

**Music, Dance, and Negotiations of Identity in the
Religious Festivals of Bicol, Philippines**

by

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To my parents, Edison and Louella Adiova,
and to my sister, Lauren Adiova,
for their constant love and support.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the relationships between music, dance, faith, memory, the objectification of tradition, and tourism found in religious festivals in Bicol, Philippines. The three case studies of this dissertation explore festivals as complex, ever-changing phenomena that are shaped in many ways by the dynamic between religious and secular communities. The first case study discusses the shift of the Tinagba Festival in Iriga City, Philippines from a community festival into a regional event, and examines the tensions that exist between the Catholic Church, local government, and private sector in its planning. The second case study examines the push and pull between the Church and the local government over the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City. The third case study discusses the roles of memory and music in the staging of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Michigan and the ways in which members of a Bicolano diaspora community reconstruct and modify aspects of culture through shared memories, music performance, and current circumstances.

The analyses in this study give particular attention to street dancing competitions, as these events are highlights of almost every Philippine festival on local, regional, and national levels. Street dancing competitions consist of music and dance choreography that portray aspects of culture meant to represent traditional and regionally specific aspects of Bicol. Participants are judged on the music performed and the coordinated movements of

the dances. While judges look for creativity among the competing groups, they also adjudicate how well groups espouse the values and identity of the community and region they represent.

This study argues that festivals are not merely occasions of celebration that provide breaks from the everyday and the mundane; they also bring to the fore the continuous negotiation of tensions between the most powerful institutions of the region—religion and government—and the manner in which individuals and communities express identity for local, national, and international audiences. Moreover, music and dance in these festivals illustrate how local notions of power and prestige in social hierarchies shape the reception of aesthetic ideas in performance.

INTRODUCTION

Excitement was in the air. I watched people line the streets, carrying colorful umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun, as they waited in anticipation of the performances that would take place. It was not uncommon to see numerous people along the streets on any given day, but the crowds were so big that, despite the driver's incessant honking, it was impossible for the truck I was riding in to continue. My friend, Taty, guided me through the maze of people walking about so that we could find a suitable place to stand. The din of people talking and laughing, as well as the sputtering of tricycles trying to make their way through the sea of people, made it difficult for me to have a conversation without shouting. When the performances began, young people in bright costumes danced in unison down the street carrying what appeared to be many different versions of white orbs on sticks. At first, I didn't know what to make of what was going on, even though my auntie and Taty had told me that what I would see involved the boa, or coconut embryo. But what struck me the most were the details incorporated by every group dancing down the street: the props they carried, the costumes, the dancers' movements, and the music being played on percussion instruments. Some musicians played catchy rhythms on bamboo instruments while others performed on snare drums as they marched behind the dancers. I started to think about how these performances must have taken a great of thought and planning; it was certainly not something anyone could join spontaneously.

When the street dancing performances were finished, the people along the streets hurriedly made their way to the high school, where the groups that had just danced down the street would each perform in front of a panel of judges. Taty and I made our way to the racetrack inside the school where the participating groups would be performing in the grassy field in the middle of the oval track. Several groups performed to recorded hip hop music, but it became apparent to me that each group was portraying the same story: people dressed in what looked to be native costumes dance happily until some sort of disturbance causes panic. People dressed in robes carry in a crucifix, and suddenly there is calm, indicating the introduction of Christianity to the native people. Everyone celebrates, giving thanks for the blessings they have received.

It occurred to me that the groups participating were not just putting on a dance show, they were competing to see who could interpret the same story in the most creative manner. It was also apparent that these performances were important to the crowds watching, who were supporting their favorite groups and were interested in how the story would be portrayed. It was striking that even an outsider like myself could easily acquire an understanding of what each group was portraying through dance and music, and I wondered at the significance of it all.

Even at the first street dancing competition I ever attended, I recognized the importance of the event to those involved: the dancers, musicians, city officials, vendors, and everyone else in the community. Except for those selling food and souvenirs along the street, it seemed like everyone had taken the day off to watch the competition take place; it was as if the entire town had shut down for this event. This was all very new to me. Born

and raised in the United States, I had only ever visited the Philippines a few times in my life to visit relatives, and I was accustomed to the ordinary, daily rhythm of a city in Bicol. I only knew about the street dancing competition because of my aunt, whom I was staying with in Iriga City, Camarines Sur. She knew that I had a special interest in music, and one morning, suggested that I go to the neighboring town of Nabua to see the Boa-Boaan Alinsangan Festival.



Figure 0.1. A street dancing performance at the 2008 Boa-Boaan Alinsangan Festival in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Photograph taken by the author.

Festivals, it turned out, were quite common in Bicol and everywhere else in the Philippines. While providing arenas for cultural display and entertainment, festivals are also vehicles for the performance of self, community, and nation. In the Philippines, they are usually tied to both the agricultural calendar, marking important times of the year, and to the sacred calendar, marking the feast days of Catholic saints and the Virgin Mary. They cater to locals and, more often than not, tourists, inevitably transforming the dynamics of performance. Festivals often include street dancing competitions, and competing groups perform to impress audiences, often reinventing music and dances so that they are more thrilling to listen to and watch. It is often the winning group that competitors observe and model their performances after in order to win the next competition. Thus, relationships between participants are also transformed. A social hierarchy in street dancing competitions takes effect, since it is thought that winning adds prestige to the winning group and the town, city, or organization it represents. In addition, many different social hierarchies can be seen within different aspects of Bicol festivals, each involving city leaders, the Catholic Church, those who plan and organize the festival, performers, and the people in the community who take part in the festivities.

This study analyzes the different layers and components of festivals in Bicol in order to show how they fulfill the needs and how they represent the aspirations of performers, the religious and secular community, and the nation. They are more than just occasions for celebrating and partying. I once had a conversation with an older gentleman whom, upon hearing that I was interested in learning about street dancing competitions in Bicol festivals, remarked: "Why? I'd dance in the street when I'm drunk." I thought his statement was funny, but at the same time, was bothered by the levity with which he regarded the

street dancing competitions. To me, it implied that they required very little planning, that anyone could spontaneously decide to participate (sober or not), and that dancing in the street did not have any meaning except for entertainment. But more importantly, it motivated me to produce an academic study that details the various practices, struggles, and performing arts that contribute to the importance of festivals within Bicolano communities.

The performing arts, particularly music, have been largely ignored in the literature of these festivals. Many studies discuss the positive and negative effects of tourism on festivals that were once only for the community (Nurse 2002; Guss 1993; Picard and Robinson 2006). Festivals have increasingly become an important source of income for many individuals. Other studies describe the festival as a display of culture and identity, particularly in the way it is performed for tourists (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Esman 1982; Ancelet 1992; Hiwasaki 2000). While dances performed in festivals have been discussed (see Ness 1987 and Alcedo 2003), music is never described in detail even though it plays a significant role in festivals.¹

To fill this void, this dissertation pays particularly close attention to street dancing competitions in festivals in Bicol, Philippines, a highlight of almost every festival on local, regional, and national levels. These competitions portray aspects of culture usually depicted as traditional and regionally specific, and they are judged on the music performed and the coordinated movements of the dancers. While judges look for creativity among the competing groups, they also adjudicate how well groups espouse the values and identity of the community and region they represent. This dissertation will examine the relationship

¹ For a more complete literature review of “festivals,” see Chapter 2.

between music, dance, faith, the objectification of tradition, and tourism in street performances and competitions, and illustrate how local notions of power and prestige in social hierarchies shape the reception of aesthetic ideas in performance.

The objectification of tradition refers to the treatment of a cultural practice, such as a festival, as a possession, an object that belongs to a particular institution or group of people. In some festivals, there is often a struggle between groups who believe that they have the right to decide how a festival is run. Many local governments are in favor of organizing festivals so that they cater to tourists who, in turn, spend money and stimulate the local economy. Other groups, such as the Catholic Church (if the festival is religious in nature), frown upon the commercialization of festivals because it takes away from the meaning of the event and may not represent the community in what they consider to be a positive light.

The notion that a festival can belong to any one group of people ties into the idea of social hierarchies. In terms of organizing the festival, those on top are usually the local government (including the local department of tourism) and the Church (in religious festivals). They oversee the events that take place and decide who can perform during the festival. The people in the community are usually on the bottom tier of the hierarchy but can influence the decision-making of those in charge of the festival. Tourists are difficult to place. On one hand, they can be low on the hierarchy, since they usually have no input on how festivals are organized. On the other, they may be high on the hierarchy if the community wants to attract tourists to generate income.

Since the creation of the Department of Tourism in 1973, the government perspective on tourism is that it is a powerful economic growth engine for the country with

great potential to generate jobs, upgrade the levels of investment, and facilitate foreign exchange movement. For the Bicol region, which remains one of the country's most economically depressed areas, tourism plays a major role in boosting the economy. In 2009, Bicol had the fastest growth rate among regions in the Philippines.² The region relies on the popularity of its natural resources, such as the Mayon Volcano, which is known for its perfect conical shape, as well as its man-made attractions, such as the Camarines Sur Watersports Complex (CWC), which is a watersports park designed for wakeboarding and waterskiing. But festivals are also one of the main engines in developing the tourism industry, and it is the hope of local governments across the entire region that the boom in tourism will help shed Bicol's reputation as one of the country's poorest regions.

The role of local government is to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well being of its community. It is responsible for creating its own tourism plan, but the local government's institutional capacity to provide for tourism development is affected by a number of issues, such as financial resources, community acceptance, and, in the case of religious festivals, the approval of the Catholic Church.

The Philippines has a long history of Spanish colonization, and the most lasting and most influential legacy left from the colonizers was Christianity. During the Spanish colonial period, only communities that had an independent parish dedicated to a Catholic saint could become autonomous municipalities.³ In the Bicol region, which has the highest number of Roman Catholics than any other region of the Philippines, almost every municipality and city has its own patron saint. A town's celebration of the feast day of the

² "Bicol registers RP's fastest 2009 economic growth rate at 8.2%," Philippine Information Agency < <http://archives.pia.gov.ph/?m=12&sec=reader&rp=3&fi=p100812.htm&no=26&date=> >. Retrieved on 1 April 2013.

³ Paul A. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002).

patron saint is usually also the anniversary celebration of its municipal status, as well as its association with a particular saint. Thus, festivals for patron saints remain important for numerous Bicolano towns.

My interest in Bicolano religious festivals lies in the continuous negotiation of tensions between the most powerful institutions of the Bicol region—religion and government—and the manner in which individuals and communities express identity for local, national, and international audiences. My dissertation will analyze street dancing competitions in religious festivals in Bicol because these competitions portray aspects of culture usually depicted as traditional and regionally specific. Participants are judged on the music performed and the coordinated movements of the dances. While judges look for creativity among the competing groups, they also adjudicate how well groups espouse the values and identity of the community and region they represent.

Theoretical Frameworks and Foundations

Since regional festivals in the Philippines rely strongly upon the idea of tradition, it is important to examine the term itself. I define “tradition” as a thought, action, or behavior that is inherited or passed down from one generation to another. A festival is a tradition because organizing it is usually always passed from one group of elected leaders and organizers to the next and celebrated by every generation if the festival is long running. Each festival tradition is also made up of other distinguishable traditions. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger take the definition of “tradition” further in the anthology *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), which is largely credited with providing much of the understanding of the term “invented tradition.” In the introduction of the book, Hobsbawm defines “invented

tradition” as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms or behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”⁴ Using this definition, I describe Bicol festivals as invented traditions because they are thought to have a connection to the ancient past when, in actuality, they are recent in origin. The Ibalong Festival in Bicol, for example, was only started in the 1990s, and was meant to show that Bicolanos are a noble people. Because it is based on an epic poem about life in Bicol in pre-colonial times, the music and costumes of dancers in the festival’s street dancing competition effectively bring pre-colonial life into the present. The use of “ancient” materials, particularly the costumes and props that appear to be from pre-colonial times, makes the festival appear to be a continuation of traditions from the past. A community eventually accepts invented traditions as significant events, and they will be carried out repeatedly for as long as they hold meaning for community members. Hobsbawm explains that social practices that are carried out repeatedly will tend to develop a set of conventions and routines for convenience and efficiency so that it can be imparted to new practitioners. They are passed from generation to generation and can be modified to a greater or lesser extent to meet changing needs.

Taking these ideas even further, this study shows how festivals can also become “reinvented traditions.” Bicol festivals are constantly in flux, because city officials have the ability to greatly modify festivals—or replace them with new ones—in order to meet the demands of the rapidly growing tourism industry in the Philippines and evolving group identities. This differs from the minor changes that can occur in invented traditions in

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

order to improve how they are practiced. Events and activities in a festival, for example, are constantly added or removed based on whether or not they enhance its established purpose. But a reinvented tradition is an invented tradition that has been transformed: its purpose, and the way it is practiced, has changed significantly. A religious festival that becomes secular in nature (that is, the religious elements are removed) serves as an example. It may have the same name and retain familiar elements, but the community



Figure 0.2. Dancers dressed as pre-colonial warriors in the 2009 Ibalong Festival in Legazpi City, Albay. Still image from video recorded by the author.

celebrates it in a new way in order to meet the needs of the people involved, whether it is because of tourism or evolving identities.

Similarly, the music and dances in street dancing competitions continually change. They reflect the same themes and values as the festivals they represent, as well as traditions of the past, but they must also have relevance in the present. Performances are reinvented year after year in the hopes that they will attract and entertain people as well as earn top distinction in street dancing competitions. Every group that performs in street dancing competitions strives to be on top, and usually that means that they will emulate the performance style of past winners. Therefore, winning groups have an overwhelming amount of influence on the way that music and dances are performed. Music and dances are constantly being reinvented to be exciting and new but accomplishing this without losing the essence of the community's identity is becoming increasingly difficult. Competition judges encourage creativity, but not to the extent that a performance no longer bears any relation to the community being represented.

