities. The following sections provide examples for several of the meeting segments, which are relevant to issues central to the study.

***Salita/Pananalita ng Araw*—Words/Phrases of the Day**

Each week during the general meetings, a Pilipino "word/phrase of the day" was discussed. The word/phrase would be relevant to current events or any topic that the students were interested in discussing that week. The word was translated to English and, if members were interested, time could be taken to discuss any other relevant words or phrases. Initially, the board came to the general meetings with a word/phrase of the day already planned. Eventually, the meeting facilitators solicited a word/phrase during the meeting from the membership instead

of having one preplanned. Table 2 below highlights the weekly words/phrases that the students discussed during that academic year.

Table 2

Weekly Word/Phrase of the Day

Week	Word/Phrase of the Day
1	Mabuhay – to live
2	Maligayang bati – happy birthday or happy greetings
3	Pasko – Christmas
4	Mayabang – arrogant
5	Ang ganda mo talaga – You are really beautiful
6	Hindi ako nag sasalita ng Pilipino – I don't speak Pilipino
7	Araw ng pasalamat –Thanksgiving Day
8	Araw ng mga puso – Valentine's Day
9	Magandang tanghali – Good afternoon
	Kumusta ka – How are you?
10	Ayoko yan – I don't like that
11	Isang bagsak – onefall

Note. Table is not representative of the total number of meetings during the academic year. Data represent recorded word/phrase of the day as reported by meeting minutes or newsletter.

Through this process, the club reviewed a variety of words and phrases. Many were relevant to upcoming or just passed holidays. For example, in one meeting before the Thanksgiving holiday, the phrase of the day was "araw ng pasalamat," a literal translation for Thanksgiving Day. The students went on to discuss that although there is a phrase to translate Thanksgiving Day, this holiday is not one that is celebrated in the Philippines. This was typical of how the word/phrase of the day portion of the meeting would play out. The word/phrase was translated into English, which would then lead to relevant discussions.

During the days when the board solicited words or phrases from the meeting participants, interesting phrases would be brought up that would lead to other relevant words and discussions. In one meeting, a club member expressed wanting to know what the Pilipino word "mayabang" meant. The members then discussed that the word translated into someone who is arrogant or

boisterous. A round of jokes went around about certain individuals being mayabang. As club members chimed in their comments, Malaya commented, "You know what though, sometimes some words just don't translate literally to English." Another student asked what she meant by her comment. Malaya replied, "Well, it just seems that some words from Tagalog [in English], just aren't the same." The members then discussed that mayabang is very close to being a literal translation to arrogant but the context of how it is said also dictates its actual meeting. The students went on to discuss other Pilipino words like "gigil" and "lambing" that don't have a literal translation or whose context dictates their meaning.

Although not done often, the word/phrase of the day was also used to segue into discussions about Pilipino/a history. Leading up to Cesar Chavez Day, "isang bagsak" was chosen as the appropriate phrase of the day. Isang bagsak in English translates into "one fall" but it also is a term that stood for solidarity among Pilipino/as and Latino/as during the United Farm Workers movement in California in the 1960s. Isang bagsak is also a symbolic action signifying unity. In the club, isang bagsak started off with a slow clap leading to a crescendo ultimately ending in a single joint clap standing for solidarity among all those that participated.

During the meeting, those facilitating the discussion asked the participants if they knew what isang bagsak meant in English. Several students could easily translate the phrase. Then the discussion facilitators asked if anybody knew its relevance to Cesar Chavez Day. Most of the students at that meeting did not know the relevance; but a couple of the students had heard of the unity clap based on their experience with seeing it at other functions outside of the club. After one of the board members explained its relevance to the United Farm Workers movement, Nimuel exclaimed, "How come I never heard of that before?" The questions hung in the air with

no specific answer, and the meeting moved on as the club members decided to practice the isang bagsak unity clap. In this case, the phrase of the day also ended up being an activity that members could participate in during the general meetings. Isang bagsak was brought up on other days, although not as part of the phrase of the day portion of the meeting, but rather as an important reference for continuing to build unity among the members.

Ang Balita ng Konseho ng Kapisanan—Club Council Report

At most meetings, the club council report followed the word/phrase of the day. This portion of the meeting was reserved for the club council representative to report back on the at-large campus activities. The club council representative would also be able to solicit input for any outstanding matters relevant to representing the club to the at-large student body. For instance, before homecoming festivities, the club council representative announced the date for the homecoming dance and carnival during this portion of the meeting. The club council representative also solicited suggestions for possible food items that would be provided at the dance and carnival. Several of the club members suggested certain foods including lumpia, the Pilipino/a egg roll. The club members also voted on the club's choice for homecoming king and queen. For the most part, the club council report portion of the meetings informed club members of activities and provided representation of the club for campus wide activities in this manner.

Usapan—Open Discussion

One key portion of the meeting was a weekly open discussion regarding relevant Pilipino/a issues or general topics pertinent to the club and its members. Typically, the board members had a discussion topic planned; other times, a discussion topic derived from an earlier portion of the meeting, as was the case for when students discussed isang bagsak. Another

example came in October, when the students recognized Pilipino American History month. During this discussion, the students recalled the involvement of Pilipino/as in the Delano Grape Strikes. Some students questioned why Larry Itliong, a major figure who is Pilipino is not as publicized as other figures in that historical event. I even remember Ligaya asking, "How come we don't talk about him?" Then others would chime in with their own comments. The open discussion section of the meeting was the time when club members engaged in more critical dialogue. Table 3 lists the weekly open discussion topics the group undertook. The section following highlights several of the discussion topics with direct quotations from participants.

Table 3

Open Discussion Topic by Week

Week	Open Discussion Topic
1	Experience with other Pilipino/as and learning about Pilipino/a culture
2	Manong Larry Itliong's 100th birthday
3	Pilipino/a American History Month
4	Homecoming carnival and king/queen nominations
5	Pilipino/a mythical creatures
6	Potential tour of Pilipino/a historic town/Election
7	Why did you join this club?
8	What are our members' expectations of the club?
9	First and second generation
10	Are you taking a major your choice or are you taking a major your parents want you to do?
11	Talent Show
12	Elections
13	What would you like out of this club?

Note. Not all meetings had an open discussion portion. Furthermore, table is not representative of the total number of meetings during the academic year. Data represent recorded open discussion topic as reported by meeting minutes or newsletter.

***Usapan ng Kultura*—Discussing Culture**

As evidenced above, club members frequently engaged in discussions regarding Pilipino/a culture. The following section is a transcription of the groups' open discussion on

Pilipino culture. This provides an example of how the club members typically engaged in dialogue during the open discussion portion of the general meetings. The start of the following discussion was prompted by a comedic video that highlighted Pilipino/a cultural traditions including customary gestures to greet your elders. Because it was a new semester, the open discussion started with a question about why the members joined Mabuhay club. Several students answered:

Ramos: To make new friends.

Clarice: To learn about the Pilipino culture.

Rene: I guess for myself, I have a lot of Pilipino friends. I already know about the culture, but I want to know more about the culture. I want to know about the language, where it came from, or the origin of it.

Juan: I barely speak Tagalog.

Cory: Okay, so learning the language a little bit.

Juan: I understand it, but I don't speak it.

Cory: It's okay. I understand, I'm in the same boat as you. Ask my mother. She's like, "Your Tagalog is horrible."

The meeting participants were then prompted by the facilitators to describe their general interaction with other Pilipino/as.

Cory: One of the big things about Pilipinos is that they're very welcoming to everyone. And yes, they always offer food. If you go to a Pilipino party, they always offer you food; they make sure you do eat something. Because if you don't, that's actually considered rude.

Vicki, a Vietnamese club member, indicated that this was similar to her background, while Cory brought up how common it was to not practice customary ways of greeting others.

> Vicki: They use the Western way of greeting, kind of just hugging and stuff like that. It's basically uncommon now to see people still actually doing that.
>
> Cory: Yeah, I get your point, and I see it, too. It's kind of unfortunate because with the new generation, they're not being taught these traditional cultural traits, and it is a little sad to see that. Just knowing it's not being taught anymore. I think it's something we want to bring back. We want to respect the tradition. Obviously, we want to respect our elders. So when you see an elder, please "mano po."
>
> Rene: I went recently to the Philippines, and of course, I was totally Westernized. I was doing that to all the elders, and they really liked it. They're surprised.
>
> Cory: Yeah, it shows that you're respectful to your elders. It's something they're looking for. When you go to a Filipino household, when you see elders, obviously you want to "bless" them. It shows a sign of respect. And always use the word "po" because that shows a sign of respect, too. Otherwise, you will get smacked in the head. [laughter]

The above discussion is a short peek into how conversations would evolve from initial questions that meeting facilitators asked the club members. Many of the open discussions developed in a similar manner. Someone would ask a question and others chimed in with their thoughts. The discussions would continue until the meeting would organically move on to discussing another matter.

