

# Evolution of Philippine Homes with the Influence of Foreign Countries and Urbanization

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**Abstract** The architectural tapestry of the Philippines, woven across its 7000 islands, reflects the indelible imprints of Spanish and American colonization. From indigenous tribal roots to the contemporary era, the nation's architectural and social landscapes have undergone profound transformations. This study explores the evolution, from humble wooden huts to modern skyscrapers, as a testament to the enduring impact of foreign nations on the Philippines' architectural identity. A critical examination is undertaken to assess the preservation of vernacular, native architecture amidst pervasive external influences, and the consequences of rapid urbanization. The inquiry centers on understanding the persistence of the indigenous spirit in a nation profoundly shaped by external forces. With a focus on the role of urbanization in shaping the lives of native populations, the study questions whether vernacular architecture can offer sustainable solutions in the context of fast-growing cities. Delving into the inherent sustainability of vernacular architecture, which inherently responds to the needs of the people, the research contributes insights into the delicate equilibrium between progress and preservation. As the Philippines stands at a crossroads amidst swift evolution and technological advancements, the imperative to balance progress with sustainable practices becomes increasingly pronounced, impacting lives and shaping the architectural identity of the nation.

**Index Terms**— philippines, spain, urbanization, vernacular, bahaykubo, residential.

## I. INTRODUCTION

With over 7000 islands, the Philippines stands apart, shaped by the colonization of Spain and the United States. From native tribal roots to the present, the architectural landscape and social fabric have been profoundly influenced. Wooden huts, stone houses, and modern skyscrapers showcase the evolving impact of foreign countries on the nation's architecture. This raises critical questions about the preservation of vernacular, native architecture amidst foreign influences and the consequences of rapid urbanization. How much of the indigenous spirit endures in a nation so influenced by external forces? What role does urbanization play in shaping the lives of the native people, and can vernacular architecture offer sustainable solutions in fast-growing cities? In exploring these questions, we delve into the sustainability inherent in vernacular architecture—a response to the needs of the people. Amidst the rapid evolution driven by foreign influences and technological advances, the Philippines faces a crossroads. Balancing progress with sustainable practices becomes

imperative as urbanization unfolds, impacting lives and the architectural identity of the nation.



Figure 1. Map of the Philippines

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

My principal reference will be the article from Corazon Alejo-Hila “Vernacular Architecture of the Philippines and

its Transformations” from the book “Vernacular Transformations – Architecture, Place and Tradition” edited by Gusti Ayu Made Suartika, as well as some articles and books specialized in the different historical eras. For the Vernacular Architecture I used the article “Philippine Vernacular Architecture and its Austronesian Ancestry” by the University of the Philippines System. For the Spanish Colonization Era I referred to the article “History of Philippine Architecture” by Architect Manuel D.C. Noche, and for the American period the source “The new American Houses in the Colonial Philippines and the Rise of the urban Filipino Elite” by Kiyoko Yamaguchi. To get more detailed into the independent Era of the Philippines and to get to know the Philippine political System I used both the book “The Philippine Archipelago” by Yves Boquet, as well as the book “Das politische System der Philippinen” by Howard Loewen.

### III. METHOD

First of all, I will explain the meaning of vernacular architecture with regard to the Philippines and my personal opinion based on the references and lectures. After that I will explain the evolution of the vernacular architecture of the Philippines and its resulting forms of homes, compare the differences and analyze the impact of foreign countries. Furthermore, I want to discuss the reasons, the development as well as the current state and the problems of urbanization in the Philippines.

### IV. DISCUSSION

#### A. *Defining the Vernacular Architecture*

Vernacular Architecture can be described as a traditional architecture, assembled by non-architects, the community, the owner of the building or local craftsmen. It is constructed to the needs of their users using local materials.

When speaking of vernacular architecture, incorrect interpretations and phrases are often used to describe this term and, in doing so, they alter the meaning and significance of vernacular architecture. The widespread use of the term "primitive architecture" from the 1980s not only undervalued architectural accomplishments but also misled from the meaning of undeveloped and sophisticated. The introduction of "indigenous architecture" by immigrants and colonialists aimed to prioritize the structures created by the indigenous populations and to separate their architecture from the indigenous. Another formulation misleading from the meaning of vernacular is “ethnic architecture”. It can be critiqued as a concept that may exoticize or romanticize the architecture and design style associated with specific ethnic and cultural groups. The Phrase reflects a tendency in dominant cosmopolitan cultures to perceive the architectural traditions other, often marginalized, rudimentary groups as exotic or different. This may lead to superficial or simplified understanding of the tradition, overlooking their deeper cultural and historical significance.

Vernacular has its origin in Latin from the word “vernaculus”, which means native or domestic and describes a way of building designed to fulfill the needs and provide the principles, habits and visions of the certain group (Manila, 2019, P. 21,22). Principal features that define vernacular architecture include the use of locally available materials like wood, adobe, thatch, or stone, as well as the incorporation of climate-appropriate techniques to adapt to local weather conditions, effectively leveraging them to their advantage. Furthermore, vernacular architecture reflects the cultural and social values of the community, seamlessly integrating traditional elements and techniques. Equally noteworthy is the dedication to functional design within vernacular architecture. Here, structures are primarily conceived with an unwavering emphasis on functionality, a factor of paramount importance. Vernacular architecture varies significantly from one region to another, thus becoming a crucial aspect of the region's identity (Ghisleni, 2020.).

Ma. Corazon Alejo-Hila raises the question “why the subject of vernacular architecture could still generate interest in today’s world” (Suartika, 2013, S. 67) and describes that approximately 90% of the world’s architecture still consists of vernacular elements. From post-colonial perspective, the global awareness of vernacular architecture emerged due to the fascination and interest of western occupiers. The vernacular style, known for its simplicity, lightness, and openness, stood in contrast to Western architecture, appearing unrefined and unsophisticated, even though these structures endured for many years and generations. Considering that vernacular architecture has evolved in response to various societal, cultural and environmental influences, it can be asserted that it is inherently tied to specific groups of people and their surroundings (Suartika, 2013, S. 68).

#### B. *Vernacular Architecture in the Philippines*

The Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia that experienced Western colonization before it could establish either a centralized government ruling over a large territory or a dominant culture. The ancient inhabitants of the Philippines were composed of various groups of people who migrated to the archipelago. Over 50 million years ago, the archipelago of the Philippines was formed through volcanic eruptions. Around 30,000 years ago, the first inhabitants reached the island group from the Asian mainland, possibly using land bridges that emerged during the glacial epoch. In the 10th century, coastal villages welcomed Chinese and Indian traders and engaged in trading with them, followed by Muslim merchants from Brunei in the 15th century and the Spanish and American colonization in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (History of the Philippines, n.d.).

The first known anatomically modern humans can be dated back to 47,000 years ago, living in the coastal regions of Luzon and Palwan and may be part of the Negrito groups, an isolated group in southeast Asia (*Détroit, Florent, et al., 2004*). Architecture scholars have recorded contact with

Chinese traders in 982 AD and cultural influences from south asia, such as sunskrit-writing systems that came from Indonesian empires like Srivijaya in the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the Majapahit in the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Despite this, the influence of china and india was of little importance, which is why the Filipinos didn't adopt Hinduism and Buddhism.