In his dissertation focusing on the Ati-Atihan Festival of Kalibo, Aklan, Philippines, Russ Patrick Alcedo (2003) examines the festival as a "reinvention of a tradition" that provides the means to construct identity, as well as act as a vehicle for a culture to change and adapt to the times. The Ati-Atihan, a festival in honor of the Santo Niño, or the Holy Child Jesus, is widely celebrated both in its original site in the Central Philippines and abroad in California. Alcedo provides an ethnographic study about why and how participants continue to celebrate the festival despite changes brought about by tourism, nationalist agendas, and transnational flows. He maintains that these changes influence

participants' choreography in dance performances during the festival, but their unwavering faith and devotion to the Santo Nino is what ultimately unites them despite their differences.⁵

I agree with Alcedo that major factors such as tourism and transnationalism can greatly affect how a festival is celebrated and the ways in which performers choreograph their dances in street dancing performances. My dissertation similarly examines how these factors affect religious festivals in Bicol; however, whereas Alcedo's study is primarily concerned with how performers' bodies reflect the factors that impact the Ati-Atihan Festival, I am more interested in analyzing how the music in street dancing performances reflect issues facing those who participate. Further, my dissertation is more focused on the relationships between the social groups that take part in each festival.

Social hierarchies within festivals are significant because they determine who has the authority to decide how they are run. The Oxford Dictionary defines the term "hierarchy" as "a system in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to relative status or authority."⁶ Groups or individuals can be ranked in a social hierarchy according to the amount of respect accorded by others (status), or by the amount of valued resources each group or individual possesses (power).⁷ In this study, I analyze the social hierarchy that is in place in various religious festivals, which usually consists of city officials representing the local government, festival organizers, the Catholic Church, performers, tourists, and community members. Status is ascribed through subjective

⁵ Russ Patrick Alcedo, "Traveling Performance: An Ethnography of a Philippine Religious Festival." PhD Dissertation: University of California, Riverside, 2003.

⁶ "hierarchy," *Oxford Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press, n.d. Web. 24 August 2013. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/hierarchy?q=hierarchy>.

⁷ Joe C. Magee and Adam D. Galinsky, "Social Hierarchy: The Self-Reinforcing Nature of Status and Power," *Academy of Management Annals* 2: 351-398.

interpretations.⁸ Because Bicol is principally a Catholic region, the Church is very respected as an institution of God. City officials also garner a lot of respect, since they are seen as highly educated leaders of any given community. But in festivals, status also depends on how well a group is able to make valuable contributions, especially when it has the potential to positively impact the wellbeing of the community. The conferral of status to a certain group depends on what the community expects to gain and the competency of the group in fulfilling their expectations. If a festival is religious, and the community expects to deepen their faith and spirituality, then the Church will be held in high regard because the community will rely on its guidance. If the community prioritizes the boosting of the local economy, then city officials and the local government will achieve a high status if they can attract tourists with various civic activities.

Unlike status, which is dependent upon the perception of others, power is given to the group that has control over resources that the community sees as valuable. In religious festivals, the Church has power because it has the resources to bring the faithful closer to God through religious activities. The local government has power in that they have the resources to strategize ways of generating income through festivals, as well as provide order and stability to the festival environment through planning and law enforcement. There can be friction among the groups involved, however, if one group believes that it should outrank all of the others and have sole authority over how a festival is run. When roles and hierarchical relations are not clear, coordination between groups is disrupted, which threatens the success of a festival. Social hierarchy works well when it provides a structure in which each group understands how to support—and be supported—by the

⁸ Ibid.

others: it facilitates coordination among the groups involved as they work toward a common goal.⁹ In this study, analyzing the social hierarchies in place provides a way to account for struggles and changes in various religious festivals in Bicol that may lead to reinvention.

Another concept of interest in this dissertation is the role of collective memory in festivals. Street dancing performances are activities in which participants portray a story or aspect of culture associated with a particular community or the Bicol region; therefore, they serve as mechanisms by which collective memories are transmitted and reinforced. According to sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, memory recollection is a collective act. What an individual remembers, and the way in which his or her remembrance occurs, is formed by education and social context, or by belonging to a specific social group. Collective memory is especially important for immigrant groups who continue to celebrate the festivals of their hometowns in their new countries of residence. The way in which they celebrate festivals reveals the traditions and aspects of identity that they believe to be the most important.

Filipino immigrants create and maintain identities that are simultaneously linked to both the U.S. and the Philippines: while they live and work in the U.S., they keep in touch with family and friends in the Philippines, occasionally visiting, making telephone calls, and sending remittances.¹⁰ Sociologist Yen Le Espiritu classifies Filipino immigrants in the United States as “transmigrants” because they preserve their ties with the Philippines. Instead of creating and maintaining identities that are exclusively Filipino or American,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Yen Le Espiritu, “Introduction,” in *Filipino American Lives*, edited by Yen Le Espiritu (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

Espiritu explains that, as transmigrants, Filipinos engage in a process called “transculturation,” in which they create “...something new from the cultural resources of their countries of origin and of settlement.”¹¹ They construct a new, distinct culture in which Filipino and American values are combined. Because Filipino immigrants essentially reinvent their identities through the process of transculturation, I believe that the traditions that they transplant are also reinvented in order to reflect what it means to be Filipino American.

While there exist studies that describe the economics of the region and the religiosity of its people, there remains a lack of scholarship on the music of Bicol.¹² My interest lies in the music and dances of Bicol’s festivals, since these are occasions when the community comes together to celebrate and express culture through performing arts. How do street dance performances express the values and identity of a community? How is music and dance changing in street dance competitions because of the competing groups’ desire to win? How has tourism played a role in the planning of Bicol festivals? How are festivals constantly being reinvented, and why? It is important to answer these questions about one region in order to get a more complete picture of what makes up the Philippines’ national culture. Because street dancing competitions within festivals occur throughout the Philippines, it is worthwhile to understand what they have in common, how they are

¹¹ Ibid., 28.

¹² For a study about Bicol’s economy, see Norman G. Owen, *The Bicol Blend: Bikolanos and Their History* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1999). For studies about Bicolano religiosity, see Jose Maria Z. Carpio, *Ina and the Bikol People: A Journey of Faith*. (Bicol: Archdiocese of Caceres, 2002); Vitaliano R. Gorospe and R. Javellana, *Virgin of Peñafrancia: Mother of Bicol* (Manila: Bookmark, 1995); and Fenella Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

influenced by tourism and each other, and why they are meaningful to the Filipinos who participate in them.

Research Methodology

Drawing on ethnographic field research with seven festivals in the provinces of Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon, in addition to periodicals, video and audio recordings, and interviews with members of the Bicol Association of Michigan who still celebrate important events of the region, this dissertation addresses issues of identity and performance, the push and pull between religion and government, and the politics of expressing and judging culture through street dancing.

Individual festivals were largely chosen for their significance in the region and my ability to attend them, since I wanted to get a feel for the dynamics of each festival and observe street dancing performances in person. In the case of the Tinagba Festival, which is one of my case studies, my reasons for focusing on this festival are twofold. Firstly, I resided in Iriga City, Camarines Sur for the entire period of my field research. My mother was born and raised in Iriga City, and I have many relatives and friends of the family who live there. Because I resided in Iriga City while I was in the Philippines, I met many people and became familiar with the daily rhythm of the city. This made it easy for me to understand how the occurrence of the Tinagba Festival affected daily life. Secondly, the Tinagba Festival, which is usually a community festival held annually in February, became a regional festival for the first time when Iriga City was chosen to host the Gayon Bicol Festival of Festivals Street Dancing Competition in 2010. I was interested in learning how

the Tinagba Festival would be adapted in order to accommodate the competition. I also wanted to see which street dancing group from different festivals in Bicol would win.

The Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, my second case study, is a celebration of thanksgiving, prayer, and devotion to the Virgin Mary. It is the largest celebration in Bicol, and it receives national recognition when it takes place every September. The Feast attracts people from all over the region and the nation. It is also celebrated worldwide: Bicolanos who have migrated to other countries still celebrate the Feast with church masses, prayers, and parties. Therefore, I am interested in how and why the Feast has become associated with the identity of a people. I am also interested in the push and pull between the Catholic Church and the Naga City local government over how the Feast should be celebrated. Because of its popularity, the Feast earns a large income for the city; however, the Church demands that the focus should be on prayer and not entertainment.

As a researcher, I am both an insider and outsider. I was born to Filipino immigrants in San Diego, California, a city in which a large number of Filipinos reside. I was raised in a household in which my parents cooked Filipino food, socialized with other Filipinos, and spoke the Bicol language with one another (but not with me). I grew up being cognizant that, while I consider myself an American and can engage in mainstream American life seamlessly, I am viewed as different in the United States because of my physical features and the elements of Filipino culture I have incorporated into my identity. But I also became aware that, while I can blend in physically with other Filipinos in the Philippines, I am frequently referred to as the “Amerikano,” the foreigner who needs help understanding and adjusting to Filipino culture. Thus, while my identity comprises elements of both Filipino

and American values, I am always learning about my Filipino heritage, and I believe that, as both an insider and outsider, I have a unique lens in which to analyze my research.

During my fieldwork in Bicol, I observed and documented the street dancing performances of different festivals. I then interviewed festival organizers, tourism officers, and dance choreographers about their thoughts on festivals and street dancing performances, and I engaged in informal conversations with people willing to talk to me about the festivals of their hometowns. These interviews and conversations were conducted in English, since the majority of the people I spoke with were proficient, if not fluent, in the language.¹³ I also collected street dancing judging criteria as well as information about particular festivals from several tourism offices.

During the writing process, as I pulled together all of my materials, it became clear that I was privileging the voices of organizers and officials over those of performers in street dancing competitions. Although I had conversations with some of them during my fieldwork, I found that I did not have the time to build the kinds of relationships necessary to produce a more multivocal and nuanced dissertation. It is thus important to emphasize that I view this study as merely a foundation for future research that will focus on the motives, insights, and experiences of festival performers and will complement the work I have already done. This study, which identifies the common elements of festivals in Bicol and the Philippines, examines factors that affect the ways in which they are organized, and analyzes how music is incorporated and affected by festival staging, lays the groundwork for what I hope to be a more ethnographic endeavor. The story told here, however, is still a fascinating one. Festivals in the Philippines, regardless of the reason for celebrating or the

¹³ As one of the official languages of the Philippines, people in government and higher education primarily speak English.

town or city in which they take place, are phenomena that draw from common symbolic resources and strategies but are also unique in their transformations and in the struggles over identity and cultural expression faced by the communities that stage them.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One serves as an introduction to the Bicol region. Because the dissertation examines the nature of festivals and street dancing competitions as it relates to the Bicolano communities that celebrate them, this chapter outlines the significant events of Bicol history that are most commonly portrayed in street dance performances. Many festivals in the Philippines celebrate the history of the municipality or city in which they originated, and the street dancing competitions attached to these festivals involve the portrayal of history through dance. Bicol's economy is important to outline in this chapter because many festivals celebrate what the community is most known for, and festivals are most often based on the natural resources, industry, or handicrafts that can be found within a certain town or city. I will also discuss the different types of performing arts that can be found in Bicol, since some are incorporated into festivals and other celebrations around the region.

I provide an overview of different definitions of "festival" in Chapter 2 in order to show why festivals can have significant meaning to community and regional identity. Festivals have become extremely popular in the Philippines but are often criticized as expensive spectacles that are a waste of a community's financial resources, since opponents argue that the money used to fund a festival could be used for more important, more useful projects that could benefit the community. I argue that festivals are a means of

giving back to the community by providing a sense of identity and unity as well as stimulating the local economy. I give an overview of the different types of festivals found in Bicol and the Philippines, and I discuss the Department of Tourism's approach to local economic development, especially in the planning of festivals. The positive and negative aspects of viewing festivals as moneymaking ploys, and the ways in which festivals are traditions unique to community identities are also discussed.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the shift of a community festival to a regional festival through a case study of the Tinagba Festival in Iriga City, Camarines Sur. For decades, the festival focused on giving thanks to Our Lady of Lourdes every February. In 2009, however, the community festival was transformed into a regional one, focusing more on determining the winner of a street dancing competition than prayer and thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary. In this chapter, I discuss tensions between the Church, local government, and private sector in the planning of the festival. I discuss the local government's vision for the festival as an event that conveys Iriga City's values, identity, and potential as a tourist destination. I also discuss the politics of the Showdown of Festival of Festivals, in which street dancing groups from festivals all over the Bicol region compete for top distinction and for a place in the Aliwan Festival in Manila, in which the top festivals from regions all over the Philippines compete. In addition, I discuss the future of the Tinagba Festival. After the Showdown of Festival of Festivals, organizers in Iriga started planning to reinvent the Tinagba Festival so that it would emphasize the city's pre-colonial past and ancestors' animist beliefs. I seek to understand why city officials felt the need to change the format of the festival, why there was a need to focus on Iriga City during pre-colonial times, and why, ultimately, it was not possible to reinvent the festival.

The Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City, Camarines Sur is the topic for Chapter Four. I examine the push and pull between the Catholic Church and the local government over how the religious feast should be celebrated. The religious feast is interesting in that Church officials want to maintain the solemnity of the nine days of prayer devoted to the Virgin Mary, but the local government would like to take advantage of the large influx of people coming into Naga City by holding numerous events to entertain them, such as beauty pageants and beer plazas. They want visitors to spend money on souvenirs and eating at local restaurants in order to give the city an economic boost and provide ways for local residents to earn more income. However, the Church does not approve of these events taking place during the nine days of prayer because officials believe that they distract people from their devotion to the Virgin Mary. Thus, I discuss the Voyadores Festival, the festival within the Feast, its purpose, and why the Church allows it to take place during the nine days of prayer. I discuss the struggle for power and the conflict of interest between the two institutions in terms of how the festival should be celebrated. I also describe the role of the Church and the intense devotion of the people of the region and how this devotion has transformed a regional feast into a global phenomenon.

In both Chapters Three and Four, I outline the basic conventions of street dancing performances, including the structure of competitions, choreography, and judging criteria. I also look at interactions and influence in encounters between street dancing groups during festivals. Competitions influence the aesthetic ideas of participating groups: choreography often changes based on movements and formations they have observed from other groups. A winning group is at the top of the social hierarchy of competing groups. They are seen as

the judges' ideal, and other groups will emulate their performance style. Therefore, I consider the politics of winning at competitions and why winning is important. For most groups, the monetary prize is not what is at stake but rather the prestige that goes along with earning top distinction.