One particular open discussion that stood out was a when the club members discussed their identity as first, one-point-five, or second-generation immigrants. For open discussion that

day, I brought an article that I found online that was written in first person based on one Pilipino student's experience with their parents. The article highlighted some of the challenges that Pilipino youth encounter when interacting with their parents. One of the issues dealing with generational gaps as discussed in the article resonated with many of the club members. When asked the question of if it was difficult to talk to their parents, several of the students responded:

> Don: Yeah. It's really difficult especially if they're from a different country, and then they come down here. Having like generation—through generation and talk about what's going on, it's really hard because of the understanding between each other. That's the thing.
>
> Cory: I understand it too, but also like, the way they were raised. They would try to, for example, like with my mother—She would try to duplicate what her mother did to raise her. Then she would try to duplicate that on us, but the problem was that I was only half, and my other half is American, so I was kind of juggling between the two.

Someone then posed a question if anyone knew the difference between first generation, one-point-five generation, and second generation. Naka, who was of Japanese heritage, answered:

> Isn't first generation just when you're born in that country, one-point-five is like when you live there for a few years, and then you came over here? It's like some people move to America when they're eight. And second is when your parents were born there and you were born here. So yeah, I'm second generation.

Several of the meeting participants then proceeded to identify themselves in a similar fashion whether as one, one-point-five, or second generation. Then someone posed a question of

whether parents should try to relate more to their children, or vice versa. Clarice and Cory answered with the following exchange:

> Clarice: It's mostly my mom that I deal with, because the ideals, like gay marriage and all that stuff, here it's pretty much okay now, right? And then my mom is just always pushing her ideals to certain people. But the thing is for me, it's not because I'm—it's not because I'm adjusted here, it's even in the—It's not even me; it's in my culture. I think it's just the time that we were raised in.
>
> Cory: Yeah, yeah. That's usually the issue, the time that you were raised in. Things have changed dramatically over the last couple years, so yeah, I could understand that.

This discussion then turned to the question of what happens to their home culture as immigrants. Several members explained:

> Don: For me, since I was born here, it's hard to backtrack your culture as being Filipino, because the only last generation of being old school is pretty much your grandparents and your parents, since they were born there. Since we were born here, it's hard to find our actual culture and traditions because we got so used to the American way. It's like, "What happened in the Philippines? What's going on there?" It's hard to actually find your roots, so that's why. Well, that's mine—that's my story for me.
>
> Cory: I guess for me, I had a hard time embracing my culture because I was born and raised here. I guess it's that whole not knowing the American movement, but that whole Western movement, also Europe as well. I guess that the majority of people having an issue with this, it's a matter of belonging. And some people will feel like if they try to embrace their Filipino culture or whatever, they'd be kind of like an outcast. So I guess

they try to balance their traditional culture of being Filipino, but also bringing in that Western culture of being American. And there's always issues with that as well, that's why people kind of lose their identity as to who they really are, because you can say that you are Filipino, but if you were born and raised here, you can also say that you're American. So you don't really know who you are. That's why for myself, for example, I'm trying to embrace my Filipino culture more, which is why I'm part of this club. I'm also part of a non-profit organization that deals with Filipinos, so I'm starting to really join these Filipino communities to really embrace my traditional culture, which is Filipino. And that's one of the things that my mother tried to do, but I was very stubborn and I ignored it, until I realized that she was trying to have me embrace my traditional roots.

At this point, I asked the group whether participating in the club helped them to embrace or preserve their culture. They replied:

Cory: It doesn't really rectify it, but it's a start. Because then you have it in your mind that embracing your culture is something that you really need to do. It's just a matter of truly identifying yourself as to who you really are as a person.

Malaya: Well, it's not really a Filipino thing. It is part of our culture where we have to obey our parents, and their parents obey their parents. So there is a thing about obeying authority that, for me, personally, I feel ashamed. Kind of ashamed of tradition. Here, in America, where, when you turn 18, you move out of the house and your parents don't have reign over you, you have to find a job if you're going to do anything. That kind of clashes because in Filipino culture, it's the—you, as a child, are supposed to obey your

parents until you get married. Or until you have your own children, I guess. I had a point, and then I lost it. [laughing]

Don: When you started, it sounded like more of a thing out of respect.

Cory: I was just trying to say that. It's more like—you kind of want to show your respect to your parents, and embrace your culture up to a certain point.

Malaya: It ties in with trying to preserve your culture.

Ramos: Yeah.

Myself: I think what you're trying to say is that your parents pass on these values to you.

Naka: And you kind of want to leave a legacy. You don't want to just like forget about your values, like your culture and stuff. For me, I'm Japanese, I should embrace my Japanese culture, because once my mom's gone, I have to show my kids, Japanese...

Don: I was going to talk about that. When I heard Cory talk, I just wanted to add more to it. I was just thinking more of self-gratitude, for, you know, understanding what this is. I just wanted to talk about - which is passing something along that you are in favor of, and just embody, as a culture. Everyone said what I was going to say.

Ramos: I was going to say; I guess that's why I think it's important to us, kind of to reserve it.

As shown by the two discussions showcased above, the members of Mabuhay explored issues of culture in their dialogue during the open discussion portions of general meetings. It is also important to note that not all club members were of Pilipino/a background. For example, Naka referenced his Japanese heritage while Vicki from the first conversation had a Vietnamese

background. Regardless of their background, club members seemed to be open and to appreciate the opportunity to discuss topics related to their culture, within the setting of the club meetings.

***Laro Para Makilala*—Icebreaker**

The last portion of the meeting was an interactive activity. The students called them icebreakers even though they were typically played toward the end of the meetings. During this portion of the meeting, club members interacted with each other in a form of a game or activity. Table 4 shows the icebreakers that the club members played during the general meetings for the second year.

Table 4

Icebreaker Activity by Week

Week	Icebreaker Activity
1	Human Bingo
2	Two truths/one lie
3	Candy facts
4	Check your privilege

Note. Not all meetings had an icebreaker portion. Furthermore, table is not representative of the total number of meetings during the academic year. Data represents recorded open discussion icebreaker activity as recorded by meeting minutes or from field notes.

For one of the icebreakers, the club members played human bingo. Each member would have a bingo card with phrases that the students associated with the Pilipino/a culture. For example, a card would have a phrase like "eats with their fingers" or "has a 'kuya' (Tagalog for older brother) or 'ate' (Tagalog for older sister)." The cardholder would then go around the room and search for another club member that associated with that trait or quality. The students would play until someone completed their card, which indicated a winner. The icebreaker activities were used only occasionally during the year. Yet each one was essential in helping the club members build their community on our campus. The icebreakers incorporated Pilipino/a culture

aspects as well, offering a small point of reference for members to engage aspects of Pilipino/a culture.

The previous sections were a glimpse into the week-by-week activities of the club as they participated in the general meetings throughout the study. The next sections highlight several significant events that occurred during the second semester of year two. The following describes the events that led to the formalization of this study with the club.

Hayag ang Proyektong Pananaliksik—Announcing the Research Project

A significant event in relation to this research was my announcement to the club of my intention to formalize our processes as a study. After institutional considerations were accomplished in relation to conducting a study on our campus, I was able to discuss with Mabuhay members what the research entailed. My announcement to the students of the study caused me some anxiety. I wrote in my notes regarding this event:

> I am and have been nervous about disclosing to my students that I am interested in chronicling the growth of our student organization as my dissertation study. The process of PAR is that you are working with your research participants as co-researchers in action related to an objective. Formalizing such a process for a dissertation seems to be incongruent with the process of PAR. I do think that I have come to some sort of understanding that with any process there are limitations. Ideally in this process the research would have started when the students tried to reform the group. But now I am only starting the formal research process four semesters after the fact. Thus, it is necessary to get across that this research study as constructed is based on the ideas and actions of the students.

When I spoke to the students, they expressed their interest in the project. Most of us—myself included—were not quite sure what the study would evolve into except for continuing in our club's development. Several of the club members would keep the study in mind as the year went on. In one instance, as I stopped by an area on campus where several of the club members were selling Pilipino/a pastries as part of a fundraiser, the students asked me about the study. About this encounter, I wrote in my journal: "I was surprised when one the students brought up the dissertation project. It seems they are interested in the process as well. The students were interested in having a list of questions that would be useful in the process."

Hence, it was from this expressed interest that participants came to decide on creating a survey (see Appendix A) to gauge how members perceived the club and to extrapolate member expectations from the club moving forward. The responses from this survey will be discussed in a later section.