Figure 2. Group of Negritos, Luzon, Philippines

The main activities of the Filipinos in the 15<sup>th</sup> century were shifting cultivation, fishing and hunting. As a result, they lived in non-settled kinship groups called *barangays*, each with a tribal chief as the leader. *Barangays* typically consisted of up to 100 people, making them the largest and most stable social and political entity at this era. Due to the different influences, the religious beliefs, whether monotheism or polytheism, as well as the social structures and economic activities varied across the archipelago.

That changed with the introduction of the Islam through Brunei leading to changes in religious beliefs, as well as economic and social transformations. One of these changes was the formation of sultanates in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which exerted control over the *barangays*. However, with the Spanish conquest in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Islamic influence was interrupted, which is why the Philippines are primarily not of the Muslim faith (Borlaza, Gregorio C, et al., 2023). Vernacular architecture is informal and intuitive, designed to meet the needs of the people and provide protection against the surrounding conditions, utilizing locally available materials. Depending on the location and the way of living the vernacular architecture evolved throughout the centuries.

The common assumption is that the earliest shelters in the Philippines were cave dwellings, as they provided ideal sanctuaries for the earliest inhabitants, who were primarily hunters and gatherers of food. The most well-known cave is the Tabon Cave Complex in Palawan, where archaeologists discovered the oldest human bone remains of modern homo sapiens (Suartika, 2013, S. 71). The Tabon Yungib (Evolution of Filipino Houses, 2021) Complex, situated on the west coast of Palawan on a limestone promontory, is home to over 200 cavities and cliff overhangs. These

natural formations served as protection against the natural elements and temporary shelters for early humans. The complex spans more than 104 hectares and comprises rounded limestone domes, separated by deep canyons. Through a multitude of C-14 datings, a continuous habitation of the caves has been traced, spanning from around 50,000 years ago to approximately 9,000 BCE. Numerous cultural materials and treasures were discovered within the caves, including flake tools, which indicate habitation during the late Pleistocene period, a jar burial complex pointing to the late Neolithic era, as well as porcelains and stoneware, suggesting trade connections with China during the Song and Yuan Dynasties (National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), n.d.). In 2012, the complex was officially designated as a National Cultural Treasure by the National Museum of the Philippines (Mahusay, J., 2012) and it officially received the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2023 (Reynoso, I., 2023).

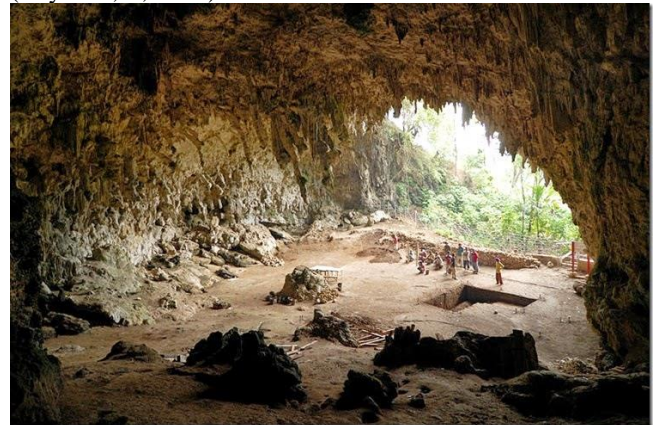


Figure 3. Tabon Cave

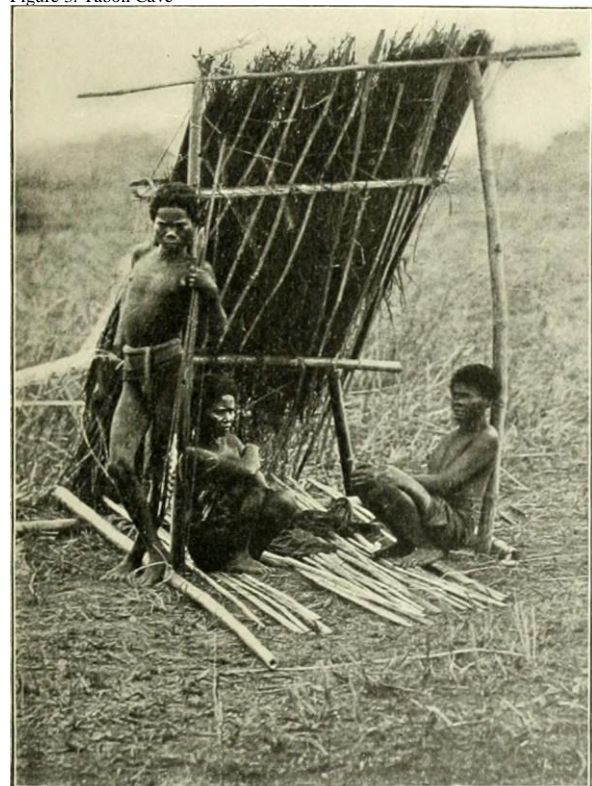


Figure 4. Negrito People in a lean-to-shelter



The first attempts at building structures in the Philippines can be traced back to *lean-to dwellings* that initially developed in areas outside of the mountain regions of the archipelago. The inhabitants of the Negrito groups constructed these small shelters using branches, limbs, and leaves to protect themselves from the elements, such as wind, sun, and rain. Due to their simple construction, flexibility, and ease of assembly, *lean-to shelters* suited the nomadic lifestyle of these groups. They could easily build and rebuild these shelters, allowing them to move to new locations in harmony with the surrounding environment (Suartika, 2013, S. 71,72).

Later, as *kaingin* (slash-and-burn agriculture) developed, and more Filipinos turned to agriculture for their daily sustenance, their lifestyles transitioned into a more settled style, and their basic needs evolved. Houses were no longer just for protection. However, durability was not a significant concern because the farmers needed to move on to another piece of land once the current one became infertile. As a result, a new type of dwelling, the *bahaykubo*, emerged (Suartika, 2013, S. 68-70).

What is the *bahaykubo* and where does it originate from? Several architecture scholars, including Corazon Hila, Norma Alarcon and Winand Klassen, describe it as a one-room cubic house, elevated on stilts with a steep roof and wide eaves. It is typically constructed using bamboo and thatched with nipa or grass. Some scholars equate the traditional house with the *Nipa Hut* due to its nipa-thatched roof. When discussing etymology, most post-World War II scholars translate the *bahaykubo* as a *cubic house*, derived from the Spanish translation of *kubo* as *cube*. However, Edison G. Cabalfin questions this translation in his 2020 published article, 'Bahay Kubo as Iconography: Representing the Vernacular and the Nation in Philippine Post-War Architectures' (Edson G., 2020). He provides arguments and scientific evidence to support his thesis by identifying the etymological origin of the terms *bahay* and *kubo*. Anthropologist William Henry Scott analyzed the linguistic origin of *bahay* by studying old dictionaries and the word family of the Tagalog word *balay* meaning *house* (Edson G., 2020).