In Chapter Five, I focus on the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia as celebrated by the Bicol Association of Michigan. Every September, members of the association celebrate the feast in Rochester Hills, Michigan, incorporating important aspects of the feast that is celebrated in Naga City, such as the *traslacion* and fluvial procession. Singing songs associated with the Peñafrancia Feast also plays an important role. The members of the Bicol Association of Michigan are mostly immigrants to the United States from different Bicol provinces. Using Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, I argue that both the memory of celebrating the feast in Naga City, Bicol and the music that members of the association had learned when involved in the feast in the Philippines, are collective or social experiences shaped by the community they have formed in Michigan.¹⁴ I discuss memory in terms of a shared recollection of the past where members of a diaspora community reconstruct a tradition from the homeland year after year. I also explore Fred Davis' concept of collective nostalgia, a condition in which symbolic objects from the past are of a highly public, widely shared, and familiar character and can trigger a nostalgic feeling in a large number of people at the same time.¹⁵ While members of the association enjoy the Peñafrancia Feast in Rochester Hills, they still experience nostalgia for the feast in Naga City, expressed through music.

¹⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 122.

Chapter Five also serves as a conclusion in which I analyze the differences in the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia when they are celebrated in two very different environments. What happens when the festival is organized by a group of Bicolanos rather than the Church and local government? I then tie together the themes emerging from the dissertation: the relationship between music, dance, and faith; the objectification of tradition; tourism in street dancing performances and competitions; and how local notions of power and prestige in social hierarchies shape the reception of aesthetic ideas in performance.

While I recognize that the festivals and street dancing competitions described in this dissertation cannot possibly represent those of every town and province in the Bicol region, my hope is that it will bring to light the politics, artistry, and socio-cultural functions that are commonly involved in these celebrations and competitions. Bicol festivals are not embodiments of a region and its people but are important as performances of identity. It is easy to dismiss these events as trivial dance shows or costly spectacles that cater to tourists. My aim is to show that they are much more complicated, expressive, and meaningful than one might think.

Chapter 1

Bicol History, Economy, and Performing Arts

Many festivals in the Philippines celebrate the history of the municipality or city in which they originated, and the street dancing competitions attached to these festivals involve the portrayal of this history through music and movement. Most street dancing performances in festivals follow a similar progression: happy natives go about their everyday lives until they are disrupted by affliction. It is not until the intercession of a saint and/or the introduction of Christianity that the affliction is cured and the natives rejoice. While simple, this progression portrays two broad but significant time periods in Philippine history: pre-colonial Philippines and Spanish colonization. It is significant that Spanish governance is never venerated, but Christianity, its most lasting legacy, is always celebrated and looked upon as a saving grace.

This chapter examines how and why festivals in Bicol portray local versions of their history, and how street dancing performances within these festivals interpret aspects of history that are both national and regionally specific. In order to accomplish this, I discuss the region under Spanish rule and how Bicolanos contributed to the national fight for independence. I then focus solely on the Bicol region, explaining why festivals play an



Figure 1.1. The Republic of the Philippines. The Bicol region is located southeast of Manila. Map data from Google and MapIT (maps.google.com).

important role in its economy. I also describe Bicol music and performing arts, because they are often featured in festivals and celebrations around the region. This chapter serves as an introduction to Bicol in order to provide context for what is being celebrated in the numerous street dancing performances that take place year round and how music and movement are used to represent history and espouse local values.

The Philippines is an archipelago located in Southeast Asia. Its islands, which total more than seven thousand, comprise numerous ethnic groups with regional and linguistic differences. Luzon is the largest and most northern island of the Philippines. The Bicol region, administratively known as Region V, is located in southeastern Luzon; it is surrounded by the Visayan Sea in the south, the Pacific Ocean in the east, Lamon Bay in the north, and Sibuyan Sea and Quezon province in the west.

Bicol is composed of six major provinces (the first four are located within the peninsula and the last two are island provinces): Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes and Masbate. There are seven cities, namely, Legazpi, Ligao, and Tabaco in Albay; Naga and Iriga in Camarines Sur; Masbate in Masbate province; and Sorsogon in Sorsogon province. The region also has 107 municipalities and 3,455 barangays. In 2010 the regional population stood at 5,420,411, spread out over a land area of 18,139.08 square kilometers (1,813,908 hectares).¹⁶ The region is sustained by its agricultural economy because of its rich soil, natural water resources, and abundant rainfall. It has also become a major tourist destination because of its beautiful beaches and

¹⁶ "Regional Profile: Bicol," *CountrySTAT Philippines* < <http://countrystat.bas.gov.ph/?cont=16&r=5> >. Retrieved on 20 March 2013.



Figure 1.2. The Bicol Region. Map data from Google (maps.google.com).

volcanoes, such as the Mayon Volcano in Albay and Mount Iriga and Mount Isarog in Camarines Sur.

While Filipino, the national language of the Philippines, is widely understood throughout Bicol because of television and other forms of media, the region's inhabitants, called Bicolanos, speak any one of the several varieties of the Bicol language.¹⁷ Bicol dialects are very diverse. The dialect spoken in Masbate and Sorsogon, for example, incorporates words from the northern Visayan language and is very different from the dialects of towns in Camarines Sur that are located more inland, such as Buhi, Iriga City, and Nabua. In order for Bicolanos to communicate with one another, Standard Bicol, which is based on the dialect of Naga City, Camarines Sur, serves as the regional *lingua franca*.

In pre-colonial times, the Bicol region was known as Ibalon. Negrito, Proto-Malay, and Malay peoples are believed to have been the first racial groups to populate the Philippines. It is thought that the Negritos migrated by land bridges during the last glacial period. Later migrations were by water and took place over several thousand years. The Agta, the Negrito indigenous people who continue to live in Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon today, were one of the first people to live in the region. Their social and political organization was based on the basic unit of settlement called the *barangay* system, which was in place when the Spanish arrived.¹⁸ Early Bicol society was family centered, and *datus* (chieftains) were the head authorities. Within the *barangay* there were broad social divisions consisting of nobles, freemen, and a group described before the Spanish period as dependents. Dependents consisted of a number of categories, such as landless agricultural

¹⁷ Because of the close proximity to Tagalog-speaking regions, many people in northern Camarines Norte predominantly speak Tagalog in addition to the Bicol language.

¹⁸ In the Philippines today, the *barangay* is still the smallest local government unit and is similar to a village. Municipalities and cities are composed of *barangays*.

workers, individuals who had lost freeman status because of indebtedness or punishment for crime, and slaves.¹⁹

In his first hand account of the early Spanish colonial venture into Asia, Antonio de Morga describes the Filipinos as being “heathen and having no knowledge at all of the true God, they neither sought Him by the use of reason, nor had any one fixed deity.”²⁰ Instead, Filipinos worshipped various birds and animals, trees, rivers, the sun, moon, and stars. The ancient Bicolanos believed in a supreme, loving god called Gugurang who lived in Kamurawayan (heaven). He had a pantheon of secondary deities called *batalas*, which were charged with protecting communities, and other minor deities called *catambays*, which were tasked with looking after individuals.²¹ Images of *anitos*, ancestral spirits that were worshipped by their descendants, were created out of wood, gold, stone, or ivory so that people could worship them. While there weren’t any temples or other places of worship, each person kept his or her own anitos in the home. When there was cause for celebrating and feasting, people would construct a shelter with branches, decorate it with leaves, flowers, and small lanterns, and then conduct their worship, which would last for a few days. The shelter was usually dedicated to an *anito*, but sacrifices were never offered there. They would then remove the decorations when the feasting was over.²² The Bicolanos also had temporary structures in which they housed rituals, such as the *atang*, in which people

¹⁹ Frederica M. Bunge, ed. 1983. *Philippines: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²⁰ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609), translated and edited by J.S. Cummins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 278.

²¹ Alejandro R. Roces, *Fiesta* (Philippines: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1980).

²² Juan Francisco de San Antonio, *Cronicas de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno*, Book I, translated by D. Pedro Picornell (Manila: Casalinda and Historical Conservation Society, 1977).

offered the fruits of the earth to Gugurang in order to obtain petitions or to give thanks for prayers answered.

Male shamans, called *asogs*, dressed and behaved like women, assisting priestesses, called *baliana*, who ministered sacrifices and were the physicians of the people. In her study of male shamans in the Philippines, Carolyn Brewer (2004) analyzed whether the link between sex/gender ambiguity or androgyny with spiritual prowess in Indonesia could also apply to the Filipino male transvestite shamans called *asogs*.²³ Brewer found that while women performed most of the religious facilitation, there is no evidence that women's sacred potency was in any way dependent upon identification with a "third" sex/gender space in which they exhibit masculine behavior despite their female bodies. For ritual purposes, both male and female shamans dressed in clothing identified as belonging to women. The *asogs* would also engage in what was considered feminine behavior, including braiding their hair and weaving with other women. Brewer found that the male/feminine inversion of the *asog* gave the male shaman status and authority in a sphere otherwise denied him, and, while it reinforced the stereotypical boundaries of femininity, it reinforced the current situation of women as shamans. Brewer argues that spiritual potency was not dependent on identification with a "third" sex/gender space, but rather on

²³ A few scholars have explored the link between the non-conforming gender behavior of males and spiritual potency, hypothesizing that identification with a "third" sex/gender space gave Indonesian men both a vehicle into the sacred domain and special potency or agency within that domain. See Leonard Andaya, "The *Bissu*: study of a third gender in Indonesia" in *Other Pasts: Women, Gender and History in Early Modern Southeast Asia*, edited by Barbara Watson Andaya (Honolulu: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 2000), 27-46; Ian Wilson, "Reog Ponorogo: spirituality, sexuality, and power in a Javanese performance tradition," in *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, online, <http://www.she.murdoch.edu.au/intersections>, Issue 2; Josko Petkovic, "Waiting for Karila: Bending Time, Theory and Gender in Java and Bali," in *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, online, <http://www.she.murdoch.edu.au/intersections>, Issue 2.

identification with the feminine—regardless of whether the biological sex of the shaman was male or female.²⁴

As facilitators of religious rituals, priestesses would inform the people whether it was necessary to exorcise Aswang or invoke the anitos. Aswang was the arch-fiend of Gugurang, and he lived in a place of fire. Aswang lived on the blood and viscera of humans. He had a daughter, called Oriol, who was a serpent who could seduce men into committing evil acts. For Aswang, there were two types of rituals that would prevent him from devouring a sick person or to prevent terrible calamities. The exorcism ritual was called *hidhid*, and it could either be public or private. The public ritual was performed after a calamity, such as a typhoon. The private ritual was performed on sick individuals, and it involved placing betel leaves on the patient's head and the phrenetic dancing of the *baliana*, who would command Aswang to leave. If the sick person recovered, the ritual was a success; if he died, the *baliana* would explain that it was because Aswang wanted to take him or her to his world.²⁵ The second type of ritual was called *hogot*, and it was performed when a rich and important person died. In order to prevent Aswang from feasting on the person's entrails, a slave would be killed because of the belief that Aswang would be busy with the slave's entrails that he would leave the other person's alone.

²⁴ Missionaries, whom in Western society recognized the dominance of men over women, refuted the spiritual prowess of women, reasoning that they were imperfect and feebler in mind and body. Thus, for them it was not surprising that they would be more susceptible to the "works of the devil." The identification with the feminine only reinforced the Spanish belief that the devil was attracted to the female body and the feminine. However, "feminized" men could easily escape the devil's works by shedding their non-conformist gender identification and adopting the behavior of "proper" men (it was not clear if male shamans only dressed as women during rituals or if they adopted dressing as women as a permanent lifestyle decision).

²⁵ Spanish missionaries make similar observations about the beliefs of indigenous Filipinos and the rituals performed on the sick. See Pedro Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (Makati, Philippines: MDB Printing, 1969) and Juan Francisco de San Antonio, *Cronicas de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno*, Book I, translated by D. Pedro Picornell (Manila: Casalinda and Historical Conservation Society, 1977).

The Bicolanos' essentially monotheistic belief in the supreme god Gugurang and the minor deities made the transition to the belief in a Christian God along with a pantheon of saints a little easier when the Spanish began converting them. As in other places in the world where there is cultural overlay, religious events that exist today have notable similarities with rites dedicated to the ancient gods. The Tinagba Festival, for example, is celebrated every year in Iriga City and offers the first fruits of the harvest to God as an act of thanksgiving.²⁶ This is very similar to the ritual in which the first fruits of the harvest were offered to Gugurang.

The earliest foreign traders were South Asians, Indonesians, and possibly Arabs. By the tenth century the Chinese were engaged in trade with the Philippines, and they were joined in the fifteenth century by the Japanese, who, like the Chinese, established resident trading communities. Traders from Indonesia brought Islam to the Philippines. While there is no sign indicating that there was ever Islamic rule in Bicol, by 1500 Islam was established in the Sulu Archipelago and spread to Mindanao; it reached the Manila area by 1565.²⁷

Spanish Contact

After convincing Charles V of Spain to fund his expedition to sail west around South America in search of the Spice Islands, the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan came upon what is now the Philippines. The journey in 1521 was perilous, and even though he and his men came into contact with the people of the islands, even converting some to Catholicism, it ended in Magellan's death by the hand of a native chief named Lapu-Lapu,

²⁶ The Tinagba Festival in Iriga City will be described in more detail in Chapter 3.

²⁷ Bunge 1983.

who refused to be baptized. In 1564, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi was directed by royal order to take over where Magellan left off, and he landed in the island of Cebu the following year. His arrival marked the beginning of a permanent Spanish presence in the Philippines. By then, Cebu had become so prosperous that the Spaniards decided to develop it into an administrative, military, and religious center for the Philippines. However, they soon moved their base of operations to Panay in 1569, and then to Manila due to rapid economic decline on Panay island.