***Humahanap parin ng Kultura*—Still Seeking Culture**

As mentioned previously, during the second semester of the club's first year, the members were interested in hosting a cultural night event on our campus. Unfortunately, we were unable to host the event due to myriad planning challenges that we could not overcome. In the second year, however, the club members maintained an interest in participating in similar forms of culturally relevant activities. One of the activities that the students planned during the second year was an excursion to the historic Pilipino town close to our campus. Club members wanted to pick a day when the student organization would host a tour of certain landmarks, including monuments and murals that were relevant to the history of Pilipino/as living in our

area. In planning discussions, Cory explained the purpose for the club excursion in the following way:

> What it is, is that—the majority of people don't know—when it comes to the history of the Philippines, they only know from when we were colonized by the Spanish till today. But there's so much history prior to that that not a lot of people know about. And that's what we want to let our members know about. And plus, the mural's one of the biggest in all of [the area]. It's huge. We'll talk about the mural and the meanings behind the visuals and everything.

As part of the excursion, the club members were also interested in eating at a local Pilipino/a restaurant. During one of the meetings, the students discussed their desire to eat Pilipino food with each other as part of the excursion as well as moving forward in other club activities.

> Paulo: I've never eaten Filipino food before, so this will be a totally new experience for me. I'm looking forward to it.
>
> Cory: One of the experiences we're going to have is we're going to try a lot of different Filipino foods. We'll do what we can to try and bring some to the meetings if it's possible.

Furthermore, several students were interested in playing Pilipino/a traditional games.

> Clarice: I have another idea if you guys want. I guess speaking of the Filipino food, I kind of want the members to experience the old, or traditional games that we'd play in the Philippines. Probably have a park day or something, and then we'll play Tiko or something.

Cory: Yes, we'll plan a day where we can all go to a park and maybe experience some of these traditional games . . . It's a good way for us, as members, to bond.

The planning for the excursion day went on throughout a whole semester. A day was picked and an agenda was set for the day. Unfortunately, the club was not able to have the excursion day because several of the members had to discontinue their participation. One student had family commitments that prevented him from participating in many of the club's functions, while a couple of other students were forced to focus their time on their classes. This resulted in only three or four active board members at one time during significant parts of the year. Thus, the challenge of dwindling participation from board members proved to be insurmountable for carrying out the group plan for an excursion day.

One event that the club successfully put together was a talent show, which was collaboratively planned with two other clubs on campus. Several club members during the year had indicated their interest in having some sort of event that would allow them to showcase their creative talents in the form of dance or song. Mabuhay's club council representative brought the idea of the talent show to the club council. A couple of the other clubs were interested, and a campus-wide talent show was agreed upon to be put together by three clubs including Mabuhay. Although, Mabuhay played a significant role in generating the idea and interest for the event, another club took on the primary responsibilities for handling logistical matters. Regardless, our club members participated in the event as performers, and their participation in the collaboratively planned talent show culminated in hosting a cultural event solely planned by our club. This Mabuhay event would finally be accomplished in the fifth semester of the club's re-creation.

Tatlong Taon—Year Three

Year two ended with the successful participation of the club members in the talent show. We were four semesters into the re-creation of the Pilipino/a student organization on our campus. As we transitioned from our second year to our third year, I recognized one of the most significant challenges to maintaining a student-run organization on campus. Student transfer or attrition each year created a new dynamic based on the club's new membership configuration. Thus, participation and engagement of the club would be contingent on this dynamic between all of the club participants, including myself as their club advisor. It also dawned on me that as years passed and as students moved on, if I were to maintain my role as faculty advisor, I would be the person who linked all of the club's experiences dating back to its inaugural year. With that in mind, I went into Year Three trying to instill a greater focus on the club's leadership with regard to its commitment and effort toward club activities. I even prefaced the club elections with this sentiment:

> For next year, we want to make sure you are committed to being on the board for the whole year. We want to take Mabuhay to the next level, and that takes commitment, it takes time, it takes, effort. If your schedule doesn't allow it, that's okay, but we want to make sure you're up front about your commitment to moving our student group forward.

As previously mentioned, several of the board members were unable to continue as officers in the club at various points during year two. It was evident when some of our plans went unrealized that having consistent leadership was necessary in ensuring activities were would be enacted. Thus, I wanted to be clear about my own expectations for board members moving into the third year of the organization re-creation.

As the second year ended, Mabuhay held its second full election. A new board was elected consisting of Cory—president, Don—vice president, Ramos—treasurer, Paulo—outreach coordinator, and Malaya—club council representative. During our last meeting, the group decided to distribute a survey, which we hoped would help us be better prepared for the upcoming year. The survey also would give us a better understanding of what club members expected from the club.

***Pulong ng Taginit*—Summer Meeting**

At the end of the second year, we agreed that the board should have a full-day retreat for planning for the next year. Again, other commitments from board members and myself prevented us from holding a full-day event. Instead we met for a condensed lunch meeting during which we reviewed the survey from the past year. Table 5 shows the responses members gave for each of the eight questions posed in the survey.

Table 5

Survey Answers

Questions	Written-in Survey Responses
1. What does participating in a Pilipino/a club mean to you?	• It means I am coming out of my shell and gaining self-confidence. • It shows that we have a voice in the community. • It means I was able to go back to my roots and share my experience and values I learned being Pilipino. • It means I learn more about the culture. • Participating in a Pilipino club means taking the steps towards understanding my culture. • To me it means learning more about the culture and its people. • It means to know more people. • To learn new things and hang with new people. • To be part of the club. And treat like family. • Being part of a community/organization. • Participating in the Pilipino club means to serve the students needs whether they're Pilipino or not. • To get close to the Pilipino culture. • Becoming involved in Pilipino culture. • It means we get to interact with others, we learn from each other, discover new things. • I get to meet more Pilipinos! • As a non-Pilipino person, it helped me learn about the Pilipino culture. • It means family.
2. Why did you join Mabuhay?	• Because I like the culture. • I have friends in Mabuhay club and another reason I joined was to learn about Pilipino culture. • To meet more Pilipinos. • Because of a friend. • Friends told me to join. • To learn about the Philippines. • Because I'm half-Pilipino. • Help and serve the people. • To learn more about Pilipino culture and fellowship. • To make new friends. • I joined it because of my Pilipino friend. • Because I wanted to learn more about the culture. • I joined because I'm Pilipino and they asked me to. • To learn more about Pilipino culture. • I joined because I wanted to contribute to the spread and growth of the club. • To have a better understanding of Pilipino culture and make new friends. • Friends

Table 5, cont.

3. Why do you think it is important to have such a club on campus?	• A To learn more about Pilipino culture. • To show that we have a voice. • For representation of culture and to help those people understand the culture and to diminish the ignorance that surrounds the culture. • Because you learn about different cultures on campus. • Some people need to know about their heritage. Others just want to know in the name of knowledge. • Unity. • So people can learn about the culture and its people. • Because we all need to represent in our culture. • Pilipino culture. • Because it's to learn more about Pilipino culture. • It promotes cultural awareness. • Because we can show the history and culture of the Pilipinos around the world. • Because it's cool. • So people are more involved and aware of the culture. • Networking. • It is important because students can give ideas to other fellow students. It can give students to be able to express themselves from other cultures. • So I can meet more Pilipinos. • I think any cultural club is important to have on any campus. • To spread awareness of the Pilipino culture.
4. Are there any specific challenges that make your participation in college challenging (family, legal, financial)? How can our club help you through these challenges?	• Well my biggest challenge is time management but there's a friend in cabinet that'll help me with that. • Study groups. • Friends, family. Being able to be more interacted. • Busy w/school. • Work. • Work. • Selling and working. • Financially, family, psychological. • Work and school. • Being an immigrant. • Family and financial. Spreading the knowledge of American college and how it works. • Financial. By having ways to better myself.

Table 5, cont.

5. What do you want to get out of this club?	• Engaging experience. • Friendships, leadership, and a better understanding of my culture. • For people to feel welcome and have another family. • I want the club to make more money in the future. • I don't know. • It improves my knowledge of the language. • Information to learn about Pilipino culture. • To get a job. • Experience in working together as a team. • Working together as a team. • Friendships. Un novio. • I want to learn more about what other peoples aspects is. • Leadership skills. • A sense of culture and an actual experience of what it means to be Pilipino.
6. What type of events and activities would you like to see our club do moving forward?	• Pilipino rave. Water gun fight. Movie night. Pool party. Potluck party. (putos and lumpia) • A mix of cultural events and fun events. • Do fun interesting activities that can help change us. • Go to Pilipino cultural events and food. • Community service/feeding the homeless. Meet with other Pilipino clubs from other colleges. • More Pilipino culture. Mabuhay picnic. Go to the beach. • The kind of activities would be icebreakers to know each other more. • More outside activities. • Talent show. • Talent show. More fundraisers and more interaction with other clubs. • A club retreat. • Car wash, talent show, and cultural trips. • Culture.
7. What topics would you like to discuss in the future?	• History, culture, traditions, myths, historic people, etc. • Pilipino food! And what Pilipino people do for fun. • Topics based on my career. • Culture, traditions, and words/phrases • Culture, traditions, and words/phrases of the Pilipinos • More Pilipino culture. • The history of the culture. • LGBT rights and activists. • Just future talks: what do you hope to accomplish on behalf of the Pilipinos? How can more knowledge of the Philippine culture help you in understanding yourself? Etc. • More Pilipino topics to learn more about the culture. • Anything Pilipino related. • Culture.