The words *kabalayan* meaning settlement, *magkabalay* translating to men and women, as well as *minalay* indicating married support his opinion that *bahay* refers to a building used for living. Professor John Wolff, who examined the origin of the word *kubo*, disagrees with the translation of it to the Spanish word *cube*, asserting that it is incorrect. Instead, he suggests that the word *kobo* can be found in many other Austronesian languages, such as Indonesian and Malaysian, where it means *secondary* or *temporary*. When combined with *balay*, it transforms into *temporary housing*, often used in fields where farmers worked. This implies that *kubo* does not derive from Spanish but rather has pre-colonial origins. Consequently, it may be assumed that *bahaykubos*, contrary to the common assumptions of Hila and Alarcon, were primarily used as temporary shelters, not as the main form of protection or permanent dwelling (Edson G., 2020).



Figure 5. Traditional *bahaykubo*

Corazon Hila refers to traditional vernacular *balay* as the “pure, Southeast Asian type of domestic architecture found in the non-hispanized, non-Anglo-Saxon communities around the country” (Suartika, 2013, S. 68). In his article "Vernacular Architecture of the Philippines and its Transformation," Corazon Hila describes the characteristics and features of the traditional *bahaykubo*. As we already know, vernacular architecture in the Philippines is constructed informally and intuitively by the labor of the owner and the community. It is designed based on spiritual beliefs, the needs and habits of the users, and it utilizes natural, locally available resources such as bamboo for flooring, posts, and siding, as well as wood, coconut, stones, or nipa. This architectural style follows the principle of 'form follows function,' such as building on elevated stilts to mitigate ground humidity and using slatted flooring for air circulation. The typical *bahaykubo* consists of one large room that serves as a living space, sleeping area, and kitchen. As people settled more permanently, they began to use the space underneath for storage. The *bahaykubo* is just one of many vernacular building types found in the Philippines. The specific needs and surrounding conditions vary across the islands and regions. In the northern Cordillera area, situated in the mountains, you can find variations such as the *Ifugao* with a more pyramid-shaped roof and sturdier, higher walls, and the *Isneg* with a high-pitched roof and walls made of wood and stone (Suartika, 2013, S. 68).

The inheritance and the development of historical research on the *bahaykubo* as a traditional vernacular house can be traced back to Anthropology, with its roots going back to the early Spanish chroniclers of the 16th century. Notably, in the first half of the 20th century, there was a significant surge in research focusing on the structures, materials, building techniques, belief systems, and the symbolism of vernacular architecture (Edson G., 2020).



Figure 6. People lifting the *bahaykubo* - Traditional *bahaykubo*

After World War II, research shifted from anthropological aspects to a more architectural-historical approach. This shift led to an exploration of stylistic differences, production methods, and historical context. The influence of vernacular architecture on post-war buildings will be discussed further in this paper (Edson G., 2020).

### C. The Spanish Colonization and the Bahay na Bato

The first Spanish expedition to the Philippines was led by Ferdinand Magellan, who sailed under the Spanish flag and arrived in what is now Cebu in March 1521. However, it wasn't until 1565 that Spanish King Philip II dispatched three more expeditions to the archipelago, all of which failed. In 1565, he sent Miguel López de Legazpi, who successfully established the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Philippines. Following the founding of the Spanish city of Manila in 1571, Spanish control expanded to most coastal and lowland areas by the end of the 16th century. The country was named after King Philip II, and the Spanish introduced Roman Catholicism throughout the archipelago. The Spanish empire left a significant impact on the social and economic aspects of the Philippines, bringing about substantial changes in the country's values and perceptions (Britannica, 2018).

As the acquisition of the Philippines marked the final major expansion under the reign of Philip II, whose empire had reached its zenith, the primary source of rapid wealth in the Philippines was not mining but trade with Imperial China. Manila served as the key trading hub between the Spanish empire and China. This meant that the Spanish did not need to heavily invest in industrial or trade development to prosper rapidly. Spain's primary interest in the Philippines lay in its economic potential, particularly in facilitating grand trade, with Manila as the central point. At the time, mining and agriculture in the Philippines were not extensively developed, which provided little incentive for the Spanish to expand beyond Manila. Initially, the Spanish did not heavily rely on the indigenous population as a labor force due to specific economic conditions in the Philippines (Anderson, B., 1988). However, they did establish a system called *encomiendas*, a form of tax farming, which allowed Spanish colonists to extract labor and tribute from the indigenous populations. Over time, there were instances of exploitation and abuses of the indigenous labor force, though it may not have been as widespread as in some other parts of the Americas (Britannica, 2018). Due to the absence of strong military and bureaucratic powers in the Philippines, along with the majority of Filipinos practicing

animism, the spread of Christian Reformation was swift and effective, leading to over 90 percent of Filipinos being Christian today. The Catholic Church significantly influenced and shaped the country's social structure. In the late 18th century, as commercial agriculture expanded, larger estates known as *haciendas* were established throughout the Philippines. These haciendas were originally assigned by Philip II in the 16th century to various religious groups. These estates were institutional property and were not owned by individual families. During this period, many clergymen had children with local women, and the land owned by these clergymen was later expropriated by the American colonial administration, eventually falling into the hands of the ancestors of the later President Aquino. The paper will later explore the connections and effects of these historical events on today's political decisions. Furthermore, the children of native mothers and foreign fathers were successfully converted to Christianity by the Christian church, granting them a distinct legal status as 'Mestizos' under Spanish colonial law. They formed a unique and recognized segment of colonial society in the Philippines, with some of them having names that indicated their distant Chinese origins (Anderson, B., 1988).

As a result of the restructuring brought about by the Spanish empire and the introduction of the Antillean architectural style (Noche, M. D. C., n.D.), along with new building techniques and materials, new architectural buildings evolved in the Philippines. The spread of Christianity across the archipelago required the construction of important buildings to support the religious organization. Around grand plazas, where people gathered to celebrate social events, engage in religious activities, and hold political assemblies, the Spanish introduced a grid pattern of streets with government facilities. This urban layout was designed to serve as a central hub for various communal and administrative functions (Fulgar, I., 2022). Although the churches were inspired by the Antillean style, they possess their own unique characteristics that differentiate them from country churches in other regions. Best preserved colonial churches can be found in the Ilocos Region in Luzon around 3 hours from Manila, in Laguna Region only 1,5 hours from Manila, as well as on the Visayan Islands like Cebu or Bohol. Built between 1600 and 1750 they were typically built by anonymous friar-architects and initially constructed with bamboo and nipa. However, as they recognized the need for protection against fire and earthquakes and aimed to create a sense of awe, they transitioned to more robust and larger structures using materials such as wood and stone (Noche, M. D. C., n.D.).





Figure 7. San Agustin Church, Manila

The San Agustin Church in Manila, completed in 1607, is one of the oldest stone churches known. The original structure, built in 1571 with bamboo and palm fronds, was destroyed by fire in 1574. From 1587 to 1607, the church was reconstructed using adobe, a new building technique introduced by architect Juan Macías. San Agustin Church has withstood various natural and man-made disasters, including earthquakes, the British occupation of Manila in 1762, the Spanish-American War in 1898, and the Battle of Manila in 1945. Recognizing its historical significance, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993. (De Guzman, N., 2019). Many other churches throughout the Philippines that still stand today exhibit specific characteristics of Spanish architectural style, such as bell towers, fortress-like features, retablos (high Baroque altars), and elaborately decorated folkloric gables (UNESCO, n.D.).