In 1567, Mateo del Saz and Martin de Goiti arrived in Masbate and Ticao intending to convert the people who lived there to Christianity, but the people, having seen the arrival of strange ships, fled to the mountains.²⁸ The Spanish returned in 1569, when the Augustinian friars Alonso de Jimenez and Juan de Orta journeyed with Captain Luis Enriquez de Guzman and a group of explorers to the islands of Masbate, Ticao, and Burias. They then moved on to the larger island across the sea to what is now the southern part of Sorsogon, which forms the tip of the Bicol peninsula. The island across the sea was called Tierra de Ibalon by the expedition. Jimenez and Orta pioneered the conversion of Bicol to Christianity, staying in Ibalon for some time and baptizing many chieftains. These Spanish conquistadors were the first to land in Luzon through the Bicol peninsula, and the native people of this area were the first people in the island of Luzon to accept Christianity.²⁹

Bicolanos are proud of the fact that the first Christian settlement in Luzon was located in Bicol. During my fieldwork, I noticed that priests reminded people of this fact from time to time during homilies at church, in order to encourage openness and acceptance towards God. But there are also some who are quick to point out that the

²⁸ Maria Lilia F. Realubit, *Bikols of the Philippines* (Naga City, Philippines: AMS Press, 1983).

²⁹ Jose Calleja Reyes, *Bikol Maharlika* (Quezon City, Philippines: JMC Press, 1992).

Bicolanos had a culture and religion before Spanish colonization. The local government of Iriga City, for example, almost changed the premise of their Tinagba Festival because city officials thought it would benefit citizens to learn about Bicolano values and beliefs before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors.³⁰ I will return to this topic in Chapter 3.

Spain had three objectives in keeping the Philippines as a colony: (1) to have a share in the spice trade; (2) to make contacts with China and Japan in order to further Christian missionary efforts there; and (3) to convert Filipinos to Christianity.³¹ Only the third objective was realized, although not completely, since Muslim peoples in the south and the Igorot, the upland tribal peoples in the north, actively resisted conversion.

In Bicol, the most lasting and most influential legacy left from the Spanish was Christianity. Their core beliefs of a supreme being, an afterlife, mediation by deities and departed loved ones, and the existence of evil actually converged with Christian beliefs in one God, eternal life, Jesus Christ, the saints, and the battle against Satan and his evil works.³² Within twenty years of the arrival of the Franciscans in 1578, churches were established throughout the region's settled areas, and the majority of Bicolanos became Roman Catholic.³³

Church and state were inextricably linked in carrying out Spanish policy. The state took on administrative responsibility—controlling expenditures and the selection of personnel—and left to churches the responsibility for the conversion of the natives by the

³⁰ Interview with Eladio Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 21 January 2010.

³¹ Bunge 1983.

³² Jose Maria Z. Carpio, 2002. *Ina and the Bikol People: A Journey of Faith*. (Bicol: Archdiocese of Caceres, 2002).

³³ Reyes 1992.

religious orders of the Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits, the members of which were known as friars.³⁴

The arrival of the different religious orders which had been sent from Spain to the Philippines prompted Philip II to divide the Philippines into districts and to assign each order to a different territory, so that where one order worked, no other would be assigned. In addition, since there was no common language, it was decided that the Philippines would be divided according to linguistic groups. The intent was that each order could concentrate its linguistic and teaching efforts on the specific groups to which they had been assigned. By decree, the Franciscans were assigned to Bicol.³⁵

The Orders became extremely powerful. As the only Spaniards outside of Manila most of the time and the only Spaniards who spoke local dialects, they acted as the conduit through which civil authority had to work in the various outer regions. They conducted many of the executive and control functions of government on the local level. They were responsible for education and health measures, kept the census and tax records, and supervised the villagers. The economic position of the orders was secured by their extensive landholders, which generally had been donated to them for the support of their churches, schools, and other establishments.

Philip II of Spain explicitly ordered that Spanish pacification of the Philippines be bloodless. His written instructions to Adelantado Legazpi, the leader of the expedition to the Philippines, were not carried out precisely as he had ordered; Spanish explorers had

³⁴ Bunge 1983.

³⁵ James J. O'Brien, ed., *The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bicol People* (Naga City, Philippines: Ateneo de Naga, 1968).

inflicted great violence on native peoples.³⁶ However, Spanish occupation of the archipelago was accomplished with relatively little bloodshed because, with the exception of the Muslims, it was facilitated by the absence of initial armed resistance. The conquest of Bicol was especially difficult for the Spanish because of the strong resistance offered by the natives of the region: “Although the Ilocanos and other northern peoples had not resisted as fiercely as had the Bicolanos, and although only forty-five soldiers were needed for the northern conquest, a much larger number was needed for Camarines.”³⁷ Bicolanos today are proud of the fact that their ancestors did not acquiesce easily. Every year, the Cimarrones Festival in Pili, Camarines Sur celebrates the bravery of the warrior tribesmen, called *cimarrones*, who tried to resist the invasion of Spanish colonizers.³⁸

Captain Juan de Salcedo’s discovery of gold mines in northern Bicol in 1571 was exploited during his explorations of the region. His conquest strategy was the same for all of the villages that were entered. He would first summon them peacefully, telling them to pay tribute immediately unless they wished war. If they did not do as he said, the Spaniards would attack and pillage their villages before summoning the natives again to submit peacefully. When the natives agreed, the Spaniards asked them to immediately give them an excessive amount of gold. The Bicol villages must have been very wealthy, because Salcedo collected a very large amount of gold in the first year of conquest.³⁹

³⁶ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959).

³⁷ Miguel Bernad, *The Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1972) 115.

³⁸ While the Cimarrones fought bravely against the Spanish, they eventually converted to Christianity, becoming one of the first people to become devotees of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. They will be mentioned again in Chapter 4, in which I discuss the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

³⁹ Reyes 1992.

Salcedo later set up the Spanish village of Santiago de Libong in honor of the Spanish patron saint, St. James the Apostle. Libong became the first Spanish settlement in the Bicol region. When Salcedo returned to Manila, he left a garrison force of eighty soldiers under the command of Pedro de Chavez, who would shortly establish the city of Caceres along the Bicol River. In 1594 it became a Franciscan mission, and in 1595, the capital of the bishopric. In 1636 the region was divided into two regions: Partido de Ibalon and Partido de Camarines. Ibalon consisted of modern day Albay, Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Masbate, and the Ticao and Burias islands, and Camarines included towns from Camalig northward (see figure). In 1829, Camarines was split into Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur, were reunited in 1846, split again in 1857, fused again in 1893, and then formally established as separate provinces in 1919.⁴⁰ In 1920, Masbate separated from Sorsogon, and Catanduanes became independent of Albay in 1948.

The Bicolanos suffered many abuses under Spanish colonization, but the Spanish served as their ally in fighting Moro (Muslim) invaders from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Moro pirates from the southern Philippines, who were offended by the Spanish's policy of conversion, pillaged towns all over Bicol, capturing and killing people (especially Spanish missionaries), and burning houses and churches.⁴¹ Moro piracy greatly hampered the social and material growth of Bicol and the rest of the Philippines. It also heightened the mutual distrust between Christian and Muslim Filipinos.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Francisco Mallari, "Camarines Towns: Defenses Against Moro Pirates," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 17 (1989): 41-66.

⁴² Domingo M. Non, "Moro Piracy during the Spanish Period and Its Impact," *Southeast Asian Studies* 30 (1993): 401-419.

Discontent with Spanish rule in the late nineteenth century, Filipinos began organizing to gain independence from Spain through insurrection. The Katipunan, a secret organization led by Andres Bonifacio, was responsible for the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The outbreak of fighting in the Tagalog provinces raised fears among Spanish authorities that it might spread to the Bicol region. As a result, they began persecuting liberal-minded Bicolanos whom they suspected of advocating the overthrow of Spanish authority in the Philippines. Arrests were made in almost every town, and hundreds of Bicolanos were massacred. Fifteen are recognized as the Bicol Martyrs: on January 4, 1897, five days after Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, was executed, eleven prisoners from Bicol were executed on the same field in Bagumbayan (now Luneta) in Manila. The four others either died in prison or while in exile. The Fifteen Bicol Martyrs are immortalized in a thirty-foot monument at Plaza Quince Martires in Naga City, Camarines Sur. It was built in 1926 and features carvings of the Bicol Martyrs around a circular base. On top of the base are a woman symbolizing the Motherland and her fallen son. In 2012, the 115th anniversary of their death was commemorated with a 21-gun salute and wreath offering at the base of the monument.⁴³

In 1898, the Philippines' war for independence from Spain commenced. In Bicol, Ildefonso Moreno organized men from the towns of Labo, Talisay, and Daet to form the local *Katipunan*. People in towns all over Bicol began to rise in rebellion against Spanish rule. The United States became involved as a result of its intervention in Cuba's war for independence from Spain, which led to American interest in Spain's Pacific territories of

⁴³ Juan Escandor, Jr., "A 21-gun salute for 15 Bicol martyrs," *Inquirer News*, 4 January 2012 <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/122591/a-21-gun-salute-for-15-bicol-martyrs>>. Accessed on 13 October 2013.

Guam and the Philippines. When Spain surrendered, the result was the Treaty of Paris, which gave the United States temporary control over Cuba, and ceded colonial authority over Puerto Rico, Guam, and parts of the West Indies. In addition, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States for \$20 million.⁴⁴

On June 12, 1898, Philippine revolutionary forces under General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the Philippines' independence from Spain, but the declaration was never recognized by the United States or Spain. In turn, Philippine revolutionaries did not acknowledge the Treaty of Paris or American sovereignty, and subsequently fought against and lost to the United States in the Philippine-American War (1899-1902). The United States did not grant the Philippines its independence until July 4, 1946 via the Treaty of Manila. The Philippines observed Independence Day every year on July 4 until 1964, when President Diosdado Macapagal signed into law that the holiday be celebrated on June 12.

Contemporary Bicol

Bicol's economy is primarily based on agriculture and fishing. Coconuts, abaca, banana, coffee, and jackfruit are the top five permanent crops in the region.⁴⁵ Other crops include rice, corn, cassava, and pineapple, and plans are in place for the region to make a significant contribution to national rice production.⁴⁶ Camarines Sur has the biggest livestock and poultry production and is the overall largest fish producer. Bicol's long

⁴⁴ See Anita Feleo, ed., *Kasaysay: The Story of the Filipino People* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas, National Historical Institute, Philippine Historical Association, 1998).

⁴⁵ "Top Five Permanent Crops, Regional V," *Department of Agriculture, Region V* <http://bicol.da.gov.ph/Statistics/top5_crops.html >. Accessed on 24 March 2013.

⁴⁶ "Agri Dept. to raise Bicol output for natl rice production," *GMA News Online* <<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/287740/economy/agricultureandmining/agri-dept-to-raise-bicol-output-for-natl-rice-production> >. Accessed on 24 March 2013.

coastline provides rich fishing grounds: the Lagonoy Gulf, Lamon Bay, Ragay Gulf, Visayan Sea, Samar Sea, and Sibuyan Sea. Tilapia is the leading freshwater fish caught in the region, and *tabios*, the world's smallest fish, and a delicacy, is found in Buhi, Camarines Sur.

Most communities engage in abaca craft, creating various wall decor, mats, rugs, hats, and slippers from strands of plaited abaca material. These crafts are exported to various countries, such as the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom.⁴⁷ Bicol's exports also include gifts, toys, and housewares made from coconut and seashells. Crafts are made from some of Bicol's various mineral resources, which include significant deposits of gold, silver, lead, zinc, iron, nickel, chromite, copper and manganese. In Tiwi, Albay, clay is used for pottery and ceramics, and construction materials such as bricks. Tabaco, Albay is known as the best cutlery producer in the region, where people are known for their skills in making scissors, bolos, knives, razors, grass cutters, and farm tools. The towns of Paracale, Labo, and Jose Panganiban in Camarines Norte are abundant in gold, making the province the center of Bicol's gold jewelry making industry. The *lasa* grass of Catanduanes is used for brooms and dusters.

Despite its resources, Bicol remains one of the country's most economically depressed areas. Bicol's employment rate improved in 2013 with a rate of 94.2 percent, but its underemployment rate, or the proportion of employed persons wanting more hours of work to total employed persons, is 35 percent, the highest underemployment rate among regions of the Philippines.⁴⁸ In 2009, the average family income was 95,000 Philippine

⁴⁷ "Regional Profile," *National Economic and Development Authority 5*
<http://www.neda5.net/bicol_sepps/profile.htm>. Accessed on 24 March 2013.

⁴⁸ "NSCB report shows Bicol's employment rate improved," *Philippine Information Agency*
<<http://www.pia.gov.ph/news//index.php?article=771364364516>>. Accessed on 30 March 2013.

pesos, which is about 74 percent of the average national family income.⁴⁹

As a result of the economic situation in Bicol, many people seek out diverse sources of income. For those who own land, farming provides some revenue but is not always sufficient to cover a family's expenses. Family members may supplement their household income with wage labor in the rural area, such as working on the farms of others, but more commonly, they migrate elsewhere in search of employment and other economic opportunities. Rural families usually follow a strategy of encouraging one or more sons or daughters to move to an urban area, with the intention that they will, at least for some time, help to support family members remaining at home.⁵⁰ While many aspire to migrate abroad to other countries, rural-urban migration is also a popular strategy, with many individuals in rural areas moving to metropolitan cities like Metro Manila and Cebu City.

Migrants who move to the city usually remain in contact with family members still in the rural home, and they continue to regard their town or municipality of origin as "home" regardless of how long they have lived in the city. In his study about Hispano migrants who have moved from rural areas to urban places, Jeffrey S. Smith emphasizes the deep emotional attachment that migrants have for the village of their family's roots.⁵¹ James Overton also notes that the idea of visiting home is very important for migrants because of a sense of nostalgia, a longing for home, family, friends, and community. In

⁴⁹ "Family Income," *National Statistical Coordination Board* <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_income.asp>. Accessed on 30 March 2013.