Table 5, cont.

8. What do you hope for the club in the future?	• For it to grow. • As a culture club, I hope to be more educated about the culture, like traditions, language, celebration, stories… • I want it to become a bigger club and connect with the Bay Cities College students. • More club get together and outside activity. • More membership. • To grow bigger.

***Paggawa ng Kahulgan*—Making Sense of the Survey**

We started reviewing the surveys by dividing the completed ones among our group and asking everyone to pick out certain items that stood out in club members' responses. After Malaya read all of the responses on her survey, she pointed out that a club member indicated that he joined the club because he was half Pilipino. Several of the board members responded.

> Ramos: Maybe we can touch on how half Pilipinos are compared to full Pilipinos, because they're pretty different. For example, with me, I basically grew up with an American lifestyle until high school. I didn't really embrace my Pilipino side until right after high school going into college.
>
> Cory: Thinking about how sometimes you don't corporate your "Pilipinoness" into your everyday activities. Maybe that's why students join the Pilipino club.
>
> Malaya: Yeah, to get a sense of identity.

Ramos then brought up that on one of his surveys, many of the responses were about learning more about Pilipino culture. Much of the board agreed that we could incorporate more Pilipino aspects into the club activities. Ramos added:

> Which does make sense because you hear a lot about the Pilipino culture in general. But even if you go through a history class, do you learn—do you know anything about the Pilipino culture? No, because they don't teach it. So if we give our members that

opportunity of learning the history of the Philippines, and the traditions and everything, and that would benefit everyone, so that we're not a forgotten culture. "What do you want to get out of the club?" For people to welcome and to have another family. Because I feel like as Pilipinos, we're very comfortable, we're very family-oriented—that's a big deal. We need our members to feel that.

Other participants mentioned that, in the surveys they were reviewing, several club members wrote down that coming together as a family was one of the reasons for participating in Mabuhay. The group agreed that club members wanted to come together for a purpose, and that it was our role as a board to facilitate a meaningful experience. Then I asked several of the board members about their own personal impressions of the club.

Myself: How do you think you guys did as a club this year?

Malaya: I think we did well.

Cory: I feel like the talent show was a big hit. A lot of people came up to me and said, "Are you going to do a talent show again?" That's something we need to talk about, because I know more clubs also want to participate in that as well . . . We should have one excursion this year; we definitely need to do that. It's also a good way for people to just get away from the area.

Myself: Did you guys have fun with the club?

Paulo: The one year I've been in Maharlika club, yeah, I had fun; I had a good time.

Myself: I'm just curious, what makes it fun?

Paulo: I also find it informational, because last semester, I actually got the chance to learn about—more about Pilipino culture that I haven't learned before. Especially all the fairy tales, the political situation there, and stuff like that.

Myself: What about you?

Malaya: What did I like about Mabuhay club?

Myself: Yeah, what did you like about it? What do you want to see continue? What do you want to see improve?

Mayala: I wish that we could get more members. Because I think last semester a lot of people were juggling between [another] club and our club. I guess we're going to have to talk to the [other] club, because they're the ones that our conflicting with our members. The talent show was really good though. I was impressed, because I joined Mabuhay last semester, and we weren't as active as we were last semester.

Myself: Do you think you could even be more active? Can you engage more? Is that something you guys want to do?

Malaya: I think so. I think also the articles we read, that was interesting.

Myself: Yeah. That was a cool conversation that we had. I love that, when people are just able to talk and feel comfortable. I'm hoping that we can do more of those type of activities, where it's just people exploring that side of themselves...

Malaya: And talking about it.

We ended by expressing our excitement about what the upcoming year had in store for us and how the club would engage the desires and expectations of the members.

Suriin ng Saligang Batas—Reviewing Our Constitution

The third year of our club started. The board was meeting for the first time in the new semester. We had our one meeting over the summer but had not met since. During this first meeting of the year, we revisited the constitution of the club and took action to review its content. To start, we reviewed the mission of the club, as stated in the first four articles of the constitution. The first article read:

> Mabuhay is organized for the enrichment of the quality of student life in the Bay Cities Campus. The organization shall aim to render every possible form of assistance necessary to aid members in the completion of their education, but also to assist them in their chosen fields of endeavor.

After the first article was read out loud, we went around and discussed its relevance to our current club. Malaya started:

> It's pretty informative. It encompasses whatever we believe in.

I asked if there was anything that we needed to revise. Paulo replied:

> The one thing that stood out to me was the phrase that says "assist them in their chosen fields of endeavor." What I was thinking about is that is pretty good, because whatever expectations or endeavors we're trying to—whatever that we're trying to do in life, we should mentor each other and support each other.

The participants agreed that the first article of the constitution suited us well. The next article of the constitution was then discussed. It read:

> Mabuhay shall place efforts in positive manners to cultivate community and campus interest in the Pilipino culture.

Ramos initiated the responses:

> I feel like it's a good thing to spread the Pilipino culture around because not a little of people know about it, or they know basic stuff, so I feel like instilling that around campus will expose us a little more. And that way, we can bring in more members, and just find a way to interest them in being part of us

Several of the students felt that the statement should be more inclusive of other cultures because the club consisted of students not only from Pilipino/a backgrounds.

> Cory: For me, for this one, to not only cultivate the Pilipino community, it should be every community around campus. Every culture. Because as you can see, our club is not only Pilipinos, it's diverse. Our board is diverse.
>
> Don: Half of our board isn't even Pilipino in any way.
>
> Rene: So it shouldn't only go with Pilipino culture, it should be everyone.
>
> Don: Maybe with that one—just change the words around, so instead of just focusing on the Pilipino community, which is our main focus, but involve everyone.

The group agreed to reword the second article of the constitution to be more inclusive of other cultures. We then moved on to discussing the third article of the constitution.

> Mabuhay shall seek avenues to establish a solidarity built on a foundation of pride, trust, intimacy, and subtlety.

The students agreed on the concept of solidarity founded on pride, trust, and intimacy but were confused by the word subtlety. Don joked, "It makes it seem like we're doing it secretly, but with 'pride, trust, and intimacy.'"

We agreed that we could leave word "subtlety" out of this portion. The fourth article of the constitution was then read and discussed:

> This organization is not for the private gain of any particular individual. The club will not partake in any activities which will benefit any entity other than the club as a whole.

This statement seemed confusing for many of the members. Malaya thought that the sentiment made club participation somewhat exclusive. We agreed that it should be omitted from the constitution.

After we reviewed the first four articles of the Mabuhay constitution pertaining to the club's mission, the club members reviewed mission statements from various schools found online. Several of the board members pointed out items what they would like to incorporate into our mission statement. Cory commented on relaying in our mission what the club provided to students on our campus.

> It's providing our members a home. It's just the fact that it's called Mabuhay Club. It's obviously Pilipino. And what I want to get out of this, is to have everyone feel like they belong. I don't want any outsiders or outcasts in our organization either. Just relaying the message to everyone that we do provide that comforting feeling. And just like you mentioned, talking about comparing—not necessarily comparing cultures – but tying us – learning what your culture is like, and that way we can either relate to it, it's just a good way of learning about what everyone's culture is about. That's the one that got my attention, providing everyone a home. Like they belong.

Although there were still several sections that we had not covered, many of the board members had to excuse themselves from the meeting to attend classes. So the group agreed to

put together a shared document of the constitution that everyone can access and revise. In this way, the members could review and revise the Mabuhay constitution, until the task was completed.

Pag*papahayag ng Kultura*—Talent Show

Mabuhay was in the fifth semester of the club during the time of this writing. As discussed by the board during our summer meeting and presemester meeting, we had many ambitious events and activities planned for the third year of Mabuhay. At the time of this study, some of the plans were still in progress. For example, our cultural excursion and the project of reviewing and revising our constitution were still in progress. However, one exciting event that Mabuhay was able to execute was our very own talent show.

Throughout the fifth semester of the club, the students were intent on riding the momentum of the initial talent show from year two of the club toward holding our own talent show. The talent show was galvanized when two board members attended a local Pilipino/a organization's gathering. There they met an individual that mentioned to them that they had *tinikling* sticks they could lend to our club. Tinikling sticks are used for a form of Pilipino/a cultural dance in which the sticks are tapped on the ground and slid against each other in rhythm while dancers step over and around the sticks. Having access to the tinikling sticks afforded a way for club members to exhibit this cultural expression.