In addition to public buildings, the design and construction of residential houses have also changed due to Spanish influence. The Spaniards introduced the use of stone in Philippine architecture because they believed that buildings needed to be more stable and secure. Inspired by the bahaykubo and its skeletal structure, the Bahay na Bato (stone house) became larger, more robust, and more sophisticated. Houses built with more permanent materials such as hardwood or stone were considered prestigious at that time, implying wealth. As a result, the Bahay na Batos were located in the capitals of the towns, while the typical lowland dwellings like bahaykubo and nipahut, distinguished by their small size, lightweight construction, and transparency, were situated on the outskirts of the districts. This was because bahaykubos were perceived as weak and indicative of poverty. The Bahay na Bato was an enhanced version of the bahaykubo with post-lintel construction and small innovations compared to the vernacular one. Inventions included flexible rooms with sliding partition elements, the addition of a second-floor terrace in the back of the house called an azotea, an antesala – entrance foyer, sliding Capiz shell windows, sun-and-rain screens, a lower transom between window sills and flooring to improve air circulation, and a stone base, as the name of the house indicates. The space under the first floor between the posts was used for storage and carriages and was called silong. The integration of both stone and flexible wooden elements enhances the structural stability of the Bahay na Bato, all while preserving the distinctive features of the

bahaykubo, particularly in terms of air circulation and lightness (Suartika, 2013).



Figure 8. Traditional Bahay na Bato

Research from Sophia Elise Arguson, a Philippine undergraduate student, in cooperation with the Internship Program of the IA Center for Intramuros Studies, delves into the question of whether the Bahay na Bato is Filipino or foreign. With the help of documented materials and online references, she compared the features of the Bahay na Bato with Filipino history, culture, and heritage, coming to the conclusion that it isn't foreign but developed during the Spanish era, adapting features of the vernacular bahaykubo, and may be considered truly Filipino. She describes the outcome, from the perspective of a Filipino, as “a step forward in reclaiming our independent existence as a people—one with rich culture, tradition, and heritage long before our islands were colonized” (Arguson, S. E., n.D.).

*“[F]oreign influences should not eclipse what is native. Historical and cultural understanding allows us to affiliate with our culture better, thus providing us a perspective that transcends the self and incorporate a larger social dimension to our individual experiences.”* (Arguson, S. E., n.D.)

#### D. The American Colonization and New Living Standards

The end of the Spanish era, which lasted over 300 years, was marked during the Spanish-American War in the bloody Battle of Manila on May 1, 1898. Spanish colonialism collapsed and was replaced by the Americans with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. In addition to the Philippine territory, America also claimed Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the independent state of Hawaii (Office of the Historian, n.D.-a), leading to a shift in America's self-perception from 'just another nation' to a 'nation with global power' (Morley, I., 2011). As the U.S. Senate aimed to confirm the Treaty of Paris on February 4, 1899, a three-year-long conflict erupted between America and the Philippine nationalists led by Emilio Aguinaldo. This conflict claimed the lives of over 4,200 American combatants, more than 20,000 Philippine warriors, and 200,000 Philippine civilians who died from violence, disease, and famine. After nine months of unsuccessful attempts by Aguinaldo to fight against a more

skilled and better-armed force, the Philippines shifted to guerrilla techniques in November 1899, lasting until 1901 when Aguinaldo was captured. The shift of important Filipino adherents to the pacification campaign 'policy of attraction' from 1900 made it possible for President Theodore Roosevelt to declare a general amnesty and the end of the conflict on July 4, 1902 (Office of the Historian, n.D.-a). After America was declared the victor of the Philippine-American War, the colonial U.S. force was reaffirmed, leading to more structural changes in the archipelago such as the separation of the Catholic Church from the state, the establishment of English as the primary language (Morley, I., 2011), and a reformation of the education system. This reformation included the introduction of compulsory education, the availability of free school materials, as well as the construction and refurbishment of school buildings (K12 Academics, n.d.).

The Americans encountered numerous social, economic, and environmental challenges in the Philippines, such as inadequate housing, polluted waterways, a lack of hygiene standards, and the absence of a cohesive national identity due to diverse historical influences. With the establishment of the Philippine Commission in 1899, America sought to guide the Philippines towards a more functional society by introducing American civilization and emphasizing the importance of urban development (Morley, I., 2011). The Commission emerged from the Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation, that was issued by U.S. President William McKinley on December 21, 1898 and ended up being the "earliest-and-brutal-linchpins of American colonialism" (Yamaguchi, K., 2006). Manila, extensively damaged by wars, urgently required reconstruction. The cholera epidemic in 1902, claiming thousands of lives, underscored the imperative need for hygiene and health policies. The visit of American city planner and architect Daniel Burnham in 1904 brought about significant changes, aiming to address these problems and create a more civilized and economically viable environment for Filipinos. Burnham skillfully combined American expertise with an appreciation for beauty and convenience, shaping an environment conducive to the flourishing of Filipino communities. Key features of Burnham's plans included a well-defined city center surrounded by public buildings and parks, strategically placed malls for both civic and aesthetic advantages, and thoughtfully designed boulevards. The city's architecture formed a harmonious ensemble with geometrically arranged houses surrounding the central district. The traditional American narrative on the development of the Philippines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries often emphasizes English education, school construction, and infrastructure development. However, it tends to overlook the role of city planning as a tool for social improvement. Daniel Burnham's city plans, visible in Manila and Baguio today, play a significant part in the urban landscape. While not fully realized in Manila, Burnham's influence is evident in the partial development of the Government Center and waterfront redevelopment.

Burnham's urban design also influenced later Filipino architects, underscoring the importance of urban improvements in American state-building efforts in the Philippines (Morley, I., 2011).

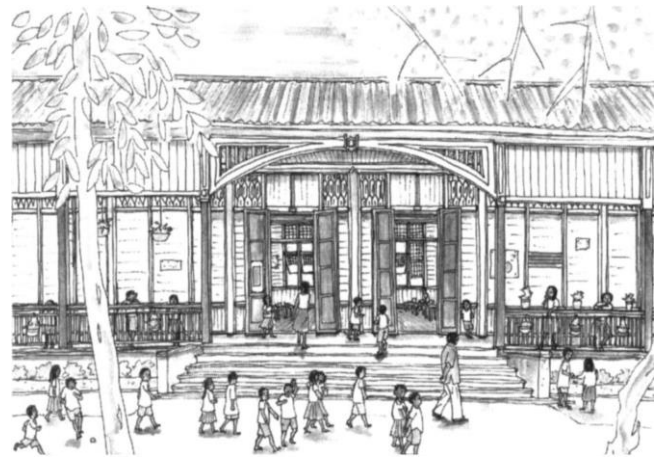


Figure 9. Typical School building, Cebu, Philippines

When looking into historical houses in the Philippines, most people think of the Spanish-influenced Bahay na Batos. Besides them there are other types of houses that are mostly forgotten. Most of them build and constructed in the early 20th century during the influence of the American style. Kiyoko Yamaguchi posits that while certain elements of the original Bahay na Bato were incorporated into subsequent constructions, the American period exerted a more substantial and pivotal influence on the social and architectural development of the Philippines through the establishment of new educational institutions, urban planning initiatives, and public buildings. Contrary to the common assumption that Americans built houses for Filipinos and for themselves, Yamaguchi clarifies that the Filipino Elite created 'American-style' houses, integrating family histories to align with the modern ideal. The Philippine urban residents adapted to various spaces they created during that time and due to this, these spaces are seen as significant reflections of both individual and family histories. The American magazines published in Manila at the time significantly influenced the perception of life and new living standards in the Philippines. Particularly impactful was the magazine "Philippine Education," as it addressed various topics such as household management, health, and lifestyle through specific advice and illustrations provided by American teachers and doctors. They encouraged Filipinos to adopt cleaner living practices, construct better homes, refrain from keeping animals inside the house, and create a healthy and practical environment for themselves. With statements like "no work or money will be better spent than making a good house" or "Good people build good houses and good houses help to make good people," they criticized the previous lifestyle of Filipinos. An example from an article in January 1913 cautioned against the "native" lifestyle through an illustration showing a family eating in front of a Nipahut. The caption, "Eating with the fingers from a common dish;

one of the ways in which disease germs are spread," aimed to underscore this warning.