⁵⁰ Women tend to migrate more than men, finding jobs primarily in the urban service economy working as salesgirls in shops, market vendors, domestic servants, and so on. See Siew-Ean Khoo, Peter C. Smith, and James T. Fawcett, "Migration of Women to Cities: The Asian Situation in Comparative Perspective," *International Migration Review* 18: 1247-1263, 1984.

⁵¹ Jeffrey S. Smith, "Rural Place Attachment in Hispano Urban Centers," *Geographical Review* 92: 432-451, 2002.

Newfoundland, the visits of returning migrants are so numerous that they have become a significant form of tourism.⁵²

As a result of the ties between Filipino urban migrants and their rural-based family members, people, goods, and money move back and forth between the city and rural home as migrants visit family and receive return visits from them.⁵³ The frequency of visits varies, ranging from weekly to annually. Regular visits can be difficult, so most take place during significant family events and Christmas. Important community events, such as festivals, are also popular events that prompt migrants to return home.

The ties between international migrants and family members remaining in the Philippines mirror that of urban migrants and their rural-based relatives: the importance of family, and a sense of loyalty and duty, motivated many individuals to go abroad in search of work. For international migrants, called *balikbayans*, it is more difficult to visit the Philippines on a regular basis because of the length and cost of travel; however, visiting would satisfy nostalgia for the homeland, allowing international migrants to reconnect with family members and their place of origin.⁵⁴ Thus, the National Department of Tourism encouraged balikbayans to visit the homeland by launching the Balikbayan Homecoming Program in 1973, a campaign that subsidized travel to the Philippines and provided incentives to visit various places in the country. Local governments were charged with

⁵² James Overton, "Coming Home: Nostalgia and Tourism in Newfoundland," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 14: 84-97, 1984.

⁵³ Lillian Trager, "Migration and Remittances: Urban Income and Rural Households in the Philippines," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 18 (1984): 317-340.

⁵⁴ According to the Pinoy Homecoming Program website, the term *balikbayan* applies to: (1) Filipino nationals who have been out of the Philippines for a period of at least a year; (2) Filipino overseas workers; or (3) former Filipino citizens with foreign passports and their immediate family members. See "Welcome to Pinoy Homecoming!" *Pinoy Homecoming* <www.pinoyhomecoming.com.ph>. Accessed on 30 March 2013.

creating festivals unique to their communities, and the Christmas season was emphasized as an opportune time to visit relatives, in order to entice balikbayans.⁵⁵

In Bicol, tourism continues to play a major role in boosting the economy. In 2009, Bicol had the fastest growth rate among regions in the Philippines.⁵⁶ The Mayon Volcano, known for its perfect conical shape, remains one of the most popular tourism sites in the Philippines. Swimming with *butanding* (whale sharks) in Donsol, Sorsogon, attending rodeos in Masbate, and attending festivals, especially the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, are popular tourist activities. The Camarines Sur Watersports Complex (CWC), a manmade watersports park designed for wakeboarding and waterskiing, attracts numerous tourists to Pili, Camarines Sur. The American competitive reality television series *Survivor* began filming two consecutive seasons (seasons 25 and 26) in Caramoan, Camarines Sur in 2012.⁵⁷ It is hoped that the boom in tourism will help shed Bicol's reputation as one of the country's poorest regions.

Bicol Music and Performing Arts

It is not easy to identify music belonging solely to Bicol. A large amount of migration and encounters with other cultures have influenced music-making in the region. While Bicolanos can recognize certain music as "indigenous" and others as belonging to other regions and countries, there is a lot of music that may become familiar through everyday

⁵⁵ Linda K. Richter, "The Philippines: The Politicization of Tourism," in *The Politics of Tourism in Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989) 51-81.

⁵⁶ "Bicol registers RP's fastest 2009 economic growth rate at 8.2%," Philippine Information Agency <<http://archives.pia.gov.ph/?m=12&sec=reader&rp=3&fi=p100812.htm&no=26&date=>>. Accessed on 1 April 2013.

⁵⁷ Reyman Buan-Deveza, "'Survivor' USA shoots in Camarines Sur," *ABS-CBNnews.com* <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/entertainment/03/27/12/%E2%80%98survivor%E2%80%99-usa-shoots-camarines-sur>>. Retrieved on 1 April 2013.

experience. On any given day, it is possible to hear a marching band playing at a funeral procession and American or Filipino popular music on the radio. The next day one might hear Bicol folk songs sung by school children at a cultural presentation. The use of lyrics in the Bicol language usually indicates a song is of Bicol origin, even though the music may show influence from other types of music. In addition, music that has a significant role in everyday activities, religious observances, rituals and ceremonies are usually identified as belonging to the region because of its importance to the Bicolanos who perform them.

While the large majority of music ensembles seen and heard in Bicol festivals consist of instruments that one would find in a marching band (such as snare and bass drums, brass, and woodwinds), some groups incorporate instruments that are indigenous to the region, invoking pre-colonial celebrations in which they would have been played. During the 2008 Boa-Boaan Alinsangan Festival in Nabua, Camarines Sur, for example, some musicians played rhythms on bamboo slit drums that complemented those that were played on the snare and bass drums. These instruments, which were made of hollow bamboo trunks and struck with wooden sticks, were either held by a handle and struck vertically while the musician danced and swayed to the music or held horizontally in place by a metal contraption that fit over the performer's chest so that he or she could comfortably march while striking the instrument (see Figure 1.3). The incorporation of indigenous instruments in festival music is uncommon because they are not as loud and accessible as marching band instruments, but if they are available, some groups may add them to the music ensemble to enhance the sound of the music and the overall appearance of the group as they dance and march down the street.



Figure 1.3. Musicians playing bamboo slit drums at the 2008 Boa-Boaan Alinsangan Festival in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Photograph taken by the author.

It is important to identify some of the instruments indigenous to Bicol because it is possible that some music ensembles in festivals may incorporate them into their performances. In his research of instruments indigenous to the region, Fr. Lorenzo-Juan B. Jarcia identifies several chordophones, aerophones, membranophones, and idiophones.⁵⁸ Many are made of bamboo, animal horns, and seashells. While Jarcia lists these instruments

⁵⁸ Lorenzo-Juan B. Jarcia, "Bicol Ethnic Instruments," Development Institute of Bicolano Artists [Pamphlet].

under the category of “Bicol Ethnic Instruments,” other regions of the Philippines have instruments of similar construction that are also incorporated into festival music.

Chordophones

The *codyape* is a guitar-like instrument made of wood or bamboo with five abaca strings. It is played in a manner similar to that of a Western cello, which is why it has a stick on its end as a means of support. In a dictionary of the Bicol language that he compiled in the sixteenth century (a second edition was published in 1865), Marcos de Lisboa describes the *codyape* as an instrument similar to the *vihuela* from Spain, a guitar-shaped instrument with six doubled strings.⁵⁹ There were different ways of playing the *vihuela*: it could be played with the fingers, plucked with a plectrum, or played with a bow. Lisboa recognized the similarities between how the *codyape* and *vihuela de arco* (played with a bow) were played. This description of the *codyape* is different from the *kudyapi/kutiyapi*, a two-stringed lute that can be found in other regions of the Philippines.

The *codlong* is a single section of bamboo with nodes at each end that has strings made of strips from a narra tree stretched over one or two circular sound holes. The strings are struck with a stick in order to produce sound.

The *litguit* resembles a Western violin, but instead of an hourglass-shaped body, it is made from a bamboo internode with a split in the middle. A piece of rattan binds both ends of the body to prevent cracking. The strings are held by bridges at both ends and are tuned

⁵⁹ The entry for “*codyape*” states that it is “un instrumento como biguela.” Marcos de Lisboa, *Vocabulario de la lengua Bicol* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico del Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1865), 99.

using pegs. The *litguit* produces sound by drawing a bow over the strings. Lisboa likens the *litguit* to the Spanish *rabel*, a two- or three-stringed bowed instrument from Spain.⁶⁰

The *Tabung-bung/Bagung-bung* is a guitar of the Agta/Aeta people. Its appearance is similar to that of the *codlong*. It is made of a single section of bamboo with a node at each end. Two or three parallel strings are raised from the outer skin of the bamboo without being detached from the body and tightened by a small bridge.

The *barimbau* consists of a bamboo bow with a string that is strung from one end to the other. A coconut shell acts as the resonator. It produces sound by rubbing the instrument along the edge of an object.

Aerophones

The *hamudyong* or *budyong* is a kind of trumpet made from an empty shell or a handcrafted carabao's horn used to call the attention of villagers.

The *diwdiw-as* consists of five or more bamboo pipes of different lengths that are tied together to form a panpipe.

The *talatut* is a horn made of coconut or bamboo leaves. It is commonly known as the *torotot* in other regions of the Philippines.

Flutes indigenous to the Agtas include the *boro-bodyong* (bamboo flute played by the mouth that has three finger holes and a mouth piece); the *subing* (reed-like bamboo flute with four or six finger holes); and *ticoco* (bamboo flute that resembles a European flute with one hole for the mouth and six finger holes).

⁶⁰ Marcos de Lisboa, *Vocabulario de la lengua Bicol* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico del Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1865), 228.

Membranophones

Drums play significant roles in social and religious activities. They are usually covered with the skin of goat, sheep, or alligator and may be played using the hands or fingers. The *caratong*, *tamadong*, and *patong* are all single-headed cylindrical drums, although the *patong* is larger in size than the *caratong*. The *bunbungan* is a drum with an animal skin membrane stretched over a clay pot. It is positioned in the lap of the performer as he or she uses the palm of the hand to produce sound. The *agong* is another kind of drum consisting of an animal skin membrane stretched over a cylindrical clay pot.

Idiophones

The *kalutang* consists of two wooden sticks that are struck against each other to create sound.

The *balalong* is a hanging hollow tree trunk or wooden gong that is struck with a large piece of wood. It was not only used for musical performances but to sound the alarm or relay warnings of approaching danger, such as pirates.

The *bungkog* is a long bamboo clapper. The bamboo trunk is split at one end so that when the other end is struck against the ground, the split ends strike against each other and create sound.

The *tultugan* is a piece of bamboo internode with two slats at both sides. The holes are struck with a bamboo stick to create sound.

Bicol Songs and the Performing Arts

Spanish colonization of the Philippines introduced Bicolanos to tonality and other Western music conventions. Bicolano folk songs, whether serious or humorous, generally have a simple structure and are either in free form or are strophic. The minor mode is used in serious songs, especially those on love. Almost always, happy songs like those for children, are in major mode. In general, folk songs comprise melodies that have a fair balance of leaps and stepwise motion, but they are easily singable. Verses are usually organized into four-line stanzas. The number of syllables per line varies, and the end of each line may or may not have end rhymes. Text settings are almost always syllabic.

Songs marked occasions or rituals such as *abiyabi* (happy songs); *kundiman*, *harana*, and *panawagan* (love songs); *panayokyok* (lullabies); *ulaw* (songs for the dead); and *sinalampati* or *salampati* (wedding songs).⁶¹ While most of these songs are gone, work songs, children's songs, and courtship songs like the *harana* (serenade) and *kundiman* (love song) have survived. It is common for children to learn folk songs in school or when listening to their parents and other relatives sing to them. For people living in rural areas, folk songs may be sung while working in the fields or for fun as a way to relax. Courtship songs were originally associated with *harana*, the once popular practice of young men serenading their beloved outside her window. While *harana* is no longer common, love songs have endured because of recordings and their popularity with older generations.

The *kundiman*, a descendent of the love songs performed during a *harana*, is a lyrical love song that describes romantic love, although sorrow over the loss of a loved one and love of country in the guise of romantic love are common themes. Musically and

⁶¹ Nicanor Tiongson, ed., *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art*, 1st vol. (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994).

textually, *kundimans* express sentimentality, yearning for freedom from want and deprivation, and the aspiration for a better future. *Kundimans* are always in triple meter and are often in a relatively slow tempo. They usually consist of two sections, and if the first section is in a minor key, it will modulate to a major key in the second section.

The religious folk dramas in Bicol that center on Catholic beliefs and liturgy, such as the *perdon* and *pasyon*, also contain musical elements. The *perdon* is a ritual sung and performed throughout Bicol. A choral group sings “Perdon, Dios Mio, Perdon” (Forgive, My God, Forgive) during a midnight procession for nine successive Friday nights as a prayer for an urgent need.⁶² At the start of Lent, Bicol Catholics receive ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday and sing the *pasyon*, which narrates the passion and suffering of Christ. Songs included in the Order of the Catholic Mass continue to be sung in Spanish, Latin, and Bicol in churches today.

Music in Bicol has played and continues to play a role in the people’s daily activities, religious feasts, rituals, and other ceremonies. In an early Bicol ritual called the *atang*, a ritual seeking divine protection from evil and to give thanks to the good, ancient god Gugurang, the *soraque* was sung.⁶³ Burials were highlighted with incantations, songs, and dances as in the burial ceremony of the Agta in Camarines Sur where the men prayed by dancing and the women mourned by singing the *ulaw*.

The *sarswela*, a play in prose with songs, was first introduced in 1892 to Bicol by Spanish zarzuela troupes from Manila. By the beginning of the twentieth century until the outbreak of World War II, playwrights created *sarswela* in Bicol. Usually presented at

⁶² Tiongson 1994.

⁶³ Reyes 1992.

fiestas, the *sarswela* was sponsored by the town and performed by professional groups like the Compañia Zarzuela Bicolana. A small orchestra accompanies the songs and dances.



Figure 1.4. Couples dance the *pantomina* in the streets at the Kasanggayahan Festival in Sorsogon City, Sorsogon. Still image from video recorded by the author.

The *pantomina* or *sinalampati* is the most famous courtship dance in Bicol. It is usually performed at fiestas and weddings, but it is also danced in the streets as a highlight of the Kasanggayahan Festival in Sorsogon. The name *sinalampati* means “the dance of the doves,” and *pantomina*, or “pantomime” refers to the dance’s imitation of the courtship and

lovemaking of doves.⁶⁴ A rondalla ensemble, a string ensemble most likely introduced by the Spanish, usually accompanies the dance with music starting in duple time and then moving into triple time.