I had spoken to Malaya about my own experience participating in a Pilipino/a cultural club when I was in college. I remembered from that time as a club member participating in practices and performances for the tinikling dance on my own campus. I was very excited about the students in our club having a similar experience. Malaya spearheaded the efforts when she

picked up the tinikling sticks and brought them to my office for storage. She and Ramos did well to take care of any logistical matters in reserving the space and handling any bureaucratic matters pertaining to holding a talent show on our campus. Although it was a talent show held by the Mabuhay club, other students from the campus would be able to perform as well. In light of this, Malaya was instrumental in setting up the auditions for the talent show. During one of the auditions, we even had time to discuss my writing up of this study thus far. She expressed her understanding of why these cultural events and types of clubs were important to students. Malaya would also be key in choreographing the tinikling dance and, as the show was approaching, I got word that she had also written a dramatic skit.

After much preparation, the talent show day had arrived. I felt an initial disappointment as I entered the venue when I noticed that there were not many people in the audience. But I was not disappointed in the students and their performances. In particular, the level of sophistication of the skit that the club put together was impressive. Malaya's skit had multiple settings that resembled a short play. The skit was about Jose Rizal, a Philippine national hero, during his travels to Spain. It was a mixture of history and fiction that showcased the creativity of the students and their imagination in engaging their heritage.

The talent show ended with the students performing their tinikling dance, which they had practiced three days a week for the past several weeks. After the show, I approached each of the club members who had performed. They were extremely satisfied with how it turned it out. I told each one of them how proud I was of them and their hard work.

To be Continued Kuwento

The end of this talent show event marked the end of this study but not the end of the Mabuhay club at Bay Cities College, which continues to meet the cultural and personal expectations of its members. In this way, the study honors the true aim of participatory action research: creating alternative cultural spaces for voice, participation, and emancipatory cultural life. With this in mind, the last chapter offers analysis of the participations and actions of the club with respect to the research questions that drove the study. Offering a better understanding of their culture, the Mabuhay club provided members an avenue for bicultural affirmation allowing conclusions for a Pin@y praxis to emerge.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

This study has chronicled the development of a Pilipino/a student organization at a community college. The previous chapter displayed, in *kuwento* format, the experiences of reestablishing Mabuhay from its new beginning to its current state. This final chapter highlights key themes and issues that student participants encountered as they engaged their club. Central to this study was the critical examination of how students navigated biculturalism in their lived experiences participating in postsecondary education. In particular, this chapter engages the original research questions to gain insight into the impact that a Pilipino/a student organization had on its members. Furthermore, the community building concepts associated with Pinayist Pedagogy are engaged in synthesizing the experiences of the students of Mabuhay. The chapter concludes with recommendations for moving forward from the lessons learned in this study.

Finding Meaning in a Student Organization

How do Pilipino/a students perceive the overall impact of their participation in a Pilipino/a student organization to their community college experience?

The intent of the first research question was to decipher the reason why students would join a Pilipino/a student club. Observations and comments from the club members were utilized to clarify why members chose to participate in a Pilipino/a student club. In the following sections, I juxtapose comments made by students in the very first meeting of the club to comments made by students at the end of the club's second year. Specifically, the responses from questions one through three in the student survey are relevant to understanding student perceptions of the club's impact on their community college experience (see Appendix B). The

initial comments highlight the expectations of the students as they entered into the new experience of having their own Pilipino/a student organization. The comments made at the end of year two show the progress and development of the club from its inception. Furthermore, the statements from the students underscore the significant elements that the club provided (and provides) its participants and what students continue to expect from the club. In examining the comments from the students at these two points, several themes stood out in the students' perception of how Mabuhay can or has impacted their individual experiences.

Building an Inclusive Community

Pinayist Pedagogy is a revolutionary praxis putting Pin@ys at the center of dialogue toward the intersecting challenges that colonized populations are forced to navigate (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). It promotes self and community development through a process of connecting with others. Essentially it is a praxis based on building community. In concert with this perspective, these key concepts in the process of building an inclusive community were at the heart of the Mabuhay study.

From its initial re-conception through its next stages of development, the members of Mabuhay were consistent in articulating their desire to build a community that could meet their needs for social activities linked to cultural connections. Specifically, as the students discussed their expectations and hopes for the club during the first meeting, it stood out that the students wanted to create and promote their community through this student organization. James's comments explicitly addressed the Pilipino community at Bay Cities College. He mentioned that he felt that Pilipino/as were not well represented at Bay Cities College. Specifically, James asserted that there was no unified voice to advocate for the concerns of his community and

culture. In turn, James hoped that the club would function to play that role and be that cohesive body.

The other students sensed a similar need. Although their comments were less direct, they too communicated this sentiment. The students sought to create and sustain their own supportive community—one they had not experienced at their school. For example, Vicki and Carolina both used the word "bond" in their comments to express the experience that they desired from the club. These two students saw the club as an opportunity to connect with their fellow students based on a shared heritage. Their comments indicated that they were seeking a deeper sense of association to this group of students than that of a surface level social interaction.

Gary and Manuel were also interested in the social aspects of participating in Mabuhay. Manuel was excited that he could be part of a group where he could see "familiar faces" throughout his time at Bay Cities College. Although he did not specifically cite "bonding" in his comments, his sentiments were similar to those of Vicki and Carolina in that he was seeking to have an extended connection with this group of students. Gary's comments are interesting because they articulated why students might typically join a student group. Gary stated that it was an opportunity for him to "meet new people," yet he was still one of the few students to explicitly state this reason. Regardless, Gary's comments indicated his interest in building more relationships through Mabuhay.

Furthermore, as evidenced by the students' comments, building and promoting a sense of community was important to them as they started their student organization. James underscored this sentiment in a later conversation when he explained the benefits of having ethnic student clubs on a college campus. He stated, "It's good to have one just to give the students a sense of

home when they're not at home . . . [so] some of these people can feel like they're actually part of a college thing." His comment subtly highlights the duality that students must navigate when participating in college and the significance of having an inclusive space for minority students. Furthermore, James's comment brought attention to the alienation that he and most others experience as Pilipino/a students when they are unable to find an authentic place of their own within their educational environment. In a similar regard, it is evident that the students had an innate understanding that creating their own Pilipino/a student organization would provide them a community on campus where they could feel at home. Most significantly, in participating in this process, the students enacted the principles of Pinayist Pedagogy. As cited in the literature review, Pinayist Pedagogy—as articulated by Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009)—can have a significant impact in providing a "home" for previously suppressed populations when individuals come together to create spaces for collective growth. Thus, the student organization was a place for the students to have a home on campus and move away from the persistent alienating forces in their educational experiences.

The original 11 members of Mabuhay had expectations for creating and promoting a sense of community through the club. Two years later, club participants were still interested in expanding the community that they had established together. James had hoped that the club would provide a unified voice for Pilipino/as in our community. Cory had similar sentiments in his survey response two years later, when he indicated that participating in the club meant that they had a voice in the larger college community. Don added that, along with having a voice, the club was also a platform for Pilipino/a students to serve their community. Mizpah suggested that simply being part of a community was meaningful enough.

Furthermore, in the initial meeting, Gary and Manuel wanted to meet new people and see familiar faces. Several of the student responses in the student survey indicated that students still viewed Mabuhay as an avenue to do so two years later. This included Dakila, Talim, and Nimuel, who stated that the club was an opportunity for them to meet new people. Along with meeting new people, Vicki and Carolina mentioned in the first meeting that they were interested in the process of bonding. Juan and Tula echoed this sentiment two years later when they responded that being part of the club is like being part of a family. Finally, James was passionate about creating a home for students on our campus. As evidenced by the previous comments, many of the students continued to experience a sense of this community through their participation in Mabuhay. In turn, the essence of Pinayist Pedagogy in creating an inclusive space endured.

Culture and Identity

There were myriad student organizations at Bay Cities College, ranging from academic ones, like the anthropology club, to social ones, like the gaming club. In general, academic clubs provide a platform for students in particular academic disciplines to participate in specific exploration outside of the classroom. Social clubs, on the other hand, generally, provide a space for students to engage their fellow students through a common activity outside of curricular functions. Ethnic student organizations seem to straddle both distinctions, as they offer what could be considered both academic and social aspects to the experience (Inkelas, 2004). Of the students from the first meeting, there were several that directly and indirectly referenced this layered aspect of participation in a Pilipino/a student club. One underlying theme that can be

derived from these comments is their relationship to the learning, understanding, and promotion of culture and its relationship to identity formation.