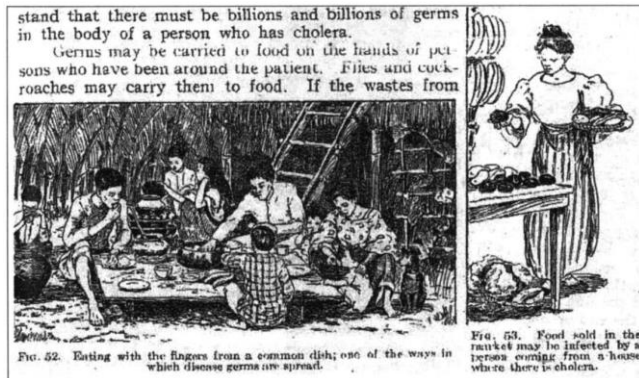


Figure 10. Illustration of the "Native" Lifestyle

While American standards of hygiene and a healthy lifestyle were disseminated, the government budget was primarily allocated to public buildings rather than housing, as the majority of Filipinos could only afford wooden houses. Due to the new perception and distortion of living standards, the Filipino Elite's view of their own past also changed. For example, Carlos P. Romulo, a member of the "Filipino elite contribution," in an architecture magazine from 1920, downgraded churches from the Hispanic era and did not recognize them as part of the Philippine heritage. Over time, the Anglo-American concept of suburban life for the upper class became established, leading to the spread of new living standards, initially in Manila and Baguio, later in other parts of the country. Contrary to expectations, regional Poblaciones, central districts of the area, such as in Cebu, did not expand because new residential buildings were mostly constructed in existing Poblaciones or on vacant lots. Although the concept of new streets and suburbs was based on American visions, only a few built their homes, with most elite buildings being rented or residents living in hotels. Some cottages were built for higher-ranking American officials, but this was the exception. The young American engineer Eusebius Halsema, who himself lived in rented Spanish-styled houses, described the behavior of Americans as temporary settling, stating that they "seemed only to be camping out" as no American wanted to settle down in the Philippines. Helen Taft, the wife of the Secretary of War, described the situation in Manila and residential homes in 1910 as Spanish-styled houses with high stone belts and street overhangs, similar to the Bahay na Batos.

Through new techniques and innovations, new architectural styles were developed, improving upon the Spanish Bahay na Batos. Heavy construction elements were replaced with lightweight frame structures made of wood or iron, bringing back the original character of bahaykubos as transparent, airy, and lightweight structures. Facades became more conspicuous, especially in Cebu poblaciones, with dynamic roof forms, playful window designs, and new materials giving them a new appearance. Houses known as Tsalets (Suartika), inspired by the American style, were

built as single-story, lightly elevated concrete, or wood structures with the character of bungalows. The positioning of houses on the property in relation to the street changed due to American influence, with houses now setting back from the street with a front yard. With the new lifestyle and ideological beliefs, the way of living and organization within the house changed, including individual spaces in the form of bedrooms, sanitary areas within the house, and new access possibilities. An important and extraordinary change in these new residential buildings for Filipinos was the use of the ground floor. What was previously used as storage space was transformed into fully functional living space. The belief that the ground floor made people sick due to dampness and local spirits hiding there was replaced with a "dry and well-built" residential space. Since this shift, Filipinos also lived on the ground floor. Another significant feature of the new American-period homes was the porch, not seen as a replacement for the earlier azotea but understood as the new social center of the house. American women were seen drinking tea on the porch, served by more than 10 Filipino servants per house, thereby improving the everyday life of the wealthy American class. This behavior changed the relationship between Americans and Filipinos as they developed a hierarchy by race and occupation. The upper Filipino class began hiring the new Chinese and Japanese working class, resulting in residential areas having residences for both the upper class and workers. Although the Filipino Elite lived in affluent and large houses, the locals were little to not recognized by the Americans, and consequently, the two worlds rarely mixed. Nevertheless, one can observe in the residential houses of Filipinos that they have adapted to the American style regarding social life and architecture based on transmitted information (Yamaguchi, K., 2006). An important concern for the Americans was the emphasis on sanitary values, paving the way for hygienic sanitation systems in residential homes. The "cubeta," toilets with pail conservancy systems, allowed for the relocation of the bathroom and kitchen to the interior space (Lamudi, 2019).

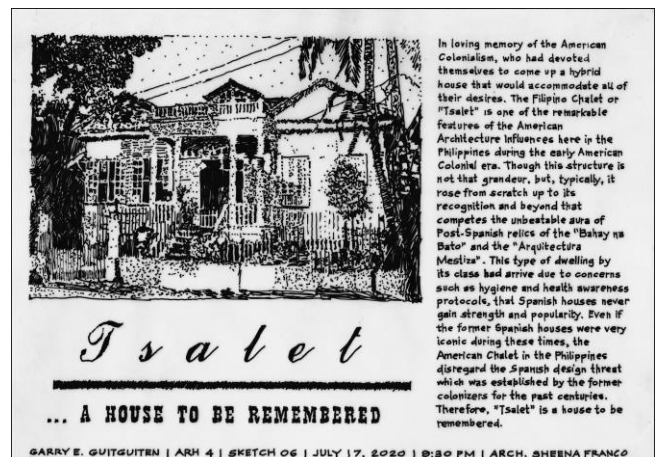


Figure 11. Tsalet - a building to remember





Figure 12. Mansions in Cebu



Figure 13. Mansions with Front Yard

In addition to spatial organization and construction, interior design in the then "American style" developed in the 1930s, which is now referred to as Filipino Style. Influenced by romantic accents and Victorian charm, chairs, tables, and cabinets were created to enhance the interior space. The development of Philippine homes shifted in the years before World War II as symbols of prosperity. Where Americans had primarily lived in rented residences years earlier, mansions in the Art Deco style with up to three stories, magnificent balconies, and conspicuously decorated facades were now being built. Houses that were large, stable, and beautiful enough are now titled "ancestral houses" as they have been passed down over the decades and gained value. Just as people remember their homes, homes also remember their people. Mansions are a good example as they changed owners repeatedly, welcomed different families and non-family visitors, and over time were altered through constructive interventions such as adding floors or raising the building. The most famous mansion, renovated in 1906 by Mayor Mariano A. Mercado, welcomed American Senator Key Pittman in 1930, as well as Ferdinand Marcos during his presidential campaign in 1960. Many owners of such mansions owned large farms that provided them with the necessary capital for construction, or they held newly established salary jobs by Americans, such as teachers, licensed nurses, local government officials, which enabled them to afford the construction. The Mancao House is a good example, as the owner, Pedro A. Mancao, originally a farmer, was employed as a public school supervisor, and with the income from farming and the public job, he could build his American-styled house in 1933 (Yamaguchi, K., 2006).