Bicol composers trained in religious music also wrote secular pieces. Potenciano V. Gregorio of Libog, Albay was first taught music by a priest named Fr. Jorge Barlin, but in addition to religious music, composed secular pieces like the famous “Sarung Banggi” (One Night).⁶⁵ The song premiered in 1917 at a town fiesta in Guinobatan, Albay and became so popular that the song became identified with the region. In an audition to join the Philippine Constabulary Band, which was then world famous under the baton of Colonel Walter H. Loving, Potenciano played “Sarung Banggi” on the banduria, then on the piano.⁶⁶ The song, in 1920, was not yet popular outside Bicol. When it was known that he wrote it himself, aside from the fact that he could play almost every instrument in the band, he was readily accepted. He then prepared the score of the song for the band, which later played it in one of its prewar public concerts at Luneta Park in Manila. “Sarung Banggi” became known outside of Bicol as a song belonging to the region.

Like in the rest of the Philippines, band music is popular in Bicol. It is easy to find bands in towns across the region playing military marches, popular songs, folk songs, and arrangements of classical music. Bands play at festivals and town fiestas, and many universities have their own marching bands. Bands hired to either lead or follow a funeral procession are a very common sight. However, “drum and lyre bands” are ensembles that

⁶⁴ Reynaldo T. Jamoralin, “Sorsogon’s Festivals,” *Official Website of Sorsogon Tourism* <<http://www.sorsogontourism.com/festivals.htm>>. Retrieved on 8 January 2012.

⁶⁵ Tiongson 1994.

⁶⁶ Merito B. Espinas, *Sarung Banggi: Bicol’s Regional Song* (Manila: Philippine Free Press, 1962).



Figure 1.5. An elementary school drum and lyre band performing at the 41st Charter Anniversary Celebration of Iriga City, Camarines Sur. Photograph taken by the author.

are perhaps even more popular than marching bands. Unlike marching bands, which typically consist of woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments, drum and lyre bands include drums, cymbals, and a bell lyre section.⁶⁷ Bell lyres, or glockenspiels, are percussion instruments that have a set of tuned metal bars arranged in the fashion of a piano keyboard. They are similar to xylophones but are mounted in a lyre-shaped frame, and they provide the melody of a piece. Drum and lyre bands also usually include majorettes

⁶⁷ It is important to note that the lyres in a drum and lyre band are metallophones. They differ from the stringed instruments of the same name that are similar to harps.

twirling batons and engaging in choreographed movement. Like marching bands, drum and lyre bands play folk songs, popular songs, and arrangements of classical music. Many schools have these ensembles, and students, from elementary school until university, take part in competitions, festivals, and town fiestas.

Many elements of the performing arts in Bicol can be found in festivals across the region, and they play an important part in the expression of Bicolano identity. Festivals feature music and dance to portray how religion, history, craft industries, and agricultural resources are significant to each community. Because they are grand and appealing, and can creatively portray important aspects about the communities in which they take place, the Philippine government has noticed that festivals are effective in attracting tourists, potentially increasing the country's income. A boost in economy is always good news, especially in Bicol, which is one of the country's poorest regions. But tensions arise between Church and State, and tourists and communities, when all groups involved have different opinions about how a festival should be celebrated. The following chapter sets the scene, providing an overview of festivals in Bicol and the Philippines, and describing the ways in which the Philippine government supports and promotes them.

Chapter 2

Festivals in Bicol and the Philippines

Through the ages, people have recognized the need to relieve the monotony of the everyday with special days in which the normal pattern of the workweek is broken and everyone is allowed, sometimes even required, to stop work and enjoy themselves. While festivals are too often viewed as fun and frivolous, they are significant markers of what a community deems to be important. Some festivals are associated with changing seasons and annual cycles. Others celebrate historical events, such as the founding of a country or city, or the birthday of a hero or important individual. More commonly, festivals are linked with religious holidays; they mark a sacred time period, celebrate a saint's feast day, or honor ancestors. People around the world celebrate the major days of their faiths as times for fun, feasting, reunion, and merrymaking. For much of the year religions are practiced in quieter, more enclosed ways, but festival time provides an outlet in which adherents can express, observe, and remember what is most important to them.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of definitions and theories concerning the nature of festivals in order to understand the positive and negative aspects of these events, and why they are popular in establishing a society's identity. I then describe the different categories of festivals in the Philippines and in Bicol, especially the proliferation of

religious festivals. Finally, I analyze the roles of the Philippine government, primarily through the Department of Tourism, and the private sector in promoting and supporting festivals in order to understand how they affect the staging of festival events in communities.

The Nature of Festivals

There are various definitions of the term “festival,” and understanding the meanings and theories associated with the term is important for explaining the significance of festivals to many Bicol communities. The definition of “festival” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* includes “of or pertaining to a feast, befitting a feast-day,” “a time of festive celebration,” and “merry-making.”⁶⁸ Indeed, many festivals in the Philippines are tied to the feast days of Catholic saints, and they are celebrated with great fervor, not only through religious masses and prayer, but also in the preparation of food, parties, parades, and other activities. Historian John Leddy Phelan situates Filipino festivals in what is called the “fiesta system,” a strategy utilized by Spanish colonizers to relocate native Filipinos closer to churches so that they could more easily Christianize and bind them to the colonial state: “The enticement was the fiesta. There were three fiestas of consequence to the Filipinos, namely, Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and the feast in honor of the patron saint of the locality. The parishioners flocked to the *cabecera* villages [head villages] for these occasions.”⁶⁹ The fiestas blended the sacred and the profane, and consisted of religious processions, dances,

⁶⁸ “festival, adj. and n.”. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. September 2013. Oxford University Press. <<http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/view/Entry/69567?redirectedFrom=festival>>. Accessed on 1 October 2013.

⁶⁹ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 73.

music and theatrical presentations, which gave Filipinos an outlet for what Phelan described as their natural gregariousness.⁷⁰

The blending of the sacred and profane can be found in the idea of the “carnavalesque,” one of the most influential theories used to frame festivals by Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. In his work *Rabelais and His World* (1984), Bakhtin coins the term “carnavalesque, referring to a literary mode that subverts the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humor and chaos. Bakhtin traces the origins of the carnivalesque to the concept of carnival, a time of feasting when normally dominant constraints and hierarchies are temporarily lifted. The festival, therefore, can serve as a break from reality and the everyday. Bakhtin asserts that festivals are usually organized by the Church or the government in order to provide its constituents with a periodic release so that they can be controlled more effectively. The constituents, meanwhile, take the opportunity to question the social hierarchy and those in power by parodying and making fun of leadership roles.

Carnival is a festive season that immediately precedes Lent, a solemn period of fasting and abstinence from sin and vice that leads up to Easter Sunday. Pre-Lenten celebrations in which people engage in masquerades, laughter, and revelry became popular in European cities between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, basic characteristics of Carnival were established: large towns and cities held processions with costumed people singing and dancing in the streets, people consumed massive amounts of meat and other special foods, and historical characters or

⁷⁰ Ibid.

contemporary members of society were made fun of at masquerades.⁷¹ Carnival thus consists of events in which rules, inhibitions, and restrictions are suspended, especially all forms of hierarchy in society. It is a time that emphasizes play, when role reversals and breaking down class distinctions becomes the norm.

Carnival in Brazil is the country's largest festival and is perhaps the most famous of all Carnival celebrations, especially those that take place in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador (Bahia). Since the 1930s, the *samba*, an Afro-Brazilian dance, has had strong associations with Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. In fact, the city's most popular event is the lavish spectacle that takes place in the "Sambadrome" (*Sambódromo*), where principal samba schools, or *escolas de samba*, have performed for hundreds of spectators in the venue and many more watching on television since the mid-1980s. But Carnival still includes (although not as prominent anymore) events that fit into Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque, such as the *entrudo*, in which revelers from all social classes would do away with decorum and engage in practical jokes and water fights that included dousing friends, family, and unsuspecting strangers with buckets and syringes filled with water.⁷²

Philippine festivals incorporate carnivalesque elements as well. In his study of Philippine fiestas and their impact on the development of a colonial culture, Reinhard Wendt (1998) recognizes that festivals can be viewed as instruments to reinforce and legitimize existing conditions, or as ways to criticize and break down the ruling order. The most common view about festivals is that they are often organized and directed "from above," transmitting ideas and values that legitimize and glorify the existing order. The

⁷¹ Barbara Mauldin, ed., *Carnaval!* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).

⁷² John Charles Chasteen, "The Prehistory of Samba: Carnival Dancing in Rio de Janeiro, 1840-1917," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28 (1996): 29-47.

other view is that festivals enable people to leave their everyday lives for a short period of time and reflect at a distance upon the norms and constraints to which they are bound, or at the extreme, overstep the restraints and forge their own identity. Wendt argues, however, that both views are not clearly differentiated; instead, they are associated in a complicated way. He asserts that festivals played a key role in the development of a colonial culture that comprised both native attributes with ideas introduced by Spanish colonizers.⁷³

Festivals can reflect shifting priorities, acting as barometers of change within communities. According to lawyer and anthropologist Marjorie R. Esman in her study of Cajun festivals in south Louisiana, "Rituals are peculiarly sensitive to changes in the social and/or cultural order, and any kind of celebration is at least potentially an arena for the enactment and display of these changes."⁷⁴ In her study, Esman suggests that while festivals are instrumental in retaining group solidarity, they can also provide insight into the conflicts and stresses that affect the people who stage them. Festivals in which performing arts take place, for example, provide outlets in which tensions felt within a community can be expressed.

The popularity of festivals is closely tied to tourism. Dean MacCannell asserts that tradition is an important tourist attraction because, while it is a reminder of a break with the past, it also allows people to briefly reconnect with it.⁷⁵ Folkloric forms, similar to and sometimes including invented traditions, have long been associated with tradition in the popular imagination. By attending a festival, the tourist can experience a taste of traditional

⁷³ Reinhard Wendt, "Philippine Fiesta and Colonial Culture," *Philippine Studies* 46 (1998): 3-23.

⁷⁴ Marjorie R. Esman, "Festivals, Change, and Unity: The Celebration of Ethnic Identity among Louisiana Cajuns," *Anthropological Quarterly* 55 (1982): 199-210.

⁷⁵ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

peasant life, but at the same time, the availability of food, music and souvenirs makes the festival similar to other types of consumable experiences familiar to the tourist. In Bicol festivals that involve myths and legends, people are able to take a break from the modern world and immerse themselves in a time that was much simpler. They are entertained as the legends and myths are recreated through performance.

As tourist attractions, festivals are popular strategies for boosting economies. In his study of Jamaican festivals, economist Keith Nurse argues that festivals are effective in enhancing Caribbean tourism: “Successful festivals enhance the image of tourist destinations, aid in the rejuvenation of cities in decline, and create new economic activities in rural or peripheral areas.”⁷⁶ By investing in festivals, tourism boards aim to attract visitors so that they will spend money at hotels, restaurants, and local attractions, and will want to return year after year. Festivals create awareness for the locales in which they take place, and if they are successfully promoted, these locations have the potential to become popular tourist destinations.

At the same time, there are some negative aspects prioritizing the festival as a tourist attraction. Performance studies scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes that the festival as an ethnographic display is a major trope because it promises access to people’s lives and encourages the view that festivals are the embodiments of a region and its people.⁷⁷ The tourist only gets to know a society in its festival mode, which gives the illusion that the society is always on holiday. In her study of the effects of tourism in

⁷⁶ Keith Nurse, “Bringing Culture into Tourism: Festival Tourism and Reggae Sunsplash in Jamaica,” *Social and Economic Studies* 51 (2002): 129.

⁷⁷ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998).

Hawai'i, Jane Desmond also notes that tourist attractions illustrate a number of tropes in the packaging of Hawai'i tourism: nostalgia, eroticism, exoticism, and the hula girl as the central embodiment of these traits.⁷⁸

What gets displayed in community festivals and to whom it gets displayed have changed radically as a result of socio-economic transformation and the introduction of tourism. Attracting tourist income becomes a significant goal, as some towns' economies depend on tourism for survival. Because tourists generally cannot consume all that a festival has to offer, entrepreneurs often excerpt local festivals and incorporate them into other events. In order to make such attractions more profitable, events are adapted to the special needs of tourists, especially those who are on tight schedules.⁷⁹

The annual Showdown of Festival of Festivals in Bicol is an important example of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's idea because it is a competition that draws in competing groups from around the Bicol region. One need not travel to the different towns and cities in Bicol in order to see their festivals because the winners of local street dancing competitions all perform in the Showdown of Festival of Festivals. The city that hosts the regional competition spends a lot of time and money preparing for the influx of people expected to attend the event, and the incentive to host is based on the idea that the competition will stimulate the city's local economy. I will return to a discussion of this fascinating festival in more depth in Chapter Three.

⁷⁸ Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

⁷⁹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 61.

In Bicol, tourism directors and government officials attribute festivals with increasing tourist arrivals to the region.⁸⁰ But appealing to tourist audiences constitutes only a part of the reason why communities stage folkloric spectacles, such as festivals. Ethnologist Regina Bendix, in her study of folklore displays in the Swiss Alps, argues that, “A close examination of the motivations and choices of originators, performers, and audiences of new, traditionalized displays points instead toward an affirmation of local and national cultural identity in the face of seasonal mass foreign invasion.”⁸¹ The goal of every town and city in which a festival takes place is to highlight what makes it unique, and this usually involves showcasing aspects of the community’s culture through arts performances, parades, and live entertainment as a way of reinforcing identity.

While the above discussion has dealt with general perspectives on festivals, the topic is made richer with perspectives on the diversity of festival types. For instance, Pauline Greenhill makes distinctions between the festival, non-festival, anti-festival, and counter-festival.⁸² The festival celebrates the special and different while the non-festival is the normal and everyday. This implies that the festive is constructed not only through its own attributes, but also in contrast with the everyday, while the mundane is recognizable because it is not overtly celebratory. The anti-festival and counter-festival are less intuitive forms in terms of Greenhill’s labels. By her definition, the anti-festival is an event for tourists while the counter-festival is an event for the community in which it is staged. Some festivals are created or appropriated by business interests (anti-festival), but can then be

⁸⁰ Mar S. Arguelles, “Bicol tourist arrivals up 8%: Albay fastest growing hub; CamSur still tops arrivals,” *Bicol Mail*, <<http://www.bicolmail.com/2012/?p=6880>>. Accessed 10 August 2013.