In their work, Museus and Maramba (2011) and Orsuwan (2011) indicated that there is a need for postsecondary schools to engage the culture of minority students with greater specificity. The comments of the initial club participants provide evidence to this notion. James's comments were both related to promoting community as well as culture. As stated before, the club was seen by students as an opportunity to represent the Pilipino/a community to the at-large Bay Cities College community. But an added element was also geared toward promoting the Pilipino/a culture by educating others. James mentioned that he wanted to bring greater awareness to the distinct qualities of Pilipino/a culture. He hoped to facilitate through the club's activities a deeper understanding of Pilipino/a culture past what can be termed as "lumpia knowledge" that many associate with Pilipino/a culture. *Lumpia knowledge* is a perceived surface-level connection to the Pilipino/a culture by those not consistently engaged in the culture, but who have eaten the fried egg roll known in Pilipino/a as lumpia. Thus, it can be inferred that James and the other members believed that through educating others about and promoting the Pilipino/a culture, Mabuhay would also be promoting solidarity in their community.

James's comments were mostly related to educating others outside of the immediate Pilipino/a community about the Pilipino/a culture. Yet, the other students were also aware that they needed to educate themselves about Pilipino/a culture. Strobel (2001) suggested that this is a critical aspect of decolonization—the need for Pilipino/a cultural and historical knowledge to provide content for the Pilipino/a story. The students of Mabuhay were clear in their need for Pilipino/a cultural and historical knowledge in their expectations for their club. For example,

John mentioned that he was involved in Mabuhay because he was interested in learning Tagalog, one of the languages of the Philippines. It is important to note that Bay Cities College currently does not have any Pilipino/a language courses. Thus, as evidenced by John's comment and the sentiments of the club members that supported his interest, the students found it essential to have an avenue for Pilipino/a language education as part of the academic curriculum. In the case of Bay Cities College, as long as Tagalog is not offered in the academic schedule, students will seek this type of learning experience elsewhere. John indicated that it was his hope that the Pilipino/a student club would provide this language support for him. Furthermore, several other students discussed their desire for deeper exploration into their Pilipino/a identities, which is relevant to learning and understanding their culture. This is also significant in their process of decolonization.

The college-going process can be viewed as an experience of identity formation. Of significance to this idea, Inkelas (2004) identified that ethnic student organizations play a prominent role in promoting a greater sense of identity. This notion was in display as several of the students mentioned their exploration of their Pilipino/a identity as being most significant in their rationale for club participation. During the first meeting, a couple of students posed questions about how the club might affect their identities as students with Pilipino/a backgrounds. Shaun specifically wanted to know what it meant to be Pilipino/a. His hope was that his experience in the club would help lead him to a place where he could comfortably engage this question.

Dolores stated her desire to learn more about their identities as Pilipino/as. Her comments were a clear indication of the biculturalism or duality that minority and Pilipino/a students

specifically experience in their individual development (Darder, 2012). When the original Mabuhay members met, they were hopeful that the club would help facilitate a greater understanding of Pilipino/a culture on our campus. James viewed the club as a conduit for teaching others about Pilipino/a culture. John, on the other hand, expressed that his hope for the club was that it would help him understand more about his culture. Specifically, John was interested in learning the Pilipino/a language. Overwhelmingly, when the students responded to the survey two years later, the majority indicated that they were motivated in their engagement of the club by their need to either promote and/or learn about their Pilipino/a culture. Sixteen students responded to one of the first three questions by indicating that in one form or another they looked to or saw the club as a way to either promote culture or learn about culture. Abian, Ramos, and Rene among others indicated that Mabuhay was important because it helped them to learn about Pilipino/a culture. Diwa, Don, and Nimuel were among others who viewed Mabuhay's importance in terms of its capacity to promote or teach about Pilipino/a culture.

It is important to note that many of the students did not view these as mutually exclusive in their relevance. Rather, students were interested in learning and promoting culture as a symbiotic cycle. Gugma stated that participating in Mabuhay was a step toward understanding her culture—although she indicated that, in learning culture, there are many rationales, including the importance of understanding heritage. She also asserted that it is similarly appropriate for an individual to want to learn for the sake of knowledge itself. Diwa saw his experience in a similar way when he first described the importance of participating in the club.

> It means I was able to get back to my roots and share my experience and values I learned being a Pilipino.

In the process of understanding his own culture through his participation in the club, Diwa believed that Mabuhay was also helping "people understand the culture and to diminish the ignorance that surrounds the culture." Thus, as he was learning, he was teaching. This dual effort is in tune with the process of praxis in which teaching and learning are not linear in their process but dialogical in their quest to produce meaningful experiences through collective voice and participation.

Discussion I

Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009) posited that communal processes can lead to transformative action. They stated, "Pinayism began in the community and has created community, where Pinays (and Pinoys) could come together, share their experience, and possibly plan actions to improve their lives" (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). Relevant to this discussion is the manner in which Mabuhay enacted the principles of Pinayist Pedagogy and, in turn, Pinayism in its processes. As stated by Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento, the first stage of Pinayist Pedagogy as a pedagogical praxis involves identifying problems. In creating their community, Mabuhay was recognizing the absence of an inclusive cultural space in their educational experience. The second and third stage of Pinayist Pedagogy was to analyze the problem and create a plan of action (Tintiango-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). It is evident that students were motivated to participate in Mabuhay because the experience offered them an opportunity to engage in and share their culture while creating an inclusive community. Furthermore, in the bicultural landscape of their community college experience, it is key to understand that these students had to create their own inclusive space so that this understanding and engagement could occur. Students also appeared to be seeking a means to connect to their

culture given the minimal opportunities afforded to them in their mainstream college-going experience. Hence, it seemed that, in this case, students perceived the student organization as an avenue toward greater cultural understanding and engagement. Thus, to address the challenges of the absent spaces for cultural exploration and expression, the students created their own platform to engage in these actions, further cementing the manifestation of Pinayist pedagogy in practice.

In the process of cultural identity formation, the opportunity for students to engage with different aspects of their culture helped facilitate a greater understanding of their heritage and, in turn, led them toward a greater sense of cultural affirmation (Darder, 2012). This process underscores the relevance of Darder's (2012) assertion that the educational experience in the United States is skewed toward a hegemonic or assimilative one that erodes students' cultural knowledge and language. Furthermore, the persistent absence of spaces that provide learning opportunities for Pilipino/a cultural and historical knowledge offers clear evidence of an enduring curriculum of assimilation in mainstream education.

Moreover, this study confirms the assertion of Museus and Maramba (2011) in their findings that postsecondary schools must do a better job of engaging students' cultural background in their academic formation. Also relevant to this study is the manner in which communal work among students can support their decolonization efforts. Strobel (2001) stated that the project of decolonization "requires the development of historical critical consciousness that challenges the master narratives that have defined the Pilipino/a from the outside" (p. vii). In their process of gaining a greater understanding and acknowledgement of their cultural history, the students were also involved in countering the effects of a colonial mentality in their lived experiences (David, 2013; Halagao, 2010; Nadal, 2008; Strobel, 1996).

Club Activities

What do Pilipino/a students identify as effective cultural resources, experiences, and activities provided by a Pilipino/a student organization?

The answer to this question can be summarized based on the discussion by students participating in this study who were seeking ways to engage their culture. The majority of the members of the Pilipino/a student organization at Bay Cities College viewed their club as an avenue toward this cultural engagement. The second research question was intended to identify specific culturally relevant resources, experiences, and activities that these students perceived as supporting their need for greater cultural engagement. This section reviews the experience of Mabuhay as chronicled in this study. Responses to survey questions 6 and 7 (see Table 6) provide insights into this discussion.

Table 6

Responses to Survey Questions 6 and 7

6. What type of events and activities would you like to see our club do moving forward?	• Pilipino rave. Water gun fight. Movie night. Pool party. Potluck party. (putos and lumpia) • A mix of cultural events and fun events. • Do fun interesting activities that can help change us. • Go to Pilipino cultural events and food. • Community service/feeding the homeless. Meet with other Pilipino clubs from other colleges. • More Pilipino culture. Mabuhay picnic. Go to the beach. • The kind of activities would be icebreakers to know each other more. • More outside activities. • Talent show. • Talent show. More fundraisers and more interaction with other clubs. • A club retreat. • Car wash, talent show, and cultural trips. • Culture.
7. What topics would you like to discuss in the future?	• History, culture, traditions, myths, historic people, etc. • Pilipino food! And what Pilipino people do for fun. • Topics based on my career. • Culture, traditions, and words/phrases • Culture, traditions, and words/phrases of the Pilipinos • More Pilipino culture. • The history of the culture. • LGBT rights and activists. • Just future talks: what do you hope to accomplish on behalf of the Pilipinos? How can more knowledge of the Philippine culture help you in understanding yourself? Etc. • More Pilipino topics to learn more about the culture. • Anything Pilipino related. • Culture.