An important aspect to consider when looking at current political decisions and powers is the development of the local elite through marriages and migration from other nations and regions. Through the ability to travel, a shared lifestyle, financial opportunities, and interaction with each other, family ties were formed, spreading across the entire archipelago and passing on their prosperity through

generations. The captivating journey from Bahay na Tisa to Valencia House for example began in 1859 when it was constructed by the affluent mestizo Sarmiento family. Manuela Sarmiento, daughter of Roman Sarmiento and Ana Canarias, who were the original purchasers of the house, later married Jose Osmena, heir of a prosperous family in Cebu. Together, Manuela and Jose acquired another wood-stone house in Carcar. As time unfolded, the property transitioned through generations. The mantle of ownership and stewardship fell upon their daughter, Catarina E. Sarmiento-Osmena, and her husband, Dr. Pio Valencia, who inherited the dwelling and subsequently christened it Valencia House. Presently, the legacy endures in the hands of their son, Mario Valencia, and his wife, Esterra Silva Valencia, who serve as the proud proprietors and occupants of this historically rich abode. Many more examples like these demonstrate that the houses were regarded as symbols of familial prosperity and their magnificent past (Yamaguchi, K., 2006).

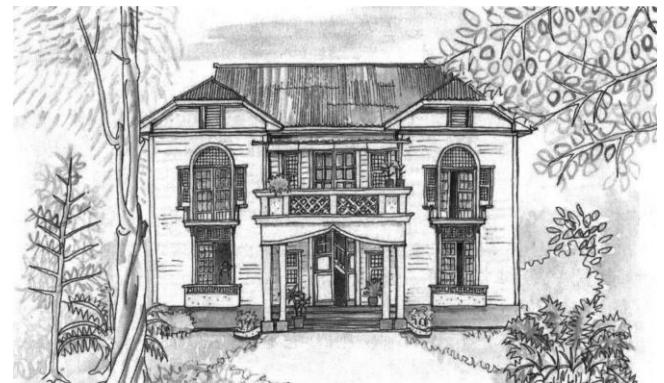


Figure 14. Mancao House



Figure 15. Mancao House Now

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The end of the Spanish era marked a significant turning point, ushering in American colonialism and bringing about profound changes in urban planning, architecture, and lifestyle. The American period, characterized by educational reforms, urban development initiatives, and the introduction of new living standards, played a pivotal role in shaping the social fabric of the Philippines.

#### *E. The Philippine Independence*

The period spanning from 1898 to 1941 was marked by the annexation by the Americans and the introduction of democratic structures and procedures in the Philippines. This era witnessed the emergence of political families and clans within the Filipino elite, whose influence continues to shape politics and the economy in the country. From 1941 to 1945, the Japanese occupation took place, resulting in the loss of approximately 1 million Filipino lives. The Philippines were eventually liberated by the Americans, and on July 4, 1946, they attained their international legal independence (Loewen, H., 2018).

Notably, the former American Governor Taft consistently opposed Filipino independence. However, his successors, including Woodrow Wilson and Governor Francis Burton Harrison, advocated for the ideas of independence and "Filipinization." The "Philippine Autonomy Act," enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1916, laid the groundwork for American policy, setting the goal of the complete independence of the archipelago. The vision was for America to play a supportive role as a political power, guiding the Philippines towards independence when the country became stable enough to take control of its destiny. Legislation was enacted to establish a Philippine House of Representatives and a Philippine Senate, with members elected by the people, ensuring adequate representation of Filipinos in the administration of their country. The constitution formed the basis for the Philippine Commonwealth, inaugurated in 1935 with Manuel L. Quezon as its first President. This significant development paved the way for full independence in 1946. The decolonization process also involved the adoption of the Tagalog language as the new national language (Boquet,

Y., 2017).

#### *F. The Japanese Invasion*

Following the Japanese attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December 1941, the Japanese swiftly targeted the Philippine capital, Manila, with the aim of gaining control over Southeast Asia. American forces under General MacArthur faced intense resistance but had to retreat in March 1942, with MacArthur promising, "I came out of Bataan and I shall return!" Over the next two years, Japan sought to eliminate Western influences in the Philippines, opposing the overvaluation of women, democratic principles, and Western materialism, hedonism, and epicureanism. In June 1944, MacArthur successfully recaptured parts of the archipelago, liberating the Philippines in the Battle of Manila in February 1945. On July 4, 1946, under President Manuel Roxas, the Philippines were officially declared independent. However, economic and political privileged relations with America persist to this day. Both countries have enacted various laws, such as the Bell Trade Act of 1946, the Philippines Trade Act, and the Military Bases Agreement of 1947. These agreements include provisions for \$800 million from America for the reconstruction of the Philippines, preferential tariff rates, free trade, a fixed value of 2 Pesos per Dollar for the Philippine currency, and the establishment of official American air and naval bases in the country (Boquet, Y., 2017).

#### *G. Independence and now what? – the new political system in the Philippines*

From 1946 to 1972, the political system of the Philippines was formally democratic, marked by short presidential terms often cut short by illness or accidents. Roxas died of a heart attack in 1948, the 5th President, Ramon Magsaysay, elected in 1953, died in a plane crash in 1957, and in 1965, Ferdinand Marcos defeated Diosdado Macapagal, who had been elected in 1961. What might seem like a healthy democracy at first glance reveals itself as a political system of shifting alliances between clans and families, leading to elections marred by corruption, fraud, or violence. These influential families control entire regions and can place individuals in various positions of power while obstructing other personalities.

A major restructuring of the political and economic framework occurred after Ferdinand Marcos won the presidency in 1965 with 52% of the vote, and again in 1969. Marcos described his plans for the nation as dynamic economic developments reflected in the immediate construction of roads, bridges, and public works, supported by the mobilized Philippine military. Additionally, he improved electrical efficiency and the general water supply in the country, cracked down on crime, smuggling, and bribery, and sent 10,000 Filipinos to support America in the Vietnam War.

However, the integration of the military into the government sparked massive protests from the University of the Philippines and opposition leader Senator Benigno

Aquino. The protests were curtailed by the imposition of martial law in 1972, along with restrictions on press freedom, curfews, and the arrest of politicians, opposition leaders, and students. Marcos initiated the production of weapons, the transfer of ownership of opposing companies to his relatives, and a new constitution that allowed him to be re-elected in 1981 with an overwhelming majority of 88%. The then opposition leader Benigno Aquino, sentenced to death, was sent to the United States for medical treatment, where in 1980, he delivered lectures at American universities critical of Marcos' regime. On August 21, 1983, Aquino was shot by the military upon his return to the Philippines at the foot of his plane. The event triggered widespread emotions and dismay both nationally and globally, leading to nationwide unrest and refusals to pay taxes, destabilizing the economic structure of the country. Ferdinand Marcos, who advanced the scheduled presidential election to February 7, 1986, to his advantage, eventually won with a slim majority of 54% against the widow of Aquino, Corazon Aquino. At that time, she had no prior political experience but was the most significant figure capable of mobilizing most people against Marcos. Following civil accusations of election fraud, the CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines), which held considerable influence over the Philippines' past, declared the regime as having lost all moral authority. This prompted peaceful demonstrations against Marcos' regime alongside Corazon Aquino (Boquet, Y., 2017). The EDSA Revolution, also known as the People Power Revolution from 22th to 25th of February mobilized millions of Filipinos onto Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) to protest against the Marcos regime (GOVPH, n.D.). On February 25, Marcos fled to Hawaii with his family, where he died a few months later. The rightful successor to the presidency was Corazon Aquino, who, in February 1987, passed a new constitution through a referendum. This constitution expressed a maximum term of six years, more powers for local authorities, the restoration of freedom of expression and the press, as well as the release of prisoners (Boquet, Y., 2017).