⁸¹ Regina Bendix, “Tourism and Cultural Displays: Inventing Traditions for Whom?” *The Journal of American Folklore* 102 (1989): 132.

⁸² Pauline Greenhill, “Festival, Anti Festival, Counter Festival, Non-Festival,” *Ethnologies* 23(2001): 5-12.

recreated and/or reappropriated by the community (counter-festival). In addition, all festival types are in a constant state of flux, and in many there is a kind of push and pull that occurs between capital and community.

Bicol festivals are a combination of festival, anti-festival, and counter-festival. They are a time to take a break from the everyday and celebrate or give thanks for good health, bountiful harvests, and for prayers answered. They are also anti-festivals because organizers are usually affiliated with the local government. Tourism is a strong driving force in the creation and continuation of certain festivals, and there can sometimes be a conflict of interests in terms of how the festival is run. While some are quick to dismiss tourist festivals as inauthentic or moneymaking ploys, communities add an element of counter-festival by incorporating events that are significant to those who participate.

Competitions within a festival, such as street dancing competitions, are events in which members of a community can express themselves; they are a major factor in the reinvention of music and dance within a community. In her article about Hawaiian hula competitions, Amy Stillman describes how competitions have transformed the hula tradition in terms of repertoire, performance, and presentation.⁸³ The intent is to impress audiences. In Bicol festivals, too, winning over the crowd through performance is strongly correlated with winning the competition. Even though the judges make the final decision, they take the audience's reaction into consideration. In addition, it is thought that winning a competition gives a group prestige and will make audience members want to visit the group's town or city for their festival (if the group competed against other towns or cities) or support the school or organization that the group represents.

⁸³ Amy K. Stillman, "Hawaiian Hula Competitions: Event, Repertoire, Performance, Tradition." *Journal of American Folklore* 109/434 (1996), 1-24.

Whatever the type of festival in question, music is rarely addressed at any length in the literature on festivals, despite the important role music plays in many of them. David Harnish has addressed this lacuna with his study of the Lingsar Temple Festival in Indonesia.⁸⁴ Music is integral to particular festivals because it creates community, permits out of the ordinary behavior, and structures meaningful actions, that is, it signals when specific rites or activities should begin and end. In his study of the Lingsar Temple Festival, Harnish describes how music is able to unify two different ethnic minority groups, the Balinese and the Sasak, through shared experience. During the festival, the music is not Balinese or Sasak music, but music that allows various rites/activities to take place. Similarly, in Bicol festivals, music allows street dancing competitions to take place. Even though it is not considered as important as the dancing in these competitions, music is vital to the competing groups' choreography. The way in which it is played deeply affects the way in which the dancers move.

Festivals as Rituals

While all of the previous examples illustrate different ways in which scholars have framed festivals, the rule-based nature of these public events signals that they fit the criteria of modern day rituals. One of the ways in which "ritual" is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "the prescribed form or order of religious or ceremonial rites."⁸⁵ Within a ritual, a series of actions are performed in a specific order mainly for symbolic

⁸⁴ David Harnish, "Like King and Queen, Like Balinese and Sasak: Musical Narratives at the Lingsar Temple Festival in Lombok, Indonesia," *Ethnologies* 23: 63-87, 2001.

⁸⁵ "ritual, n.", *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, September 2013. Oxford University Press. <<http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/view/Entry/166369?redirectedFrom=ritual>>. Accessed on 1 October 2013.

value, as prescribed by a religion or by the traditions of a community. Rituals serve a variety of purposes that are beneficial for individuals or a small group of people, but in a society, the most important purpose involves the intensification of social bonds. Rituals, whether religious or not, can have social functions that express and reinforce the shared values and beliefs of a society.

In sociologist Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, the author writes about the role of rituals in the totemic religions of Australian aborigines. Their religions involve a totem, usually a plant or animal that was regarded as sacred and was attributed with a supernatural force called *Mana*. Durkheim argues that when a social group worships the totem, it is actually worshipping itself: "the god of the clan, the totemic principle, can therefore be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented to the imagination under the visible form of the animal or vegetable which serves as totem."⁸⁶ He further compares the relationship between the worshipper and totem/god with that of the individual and society. The reverence that people feel for the totem actually derives from the respect they hold for central social values. Both god and society thus have a strong influence over an individual's actions and feelings, and, in religion, the object of worship is society itself. According to Durkheim, religion functions to stabilize society and bring about a sense of unity and identity between members of a community.

Rituals are especially essential in binding members of groups together. While they are usually associated with religion, not all rituals are sacred. "Rites of passage" include various life crises at which major social transitions are experienced, such as birth, marriage, and death. In the United States, for example, christenings celebrate a new baby's

⁸⁶ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, translated by Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Macmillan Company, 1915) 206.

admission into a Christian church, weddings celebrate a couple's commitment to one another, and funerals celebrate, sanctify, and remember the life of a person who has died. In his study of "rites of passage," Arnold van Gennep proposed that rituals comprise a three-phase structure: separation (preliminal rites), liminal or an "in-between" phase, and reintegration (postliminal rites).⁸⁷ During an initiation ritual, a person leaves their former life behind (separation), undergoes ordeals in which new knowledge and behaviors are learned (liminal phase), and emerges into society with a new identity, level of responsibility, and status (reintegration). The liminal phase fascinated Victor Turner, who developed Gennep's insight into a theory of ritual in which he described the difference between "liminal" and "liminoid." The liminal is a state of being in the in-between: "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions."⁸⁸

In contrast to liminal rites of passage, which are compulsory in societies, liminoid behaviors or activities are voluntary symbolic actions that serve a function similar to ritual and occur in leisure activities. Liminoid activities are undertaken because they are enjoyable and are based on the contrast between leisure and work. Turner succinctly explains the difference between "liminal" and "liminoid" by stating: "One *works* at the

⁸⁷ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge, 1977), 21.

⁸⁸ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969), 95.

liminal, one *plays* at the liminoid.”⁸⁹ Recreational activities, popular entertainments, festivals, and the arts are examples of the liminoid.

While in a liminal or liminoid state, an individual is freed from the demands of everyday life, and if he or she enters into that state with other people, *communitas*—a strong feeling of communal connection—develops:

In the workshop, village, office, lecture-room, theatre, almost anywhere people can be subverted from their duties and rights into an atmosphere of *communitas*...Is there any of us who has not known this moment when compatible people—friends, congener—obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved, whether emotional or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as “essentially us” could sustain its intersubjective illumination?...In industrial societies, it is within leisure, and sometimes aided by the projections of art, that this way of experiencing one’s fellows can be portrayed, grasped, and sometimes realized.⁹⁰

As liminoid activities, festivals maintain and reinforce group solidarity through storytelling, especially through the arts. Stories are not just told; they are usually acted, re-enacted, sung, and/or danced.

⁸⁹ Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: the Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 55.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 45-48.

In his work on Polish folk festivals, Tim Cooley argues that tourist festivals are rituals in that they are symbolic representations of objects and beliefs that are significant to a group of people.⁹¹ Tourist festivals are also transformative in that participants are transformed into performers for tourists rather than for the community. In tourist festivals, the community performs what makes them unique in order to attract tourists and generate income; therefore, the meaning behind a particular ritual or performance is changed. The festivals provide a venue where a people can reaffirm their identity and distinctive music culture, but at the same time, serve as a leading means of livelihood as tourist attractions. In addition, the stylized representation on stage of a folk dance that may have had a function in the past does not necessarily have to serve the same function in contemporary times; it is instead the symbolic representation of a function as practiced by a particular people in a particular place. The symbolic stylization of a folk dance for stage production denies its original function. The dance is no longer done only before the community, but also before a group of strangers (tourists). The folk dance as a ritual is not "deritualized," but restaged for a new purpose.

Indeed, Cooley's arguments apply well to Bicol festivals because, while they serve the people of a particular community as a means of earning income, they are also meant to educate about history, religion, and folklore and produce feelings of pride in one's ancestors or hometown. Parades often include floats carrying local politicians and other well-known personalities as well as images of saints and values important to the community. Street dancing competitions either involve folk dances or dance routines that

⁹¹ Timothy J. Cooley, "Folk Festival as Modern Ritual in the Polish Tatra Mountains." *the world of music* 41(1999): 31-55.

are based on them. One of the highlights of the Kasanggayahan Festival in Sorsogon City, Bicol, for example, is the dancing of the *Pantomina sa Tinampo*, a folk dance that originally functioned as a courtship dance. In the competition, the dance has lost its original function, but it is restaged for everyone to enjoy and learn about a dance that has become known as “Bicol’s regional dance.” The purpose of showcasing the performing arts during festivals is not just for fun, but it is to creatively educate and share information that remind people year after year of stories and values that are important to their community, whether it be based on identity, culture, faith, or all of these.

An Overview of Festivals in the Philippines

The Philippines have numerous Christian festivals that take place throughout the year, and they have become a part of national culture because they are celebrated with great pomp and pageantry all over the archipelago. Communities throughout the Philippines share many of the same reasons for staging festivals: as a form of thanksgiving, to commemorate the feast day of a town’s patron saint, as a reenactment of a historical event or legend, or to celebrate a bountiful harvest. Before discussing my festival case studies in the next few chapters, I will first provide some context by providing an overview of festivals in the Philippines, as well as the variety that can be found in Bicol.

All festivals in the Philippines are annual events, with the majority of them being week-long or month-long celebrations with scheduled activities that take place each day. Celebrations that recognize a specific day, such as the feast day of a saint or the anniversary of a historical event, usually determine the week or month in which the festival will occur. The Tinagba Festival in Iriga City, Camarines Sur, for example, takes place each year on

February 11, the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes; therefore, the week in which that date occurs will be the week in which the Tinagba Festival will take place. Likewise, in Sorsogon City, the Sosogon-Pili Festival celebrates the day (December 16) when two municipalities merged to form one city; thus, the month-long festival takes place in December. Some cities will declare the date that the festival celebrates as a special non-working holiday so that citizens can participate in the festivities. February 11 and December 16 are holidays in Iriga City and Sorsogon City, respectively.

A city or town's Department of Tourism is usually in charge of organizing its own festivals. A committee of organizers is formed and, working closely with the mayor, they plan and organize each festival as much as a year in advance. They plan the activities and decide when and where they will take place; select which individuals, schools, and organizations can participate in performances and in staging festival events; plan where guests and visitors will stay during their time in the city/town; and determine how to advertise the festival in order to attract visitors. Because staging a festival can cost millions of Philippine pesos, they also solicit corporate sponsorship in order to help fund many of the activities that take place during the festivals. It is very expensive to organize festivals, but by planning activities that will draw large crowds, local governments expect to increase revenue for the private sector.

The most common festival events include beauty pageants, beer plazas, street dancing competitions, civic parades, and concerts. These events are usually the most popular, drawing a large number of community members and visitors to gather at central locations, such as plazas and main roads, within the city/town. Other events take place at shopping malls, schools, and other venues that can accommodate large crowds. On

weekdays, most activities take place during the evening so that those who have school or work can attend. On weekends, events occur throughout the day. The most popular events involve celebrities from Manila, who are often invited by local governments to give concerts, take part in parades, or conduct “meet-and greets” for fans. During Iriga City’s Tinagba Festival, for example, celebrities stand on floats during the civic parade, waving at the people lining the streets. Well-known bands, such as the rock group Sponge Cola, often give concerts at the Kaogma Festival in Pili, Camarines Sur, entertaining crowds throughout the evening.

While festivals in the Philippines and in Bicol have various secular events that provide entertainment, many also celebrate a particular saint or sacred event (see Appendix for a list of some of the festivals found in Bicol). More commonly, festivals that celebrate an aspect of a community’s identity and traditions are also geared towards appealing to tourists and making sure they have fun. Rarely do festivals fall strictly under one category. Because this dissertation is primarily concerned with religious festivals, this overview will focus on the largest ones of this type found throughout the Philippines in order to contextualize those found in Bicol.

Festivals linked to important holidays in the Christian calendar are the most numerous type and are celebrated across the country. Holy Week, which includes Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday, and ends the day before Easter Sunday, is the most important and most solemn week in the Christian calendar. During this time, Filipinos memorialize the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in a variety of ways, such as chanting the *Pasyon*, an epic narrative about the life and sufferings of Christ.⁹² The *Pabasa*

⁹² Ibid.

ng Pasyon (“Reading of the Passion”) can be chanted alone or in groups throughout the week, and it can be chanted a capella or accompanied by musical instruments. In towns such as San Pedro Cutud, Pampanga, Christ’s crucifixion is re-enacted with volunteers happily willing to be nailed to a cross.⁹³

During Holy Week, on the island of Marinduque, the Moriones Festival takes place and attracts locals and tourists alike. Devotees put on painted masks and headdresses, and pretend to be the Roman soldiers, called *morions*, that tormented Christ as he struggled to carry the cross.⁹⁴ The highlight of this festival is the *sinakulo*, or street play, that tells the story of Longinus, the Roman soldier who speared Christ’s body after the crucifixion. A drop of Christ’s blood landed in his eye, curing his blindness. After this miracle, Longinus converted to Christianity. In the *sinakulo*, the actors onstage never speak; instead, they perform to a Tagalog soundtrack that was recorded by radio drama actors after the 1986 EDSA Revolution.⁹⁵ The music is also prerecorded since the tracks have been lifted from the 1956 American religious epic film *The Ten Commandments*.⁹⁶

Another popular event during the Moriones Festival takes place the morning after Good Friday, when bands of morions, dressed in their masks and full costume, serenade businesses and groups of townspeople with traditional songs accompanied by guitars and

⁹³ The Associated Press, “SEE IT: Fervent Filipino Catholics nailed to crosses for Good Friday,” *NY Daily News* < <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/fervent-filipino-catholics-nailed-crosses-good-friday-article-1.1057219>>. Accessed on 27 January 2013.