The Significance of Dialogue

As evidenced by student responses, members perceived Mabuhay as being able to engage their culture in myriad ways. Most significant was the manner in which students were able to dialogue with one another, learning about culture through their individual lived experiences,

which they brought to club discussions and activities, as well as through their collective experiences with one another. This was evident even before the club was re-organized, when James hinted at the significance of dialogue in the process of learning culture—as he described his interactions with Asa. One of the most significant observations drawn from the group was in its ability to "help students to just talk." Thus, from the early beginnings of the club, the students saw engagement with one another as a means toward understanding themselves and their cultures. Club members relayed this understanding in a variety of ways. For instance, during the summer meeting, Malaya commented that she enjoyed the articles on Pilipino/a culture that served as prompts for discussion during general meetings. It was not the process of reading the articles that she enjoyed most, rather, she especially valued "talking about it," which afforded her and her fellow members a space for naming their own world (Freire, 1983) and developing and expressing more fully their bicultural Pilipino/a voice (Darder, 2012). Furthermore, the responses from the student survey echoed a similar sentiment, overwhelmingly indicating that Pilipino/a culture is at the forefront of topics that the students wanted to engage in discussion. It can be inferred that many students were seeking engagement with Pilipino/a culture through dialogue, as influenced by its absence in the mainstream curriculum of education. Thus, it was quite clear that students valued the space that Mabuhay provided in facilitating discussions about culture and their lives as bicultural subjects in the United States. Moreover, Mabuhay members were able to "create places where their epistemologies are at the center of discourse/dialogue/conversation" (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009, p.180), ultimately, opening the possibilities, "by perceiving their adhesion, to opt to transform an unjust reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 174).

Expressions of Culture

Along with underscoring the importance of dialogue in the process of learning and understanding culture, the experience of Mabuhay highlighted the relevance of participating in culturally relevant experiences in the form of events and activities. From the student organization's initial attempt to host a cultural night on campus and its proposed but yet-to-be-realized Pilipino/a town excursion, to its successful talent show, participating in events that highlight that the distinctness of their culture was a significant aspect of what Mabuhay club members were seeking from and able to offer its members. Central to the significance of these events and activities was also the students' desire to explore and display everyday expressions of their culture. As evidenced by their responses, the students put forth an array of activities that would support their needs for cultural exploration and expression, which serves as an important reminder of the power of communal knowledge and the ability of students—when provided an affirming bicultural space—to participate in the self-determination of their lives and community.

Furthermore, their responses reinforce issues and elements related to cultural values that they perceived as lacking from the mainstream college-going experience. Several students responded that they would like to continue to have more talent shows in the second-year survey, which provided a place for free cultural expression. When the talent show manifested into reality the next semester, the show became a platform for expressions of Pilipino/a heritage as well, as exemplified by the Jose Rizal dramatization. The tinikling dance was another way that the students were able to creatively articulate their link to Pilipino/a heritage. In essence, the dramatization and dance was a display of the cultural artifacts that the students utilized to regain cultural perspectives and retain an attachment to Pilipino/a culture. Furthermore, the dialogue,

practices, and planning that students participated in as part of preparing for the talent show contributed to the wealth of their collective experience, bringing them closer to the cultural engagement that they were seeking with one another.

Discussion II

The concept of dialogue as described by Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is essential to understanding oneself and the world around in which one lives. Specifically, in moving toward cultural democracy, dialogue is central. Furthermore, Darder (2012) posited that, in the process of dialogue, "bicultural students can experience democratic participation as part of their lived history, as they develop knowledge together, in the spirit of solidarity and a critical understanding of the common good" (p. 101). Thus, when the Mabuhay members overwhelmingly prioritized engaging their background culture in discussion, they were in essence activating their voices and social agency in the quest for cultural democracy. Furthermore, their commitment to participating in dialogue is a testament to the powers and possibilities of cultural communion with others in the process of learning. Henceforth, rooted in the solidarity that is nourished and cultivated through dialogue, action toward a more culturally affirming experience can occur. In the case of Mabuhay, these actions translated into meaningful expressions of cultural heritage and values, as exhibited by their on-going dialogues as well as by communal activities they developed like the skit and dance performance in the talent show. As such, Mabuhay also enacted the principles of Pinayist pedagogy, which is represented "through critical production of art, performance, and engaged scholarship that expresses their perspectives and counternarratives" (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009, p.180). In engaging in dialogue with one another, Mabuhay members were able to name the problem, plan a course of

action to address that problem, analyze their actions, and, if necessary, repeat the cycle of planning, action, and analysis that is essential in praxis and salient in enacting transformative processes. To sum up the significance of dialogue as a communal process, Freire (1970) stated that, through dialogical action, marginalized individuals and groups are able to "meet in cooperation in order to transform the world" (p. 167).

Understanding Biculturalism

In what specific ways do they express that these cultural resources have had an impact on their understanding of themselves as bicultural individuals?

As evidenced by their resolve to engage their background culture through dialogue and the manner in which they utilized the club as a platform for the exploration and expression of their cultural heritage and values, Mabuhay provided students a base from which to understand themselves as both individual and collective bicultural subjects of history (Darder, 2012, 2015). Students expressed their understanding of themselves as bicultural individuals and a community, in many ways. In particular, during open discussions, students created the space to articulate specific instances in their lived experience in which their bicultural identities were evident. For example, during one discussion about generational immigration identities, students pointed out the major differences in their home culture and the culture they experienced outside of the home. This was significant to their expressions of both their individual and collective comprehension of their biculturality.

Malaya summed up her personal bicultural experience when she described the tensions that she and her fellow students must negotiate in their relationship to their parents and the home culture.

> Well, it's not really a Pilipino thing. It is part of our culture where we have to obey our parents, and their parents obey their parents. So there is a thing about obeying authority that, for me, personally, I feel ashamed. Kind of ashamed of tradition. Here, in America, where, when you turn 18, you move out of the house and your parents don't have reign over you, you have to find a job if you're going to do anything. That kind of clashes because in Pilipino culture, it's the—you, as a child, are supposed to obey your parents until you get married. Or until you have your own children, I guess.

Here, Malaya underscored her own personal experience of having to negotiate knowing that in her home culture she has to obey authority and her understanding of American culture, in which she is supposed to demonstrate greater personal responsibility. Regardless, Malaya later commented that navigating this tension is necessary because it is in line with "trying to preserve your culture."

In this discussion, Cory also explained the need for younger Pilipino/as to embrace their culture.

> So I guess they try to balance their traditional culture of being Pilipino, but also bringing in that Western culture of being American. And there's always issues with that as well, that's why people kind of lose their identity as to who they really are, because you can say that you are Pilipino, but if you were born and raised here, you can also say that you're American. So you don't really know who you are. That's why for myself, for example, I'm trying to embrace my Pilipino culture more, which is why I'm part of this club. I'm also part of a non-profit organization that deals with Pilipinos, so I'm starting to really join these Pilipino communities to really embrace my traditional culture, which is

> Pilipino. And that's one of the things that my mother tried to do, but I was very stubborn and I ignored it, until I realized that she was trying to have me embrace my traditional roots.

In this passage, Cory also touched on the relationship between culture and the process of identity formation. Specifically, he posited that if one is not in tune with the dual cultures in which he/she operates, then that individual would have a misplaced identity. To prevent this misplacement, Cory suggested that students embrace their home culture to enhance their process of identity formation. Additionally, he recognized that his participation in the club played a major role in the process of understanding himself as a bicultural individual. Cory also expressed his understanding of the club's ability to provide this cultural foundation to its members.

> What it is, is that—the majority of people don't know—when it comes to the history of the Philippines, they only know from when we were colonized by the Spanish till today. But there's so much history prior to that that not a lot of people know about. And that's what we want to let our members know about.

In light of his comments, it is evident that Cory viewed Mabuhay as playing a significant role in club members' processes of cultural affirmation, which in turn facilitates a better understanding of their bicultural self. Furthermore, his comment underscored the colonized framework in which many Pilipino/a students have been forced to operate. As cited in the literature review, Strobel (1996) and Halagao (2010) identified the process of decolonization as significant in formulating one's cultural identity, which is important in understanding oneself as a bicultural individual. Thus, when Cory articulated that it was important to teach and learn with the club members

about noncolonized Philippine history, in essence, he was engaging in the process of decolonization and articulating his understanding of his bicultural identity.

Lastly, it is important to note here that issues related to culture and power that underlie the different tensions described by the Mabuhay members were engaged by the group during the course of this study with increasing degrees of understanding over time. However, it must be acknowledged that social consciousness, which supports bicultural affirmation, is a process (Darder, 2012, 2015) that evolves with the individual and the community's understanding of how the dominant/subordinate tensions impact cultural histories and lived experiences. Hence, the capacity of the Mabuhay club members to engage decolonizing issues is bound to continue evolving as the group progresses in their cultural work together.

Conclusion

This study examined the experience of Pilipino/a students participating in a Pilipino/a student organization at a community college. As underscored by the literature review, the Pilipino/a student experience is steeped in challenges that arise from colonized roots that, when combined with the assimilative pressures of a hegemonic system, can have ill effects on their ability to effectively negotiate the bicultural tensions. Nevertheless, based on the prevailing cultural landscape in the United States, Pilipino/a students must navigate the duality of their lived experiences. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore and address the needs of Pilipino/a students as they operate in this setting.