Since 1986, seven presidents have governed the Philippines. Corazon Aquino was succeeded by the pro-American officer Fidel Ramos as the first Protestant president. Ramos' successor, Joseph "Erap" Ejercito Estrada, who assumed office in 1998, had to resign due to massive allegations of corruption and incompetence. In 2001, he was replaced by his vice president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the daughter of former President Diosdado Macapagal and a former Undersecretary for Trade in the government of Corazon Aquino. Following the death of former President Corazon Aquino in 2009, her son, Senator Benigno Aquino III, was elected president in 2010. He promised a 'matuwid na daan' ('straight path') without corruption, but during his presidency, he faced challenges in living up to this commitment due to his relative lack of experience and hesitant, measured responses. On June 30, 2016, he was succeeded by Rodrigo Duterte. Since 2022,

the son of Ferdinand Marcos, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., has been governing the country (Boquet, Y., 2017).

#### *H. Architectural Changes throughout the new Era*

At the end of the 19th century, a radical shift in architecture towards Western influences is evident in the outer provincial towns, driven by increased trade and population growth. The iconic bahay na batos, typically seen throughout the Philippines, gave way to structures made of concrete and stone. Roofs once covered with nipa or coconut were replaced by galvanized iron. However, this new construction style proved vulnerable to typhoon winds, floods, and the hot summer temperatures. The bahay na batos, symbolic of Philippine identity, transformed from practical, tropics-suited homes into buildings with a museum-like quality. An example is the replication initiated by First Lady Imelda Marcos, who built wooden and stone houses as a tourist attraction. During the American period and beyond, new architectural styles emerged, facilitated by innovative materials and construction techniques. Multi-story apartment buildings, two-level rowhouses, and family chalets became possible. Small towns, present before and during World War II, expanded into larger cities due to population growth and rural-urban migration, significantly increasing the rate of urbanization (Boquet, Y., 2017).



Figure 16. Damaged Manila City Hall, 1945

After World War II, much of Manila's original colonial architecture did not survive the war's devastation, making way for modern Western architecture. Manila was considered the second most devastated Allied city in the world. Modern Western architecture, representing optimism, confidence in the future, and a departure into the unknown, replaced the old styles. Some key buildings, such as Manila City Hall, the Post Office Building, and certain University of the Philippines structures, were reconstructed according to their original plans with the assistance of the



US War Damage Rehabilitation Fund. Due to budget constraints and time limitations, a trend emerged towards plain, ornament-free facades and interiors, further emphasizing the style of modern architecture (Lico, G., 2017).

*"The utilization of reinforced concrete, steel, and glass, the predominance of cubic forms, geometric shapes, Cartesian grids, and most of all the absence of all forms of applied decoration were the essential features of modern architecture."* (Lico, G., 2017)



Figure 17. Condominiums

Starting from the 1960s, architects began exploring the integration of national heritage into their designs. Francisco Manosa and Leandro V. Locsin played pivotal roles in developing an architecture that seamlessly merged modern forms with elements of Philippine culture (Ogura, Nobuyuki et.al, 2002). However, the attempt to blend old and new was not a recent endeavor. Even the Americans, particularly architects like William Parsons, drew inspiration from vernacular architecture. Parsons, responsible for city planning in Manila, designed structures in the Neo-Classical style that incorporated features of preceding Spanish colonial architecture, such as Capiz Shell Windows (Edson G., 2018). In a 1966 article, Paterno Alcudia raised the question of "What is Filipino Architecture?" and identified the Nipa Hut, or bahaykubo, as a prime example. Architects like Manosa and Locsin acknowledged the bahaykubo as authentic and integrated its elements into their designs. Manosa, emphasizing its significance, stated, "It all starts with the bahaykubo," tracing the origin and features of Philippine architecture back to this traditional dwelling (Edson, G., 2020). The characteristics of the bahaykubo, including its single-room layout, steep roof, elevation from the ground, and use of local materials, align with Manosa's principles of Filipino architecture: "Filipino values, Philippine climate, and the use of indigenous materials" (Edson, G., 2020). Examples of his works, such as the Coconut House and the bamboo project in Puerto Azul, vividly showcase the design aspects of what he defined as Philippine architecture. Locsin, a modernist architect using materials like concrete, glass, and metal, also drew inspiration from the bahaykubo in his

works, as evident in the National Arts Center in Laguna from 1976.



Figure 18. The Coconut Palace



Figure 19. The National Arts Center, Laguna

First Lady Imelda Marcos attempted to define a common national cultural heritage through construction projects like the BLISS housing program or the Batasang Pambansa Parliament building, all modeled after indigenous Philippine architecture, featuring pitched roofs. In a 1978 article, Jaime Uyvico Nierras emphasized that housing needs in the Philippines could be met not by calculating minimal space requirements but rather by recognizing appropriate Philippine architecture. He defined this architecture as "responding to Filipino family's socio-cultural activities, protecting from the hot and humid climate, and reflecting their cultural identity as Filipino" (Edson, G., 2020). Illustrations of bahaykubos, Ifugao houses, Muslim Filipino houses, and Antillean houses showcased modern living spaces incorporating local materials and Philippine elements (Edson, G., 2020).

Yet, how can we truly define vernacular architecture? The American notions of indigenous and folk architecture differ significantly from the perspectives of post-war architects like Manosa and Locsin. While Americans consider Spanish colonial architecture as original, architects in the second half of the 20th century refer to the

bahaykubo. Vernacular architecture cannot be viewed monotonously. Folk architecture is not necessarily pure and flawless, as indigenous architectural forms evolve and adapt over time, even before the colonial era (Edson G., 2020). It is necessary to broaden our view of vernacular architecture, be more inclusive, and move away from the mindset of a monolithic and singular architecture. The true origins of Philippine vernacular architecture remain unclear, emphasizing the importance of reinterpreting the use of seemingly folk elements and recognizing the cultural diversity of the Philippines (Edson G., 2018).

### *I. Active Problems of the Philippines*

Yves Boquet mentions in her book "The Philippine Archipelago" the instability of democracy in the country. "Control of the political life [...] by powerful landed families [...] fighting each other, poverty-rooted corruption at all levels [...], instability linked to clientelism and shifting alliances [...], continued struggle of poor farmers against landowners, including the very family of President Aquino, mediocre industrialization, difficulties to reach a lasting peace with the Muslim factions in Mindanao, widespread criminality fueled by poverty and drug usage [...]" (Boquet, Y., 2017). She describes the colonial and post-colonial governments' efforts as catering to the elite and not showing genuine interest in the real problems of ordinary Filipinos. This naturally erodes citizens' trust in the government, and the political and economic system of the country remains unstable (Boquet, Y., 2017).