A key element of this project was in deciphering the impact of a Pilipino/a student organization on its participants in relation to navigating the bicultural landscape of education. The story of Mabuhay provides a basis for examining and addressing issues that challenge

bicultural students in their pursuit of academic and personal success. This study has shown that in the case of Mabuhay, through club membership and participation, student members constructed a platform to explore and express their cultural heritage, which their educational setting had not otherwise provided to them. It is also evident through the findings of this study that critical dialogue is key to any element of understanding oneself and collective identity. In this case, dialogue was made possible by the inclusive space that Mabuhay provided for its participants to express their voices, self-determination, and social agency. This signifies the importance of community building in the process of cultural affirmation so that spaces for dialogue be available for students who experience daily the effects of a system of cultural marginalization and racialization. In turn, Pin@y praxis is made possible through the collective efforts of individuals engaging in dialogue and activities toward community building, while addressing the challenges of their bicultural realities.

Implications and Recommendations

The research presented here confirms that, ultimately, the goal of any cultural student club or organization should be to create an inclusive space for its community. More specifically, ethnic student organizations have the ability to engage the heritage and cultures of minority students in ways that are generally nonexistent in mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, institutions of education must recognize and address the marginalization of nondominant cultural groups in order to counter the adverse effects of biculturalism.

Future research. Future research could focus on the implications of this study for Pilipino/a parents. This study was focused on Pilipino/a student participation in the process of formal education and their need to navigate its bicultural landscape. Yet, the Pilipino/a parents of these

students also experience the effects of biculturalism as they share in the process of education with their student. Thus, a study that links the student experience with the parent experience would give greater clarity to the bicultural development of Pilipino/a students and the impact of parents in that development. Additionally, further exploration of the multiplicity of expressions of Pilipino/a culture to include the diversity in generational responses to biculturation would facilitate an even greater understanding of the dynamic relationship of Pilipino/a parent and student participation in education. The reach of these studies, combined with the implications from this study, would provide a more encompassing view of the bicultural landscape of Pilipino/a education. In doing so, effective efforts to support the challenges that arise from dominant and subordinate culture contradictions can be more clearly pursued.

Pin@y praxis. Addressing the effects of biculturalism on students and the need for inclusive spaces on campus are the basis for moving toward an educational practice that I have termed Pin@y praxis. Pin@y praxis is aimed at supporting bicultural individuals and communities as they navigate the duality of their lived experiences. This requires educators and students alike to practice an inclusive and democratic form of education. Substantiated by the research and this study, Pin@y praxis is founded on the following principles.

1. An educational experience grounded in Pin@y history and experiences that promote cultural democracy.
2. The necessity for educators and educational settings to provide inclusive spaces to explore and express Pin@y cultural history, heritage, and values.

3. Utilizing dialogue toward a process of decolonization in creating counter-narratives, the learning and understanding of culture, and the promotion of bicultural affirmation in identity formation for Pin@y students.
4. Promoting Pin@y community building toward solidarity in navigating and affecting the intersecting challenges of a dominant and subordinate sphere system.
5. Ultimately, moving toward a more equitable society, conscious of its ability to live in unity with others.

Expanding on the foundations of Pinayist pedagogy and a critical theory of biculturalism, Pin@y praxis establishes a foundation of support for students as they navigate the dominant and subordinate spheres enforced by the prevailing systemic promotion of hegemonic ideals. It is also engagement in a process of decolonization as a means toward an emancipatory educational experience. Pin@y praxis promotes inclusive educational practices that facilitate bicultural affirmation for students from subordinate populations. Through the inclusive spaces that Pin@y praxis facilitates, Pilipino/a students will have the platform and foundation to name and transform their world, in the process of decolonizing their hearts and minds.

Epilogue

As an immigrant, I understand firsthand the impact of assimilative processes on my personal identity formation. One of my first memories of being in the United States was that moment in my second-grade classroom playing "Around the World." Throughout my lived experience, I've encountered many other moments that emphasized my cultural otherness. Although I have lived in the United States from the time that I set foot on its ground, I was not fully of the United States. The struggle with this tension has been a consistent aspect of my life.

On a personal level, I entered this work hoping to find a resolution of these tensions. Instead, I find myself in a similar place having to navigate the enormous challenges associated with the hidden curriculum of assimilation in the United States. It is evident that this work is not the end of my engagement of these issues toward resolution in my personal life. Perhaps, I am only truly starting the process but with a clearer picture of the landscape that I must navigate, thanks to what I was able to learn *with* the Mabuhay participants in this study.

Most of all, I am reminded of the notion of unfinishedness as conceptualized by Freire (1998a):

> I hold that my own unity and identity, in regard to others and to the world constitutes my essential and irrepeatable way of experiencing myself as a cultural, historical, and unfinished being in the world, simultaneously conscious of my unfinishedness. (p. 51)

> It is in this consciousness that the very possibility of learning, of being educated resides… This permanent movement of searching creates a capacity for learning not only in order to adapt to the world but especially to intervene, to re-create, and to transform it. (p. 66)

In light of my understanding of this concept, I acknowledge my personal unfinishedness. As such, this study has provided me the consciousness with which to better face the challenges that persist in my own personal journey. So I move forward with much hope and embrace the future possibilities, carrying with me the lessons learned as I continue to adapt, intervene, re-create, and transform the world around me.

APPENDIX A

Year-Two Survey Questions

Question 1:

What does participating in a Pilipino/a club mean to you?

Question 2:

Why did you join Mabuhay?

Question 3:

Why do you think it is important to have such a club on campus?

Question 4:

Are there any specific challenges that make your participation in college challenging (family, legal, financial)? How can our club help you through these challenges?

Question 5:

What do you want to get out of this club?

Question 6:

What type of events and activities would you like to see our club do moving forward?

Questions 7:

What topics would you like to discuss in the future?

Question 8:

What do you hope for the club in the future?

APPENDIX B

Individual Student Answers to Survey Questions 1, 2, & 3

Students	Question 1: What does participating in a Pilipino/a club mean to you?	Question 2: Why did you join Mabuhay?	Question 3: Why do you think it is important to have such a club on campus?
Corazon (a)	As a non-Pilipino person, it helped me to learn about the Pilipino culture.	I joined Mabuhay to learn about Pilipino culture.	I think any cultural club is important to have in any campus.
Dakila (a)	I get to meet more Pilipinos.	To meet more Pilipinos.	So I can meet more Pilipinos.
Tula (a)	It means family.	Because I like the culture.	To spread awareness of the Pilipino culture
Dari (a)	It means we get to interact with others, we learn from each other, discover new things.	Because of a friend.	It is important because students can give ideas to other fellow students. It can give students to be able to express themselves from their cultures.
Nimuel (a)	It means I get to know more people.	Because of my Pilipino friend.	Because we all need to represent in our culture.
Bituin (a)	Omitted	Omitted	Pilipino culture
Talim (a)	To learn new things and hang with new people.	I joined for the culture.	To learn a new culture.
Juan	To be part of the club. And treat like family.	To make new friends.	Because it's (important) to learn more about Pilipino culture.
Mizpah	Being part of a community/organization	To learn more about Pilipino culture and fellowship.	It promotes cultural awareness.
Don	Participating in the	Help and serve the	Because we can

	Pilipino club means to serve the students needs whether they're Pilipino or not.	people.	show the history and culture of the Pilipinos around the world.
Ligaya	To get close to the Pilipino culture.	Because I'm half-Pilipino. Lol.	Because it's cool.
Irlo (a)	Becoming involved in Pilipino culture.	To learn more about Pilipinos.	So people are more involved and aware of the culture.
Jovelyn (a)	Omitted	Friends told me to join.	Networking.
Rene	It means learning more about the culture and its people.	I wanted to learn more about the culture.	So people can learn about the culture and its people.
Ninoy (a)	Omitted.	Omitted.	Unity.
Gugma (a)	Participating in a Pilipino club means taking a step towards understanding my culture.	I joined because I'm Pilipino and they asked me to.	Some people need to know about their heritage. Others just want to know in the name of knowledge.
Ramos	It means I learn more about culture.	To learn about Pilipino culture.	Because you learn about different cultures on campus.
Diwa (a)	It means I was able to get back to my roots and share my experience and values I learned being a Pilipino.	Because I wanted to spread and contribute to the growth of the club.	For representation of the culture and to help those people understand the culture and to diminish the ignorance that surrounds the culture.
Cory	It shows that we have a voice in the community.	To have a better understanding of the Pilipino culture and to make friends.	To show that we have a voice.
Abian (a)	It means I am coming out of my shell and gaining confidence.	Friends.	To learn about Pilipino culture.

Note. (a) indicates student left survey anonymous. A pseudonym was assigned to these students.

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