This is expressed in the ongoing widespread poverty, gender inequality in the country, and economic factors. The fact that in 2011, 76% of economic growth went to the 40 richest families on the Forbes Rich List underscores the theory that the Philippines, marked by poverty and a lack of comprehensive education, is dominated by wealthy individuals, celebrities, and members of political dynasties (Boquet, Y., 2017).

In an article from 1988, author Benedict Anderson criticizes the political system of the Philippines, describing it as a form of Cacique Democracy in which local elites and political bosses hold significant power over the country and exercise their power through manipulation, corruption, and the use of private military forces. He illustrates this with the example of Corazon Aquino, born Corazon Cojuangco, whose familial connections and background were responsible for her power. In 1987, she described herself as a descendant of a poor Chinese immigrant, despite being part of one of the wealthiest and most influential dynasties of Filipino Mestizos. Her grandfather, Don Melecio Cojuangco, the son of the poor immigrant, was a prominent farmer elected to the Philippine Assembly in 1907. His son, Corazon's uncle, was the Governor of Tarlac in 1941, supported by Corazon's father as a congressman. Her cousin, Eduardo Danding Cojuangco, was appointed Governor with the support of Ferdinand Marcos and was always one of Marcos's followers. Her brother served as Governor several times and was among the six most

powerful politicians of the time. Her marriage to Benigno Aquino, the successor of Senator Benigno Aquino Sr. from the American episode, brought further influences into politics. Additional names of brothers-in-law and uncles-in-law illustrate this theory. Although Corazon Aquino reluctantly agreed to run for president, she had a powerful base from her family's financial, agricultural, and urban real estate holdings (Anderson, B., 1988).

In addition to typical condominiums and townhouses, the less privileged live in urban areas such as riverbanks, canals, strips along railroad tracks, garbage dumps, or abandoned undeveloped lots in structures known as "barong-barongs." This specific term describes the living conditions of these individuals. The huts are constructed from various materials, including homemade bricks, concrete blocks, metal plates, and recycled materials. The roofs often consist of recycled corrugated metal sheets and other improvised materials, weighed down with items like car tires, stones, battery casings, or bicycles. People in these impoverished neighborhoods often live in precarious conditions without proper sanitation, and many are at risk of flooding and landslides. Approximately 7% have no sanitation facilities, while 24% have to share a toilet. Only 69% of households own toilets, but these lack flush systems and must be manually flushed. Despite about half of the population living above the poverty line, they have limited options to relocate. The reasons for settling in these slums are attributed to the lack of affordable housing for the urban working class and inadequate government housing policies. Conflicts between the poor and the wealthy class are visible in land evictions and urban development projects in these areas. Due to the increasing urban land values associated with globalization, justifying the use of prime urban land for cheap accommodations becomes challenging. Beautification processes lead to the displacement of the poor, forcing them to move to distant locations. A potential solution in the future could involve promoting relocations near the original residences through mixed-use housing projects, provided the real estate sector allocates a share for social housing, and the government provides adequate financing. High inequality persists in the Philippines, with eleven Filipino business leaders listed on the Forbes billionaires list. Meanwhile, many Filipinos suffer from inadequate nutrition and insufficient medical care. This stark contrast in wealth is attributed to corruption and disparities in educational levels. The inequality extends spatially, revealing significant differences in economic activities, income levels, and poverty across various regions of the country. Socio-economic indicators, measured by the Human Development Index (HDI), vary significantly between regions. Economic development in the Philippines is highly unequal. The National Capital Area (Metro Manila), covering only 0.2% of the land area, produces over a third of the country's GDP. Residents of Metro Manila are, on average, more than ten times wealthier than those in the poorest regions of the country. Despite having many slums, Metro Manila experiences less poverty compared to



most other parts of the country (Boquet, Y., 2017).



Figure 20. Slums in Manila



Figure 21. Slums near to a garbage dump

Although safe and adequate housing is a fundamental human right, the number of slum dwellers, particularly in the rapidly growing region of Manila, continues to increase. While in the years following the war destruction in 1946, there were about 46,000 slum dwellers recorded, by 2010, the number had risen to over 2.8 million people, approximately 556,526 families. The development of slums raises numerous unanswered questions. "Should the policy be to do nothing and consider that shantytowns are only a symptom of untamed population growth and will eventually disappear with the expected decline in fertility? Should it be to 'upgrade' slums? Should it be to eradicate slums, either by chasing away their residents, relocating them, or developing major programs of public housing in situ?" (Boquet, Y., 2017). Nevertheless, recent years have seen some noticeable changes. While beggars are still considered a nuisance, there has been a shift in the tolerance towards squatter areas as they are no longer considered criminal areas through eviction controls. Nevertheless, from 2008 to 2011, areas were repeatedly cleared, with people being displaced due to various reasons, including safety concerns (17% of evictions), disputes over illegal land acquisition and court decisions (53%), as well as infrastructure projects (35%). Due to the environmental impacts on people in the slums, such as health risks due to overcrowding, inadequate waste disposal, and unsafe, dirty water from the rivers,

there is a national interest in displacing residents in the name of environmental protection. For example, efforts involving forced evictions and the creation of new relocation sites outside of Manila can be observed along the Pasig River, which is used as a washing area, toilet, and garbage dump. While this may initially seem like a sensible idea, it is considered a problem for the residents. They are deprived of their current quality of life, as they lack employment opportunities outside, access to education becomes uncertain, and adequate infrastructure outside of Manila is often lacking (Boquet, Y., 2017).

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evolution of Philippine homes reflects a profound journey marked by pain, heteronomy, and the influence of diverse cultures throughout history. From humble beginnings such as the lean-to and the bahay kubo, the architectural landscape underwent significant transformations shaped by foreign colonizers and urbanization.

The bahay kubo, with its ingenious design perfectly suited to the local environment, provided safety and adaptability for the people. The Spanish colonization introduced the bahay na bato, contributing to settled lifestyles and social differences. The impact of Christianity remains evident in the predominantly Christian Philippines, with churches and public buildings scattered across the archipelago.

American influence, marked by hygiene awareness and new city plans, further altered Filipino lifestyles and architecture. The quest for independence, achieved in 1946, saw the Philippines navigating through various political regimes, including the impactful dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. During this period, architecture reflected a brutal, clean, and modern aesthetic.

The concept of Vernacularization, a dynamic process rather than a static building technique, underscores the evolution of buildings over time and across regions. However, the Philippines grapples with significant challenges, including a stark divide between the rich and poor, exemplified by opulent mansions juxtaposed with slums made of garbage.

The complex history, shaped by external influences and internal struggles, makes it challenging to predict how the Philippines were able to develop its unique values and architecture. Yet, amidst the brutality and varied influences, the resilience of the Filipino people is evident. The country stands proudly, with a tradition that, while influenced by others, continues to thrive due to the tenacity and identity of the Filipino people. In essence, the Philippines is a living testament to the endurance of its unique tradition amid adversity and change.

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