⁹⁴ Alejandro R. Roces, “Moriones,” *Fiesta* (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1980), 170-185.

⁹⁵ William Peterson, “Holy Week in the ‘Heart of the Philippines’: Spirituality, Theatre, and Community in Marinduque’s Moriones Festival,” *Asian Theatre Journal* 24 (2007): 309-337. The 1986 EDSA Revolution refers to the four-day non-violent mass demonstrations that ousted Ferdinand Marcos from power and installed Corazon Aquino as president.

⁹⁶ Peterson 2007.

the *kalutang* (two wooden sticks struck together to make sound). After being serenaded, businesses are expected to pay the morions small amounts of money. The money that the morions earn helps defray the costs associated with dressing up as Roman soldiers, which they do every day of Holy Week to atone for their sins.⁹⁷

Even outside of the Christian Holy Week, many Filipino festivals can be viewed as forms of worship in which people can pray for favors from their deities or give thanks for blessings received. Since early times, indigenous tribal Filipinos have prayed and offered thanks to their pagan gods. While old tribal customs continued even after the arrival of Spanish conquistadors, for those who converted to Christianity, saints eventually replaced native gods. If a woman wanted to become pregnant, for example, she would pray to Santa Clara instead of the native god of fertility. For healing, one would pray to San Roque. For a bountiful harvest, one would pray to San Isidro Labrador.⁹⁸ Likewise, gatherings that may have once been devoted to native deities were replaced by Christian saints. Each Christian town in the Philippines has a patron saint, and each saint has a feast day that is celebrated with a festival.

Arguably, the most popular saint is the Virgin Mary, since Mary is the patron saint of the Philippines and because the maternal qualities associated with her resonate with so many. There are a number of popular Marian festivals each year that are celebrated separately in different towns of the Philippines. Many celebrations take place during the month of May because of the ancient tradition of associating May with new life and fecundity. The Romans, for example, dedicated the month of May to Flora, the goddess of bloom and blossoms. The connection between new life and motherhood led Christians to

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Aluit 1969.

dedicate May to the Virgin Mary, since they recognize her as the mother of God and of the Church.⁹⁹ In the Philippines, people celebrate May as Mary's month with the Flores de Mayo, an event in which little girls and young ladies honor the Virgin Mary by placing flowers before her image, and the Santa Cruzan, which consists of nine days of prayer in honor of the Holy Cross. At the end of the nine days, a kind of religious-historical beauty pageant takes place in which young ladies are selected to play Reyna Elena (Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, who searched for the cross upon which Christ was crucified) and other queens that represent the various incarnations of the Virgin Mary.¹⁰⁰ In addition to these Maytime celebrations, devotion to the Virgin Mary under her many patronages is celebrated all over the country throughout the year, with feasts that draw huge crowds annually. Our Lady of La Naval de Manila, for example, is credited with interceding for victory during the Battles of La Naval de Manila against Dutch invasion in 1646.¹⁰¹ Her image, its possessions, and shrine have been designated as one of the Philippines' National Cultural Treasures, and her feast day is celebrated every second Sunday in October with nine days of prayer and a grand procession.

The Santo Nino, or Holy Child, is also one of the most celebrated religious icons in the Philippines. Legend has it that when the Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived in Cebu in 1521, he gave the chieftain's wife a statue of the Santo Nino. It was a gift that symbolized friendship and celebrated the native couple's baptism into Catholicism. In 1565, another explorer named Miguel Lopez de Legazpi invaded Cebu, burning a village to

⁹⁹ Ann Ball, "May," *Encyclopedia of Catholic Devotions and Practices* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2003).

¹⁰⁰ For descriptions of various Marian festivals, see Abe Florendo and Zardo A. Austria, *Sagala: The Queen of Philippine Festivals* (2006).

¹⁰¹ "About La Naval," *National Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila* <http://www.lanavalde Manila.com/about_la_naval/>. Retrieved on 27 January 2013.

the ground. The statue miraculously survived the fire, and the devotion to the Santo Nino soon spread. Feast day celebrations for the Holy Child are now celebrated in towns and cities across the Philippines on the third weekend of January.¹⁰²

The Ati-Atihan Festival in the central Philippines, discussed earlier in this chapter, is one of the largest and likely the most famous of all the festival celebrations of the country, It is held annually in honor of the Santo Nino. An interesting feature of this festival is that it includes *Ati-atihan* competitions, or displays in which participants cover their bodies with black soot and wear bright, outlandish costumes as they dance in imitation of the Atis, a short, dark-skinned people indigenous to Panay Island. The festival originally celebrated Malay people's peaceful acquisition of land from the Atis in the thirteenth century but later changed into a celebration for the Santo Nino.¹⁰³

Like the Ati-Atihan Festival, the Sinulog Festival of Cebu City is famous for its celebration for the Santo Nino, especially since many people attend in order to pay homage at the shrine that contains the image that miraculously survived the fire in Cebu. The festival is also known for its colorful streetdancing performances. In her dissertation about the three forms of Cebu City sinulog dancing, Sally Ness describes how parade sinulog, or street dancing performances at the Sinulog Festival, has transformed over the period from 1980-1985 from a religious procession devoted to the Santo Nino, or Child Jesus, to a cultural procession, and finally, to a *mardi gras* for commercial interests.¹⁰⁴ Because of

¹⁰² Aluit 1969.

¹⁰³ Marcela Mijares Reyes-Tinagan, *Viva! Kay Señor Santo Niño Viva! : Aklan's Santo Niño Ati-Atihan Festivals* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2001).

¹⁰⁴ Sally Ann Allen Ness, "The Sinulog Dancing of Cebu City, Philippines: A Semeiotic Analysis," PhD Dissertation: University of Washington, 1987.

criticism voiced within the community of parade participants, festival promoters decided to revert back to a historical and folkloric event. However, to this day, many people regard the Sinulog Festival street dancing performances as a *mardi gras* performance in which the original religious elements have been overshadowed.

While more than 90% of the population in the Philippines is Christian, 5% is Muslim, most of whom live in the southern section of the archipelago.¹⁰⁵ Many customs and traditions unique to Filipino Muslims are celebrated throughout the year. Hari-Raya Poasa, for example, is the biggest festival celebrated by Muslims. It marks the end of Ramadan, the thirty days of fasting required of Muslims in which they must abstain from food and drink, and bad thoughts and acts, from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. Filipino Muslims celebrate the end of this period of fasting with food, prayer, and thanksgiving for blessings received.¹⁰⁶

There are also a number of festivals in the Philippines that are secular in nature but that are still closely associated with the ideas of tradition and a connection with the past. Most of these festivals celebrate the identity of a community, often the industry, craft, or landmark for which its town or city is particularly well-known. An example is the Lanzones Festival in Camiguin Island, which is located along the coast of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. The island is known for its lanzones fruit, and every harvest time, locals and tourists enjoy a celebration that includes exhibits, street dancing, parades, and beauty pageants.¹⁰⁷ Another festival created for tourism purposes is The Panagbenga Festival, a

¹⁰⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Philippines," *The World Factbook*, 2013 <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html>>. Accessed on 27 September 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Alfonso J. Aluit, *The Galleon Guide to Philippine Festivals*, Manila: Galleon Publications, 1969.

¹⁰⁷ "Lanzones Festival starts Oct. 21," *Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro* <<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/cagayan-de-oro/feature/2012/10/19/lanzones-festival-starts-oct-21-248856>>. Retrieved on 25 January 2013.

month-long celebration of flowers that takes place in the mountain city of Baguio. Activities include flower exhibits, garden tours, floral contests, and parades.¹⁰⁸

Bicol Festivals

During informal conversations with organizers of festivals in Bicol, many stated that festivals across the Philippines, especially in Bicol, attempt to recreate the success of the Ati-Atihan and Sinulog Festivals in order to stimulate local economies. These two festivals are viewed as the most popular and successful. As a result, many festivals become similar to one another and lose the essence for which they were originally intended because organizers attempt to emulate the style of the Ati-Atihan and Sinulog Festivals in order to attract tourists. Thus, tourism plays a large role in the planning of many festivals.

Still, festivals contribute to regional identity. Festivals in Bicol fall under many of the same categories that describe the numerous festivals celebrated all over the Philippines: religious; tourism; identity; and music and the arts. Regardless of the category, each festival describes what it means to be Bicolano. Festivals based on epic tales celebrate the Bicolanos' bravery; those that give thanks for bountiful harvests and/or pay homage to patron saints illustrate the people's devotion and religiosity; and those that highlight specific industries and agricultural products show that Bicolanos are hard working, resourceful, and resilient. Above all, festivals in Bicol highlight and commemorate what is important to communities in order to show what makes each of them unique, yet still a part of the region's identity.

¹⁰⁸ Artermio Dumlaog, "Baguio kicks off month-long Panagbenga festival," *philSTAR.com* <<http://www.philstar.com/nation/2013/01/31/903301/baguio-kicks-month-long-panagbenga-festival>>. Retrieved on 25 January 2013.

Libon, a first class municipality located in the province of Albay, celebrates the Libon Paroy Festival (previously celebrated as the Libon Katalingkasan Festival) every year. The festival has many functions: it is held in honor of St. James the Greater, the municipality's patron saint, and because Libon is a major producer of rice for Albay, the festival celebrates its rice crops and farmers. The objectives also include reviving the culture and heritage of Libon, especially through the arts:

1. To initiate and feature activities which will reflect Libon arts and culture.
2. To generate strong interest from among the Libongenos in studying and promoting his own arts and music.
3. To generate attention for its lifeblood industry—the Palay [rice] Industry and preserve its image as the Province's Rice Granary as well as to plant the seed of pride for the farmers of Libon.
4. To generate funds to finance other related arts and cultural activities.¹⁰⁹

During the festival, every barangay participates in games, contests, and performing arts-related activities such as the drum and melodica competition and street dancing competition in order to bring town residents closer together and to show appreciation for the rich harvest and productive economy. The festival also promotes tourism through these various activities because tourists can choose to take part in whichever religious, social, cultural, or recreational activity interests them.

¹⁰⁹ Mayor Agnes “Bem” P. Dycoco, *Libon Paroy Festival 2007: The New Season* [Terminal Report], 2.

Festivals and Philippine Tourism

Festivals in the Philippines promote tourism with the help of the Department of Tourism (DOT), the executive department of the Philippines tasked with developing and regulating the country's tourism industry, and promoting the country as a major tourist destination. It was created on 11 May 1973, a few months after former President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines. At the time martial law was declared, Marcos had two critical foreign policy problems that he needed to address. First, he had to neutralize opposition to his leadership when some people in Western circles were upset that he imposed martial law in a country that was considered at the time to be the most democratic country in Southeast Asia. Second, he had to assure that martial law would not jeopardize foreign capital investment and that it would not lead to cuts in foreign aid or introduce new trade barriers.¹¹⁰ In order to boost Marcos' image and promote the Philippines as a stable and appealing place to visit, the Marcos regime made tourism become a priority industry.

One way that the Marcos regime sought to increase the Philippines' appeal was to attract major international events. The Miss Universe pageant was held in Manila in 1974, and the famous boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, dubbed the "Thrilla in Manila," occurred in 1975. The Marcos regime bid furiously to host the 1976 International Monetary Fund – World Bank Conference, hoping to gain recognition and status. When they won the bid, the regime spared no expense in impressing the bankers and their guests, even if the money spent placed the Philippines in enormous debt.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Linda Richter, "The Political Uses of Tourism: A Philippine Case Study" *The Journal of Developing Areas* 14(1980): 237-257.

¹¹¹ Sterling Seagrave, *The Marcos Dynasty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

Marcos also planned to improve the Philippines' image abroad along with his own by attracting Filipinos living overseas to visit their homeland. This was accomplished through the formation of the Balikbayan Program and an initiative called Reunion for Peace.¹¹² The Balikbayan ("nation returnee") Program was founded in 1973 and provided Filipinos with incentives, such as subsidized travel, extended visas, and tax breaks.¹¹³ The Reunion for Peace initiative specifically targeted former World War II servicemen originally from the Philippines to return home. The initiative was created in 1977, which marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of World War II's engulfment of Southeast Asia, to give Filipino war veterans and their families the opportunity to tour old battlefields and memorials. It also allowed them to see firsthand the "positive" effects of Marcos' development policies.¹¹⁴ The coordinating committee in charge of the initiative was instructed to create a hospitality program and arrange discounts with hotels, airlines, and tourism agencies in order to provide a pleasant experience for the war veterans.¹¹⁵ If the war veterans and balikbayans went back to their current country of residence and described their experience in the Philippines in a positive light, then Marcos' rule would win further recognition and the Philippines' global image would be greatly improved.

Marcos essentially exploited the DOT for his own gain, but after his ousting in 1986, the department was restructured and continued to work towards making tourism a priority industry. The National Tourism Act of 2009 (Republic Act 9593) declared it a national policy to make tourism one of the country's primary engines of investment and

¹¹² Richter, 1980.

¹¹³ Yen Le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹¹⁴ Richter, 1980.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

employment, and to strengthen the DOT in order to effectively implement the policy. The act also established the creation of “Tourism Enterprise Zones” (TEZ) to attract tourists to places considered rich in history and culture. Any geographic area in the Philippines could be designated as a TEZ, one of the main criteria being that it has “historical and cultural significance, environmental beauty, or existing or potential integrated leisure facilities within its bounds or within reasonable distances from it.”¹¹⁶

The tourism law and the establishment of TEZs garnered high expectations among tourism officials that it would generate more jobs and businesses as a result of attracting foreign investors with tourism-related development projects. In support of the Tourism Act, Robert Lim Joseph, chairman emeritus of the National Association of Independent Travel Agencies Inc., explained that Philippine tourism would get stronger and that it would “open new facets, like the development of community tourism where customs and rituals of a locality, like planting or harvest festivals, become tourist attractions.”¹¹⁷ There were concerns, however, that the Tourism Act would commercialize culture. In an opinion piece posted on an alternative media organization’s website called *Bulatlat.com*, Julie L. Po, the secretary-general of the organization Concerned Artists of the Philippines, argued: “The people in tourist zones will become alienated from their own culture as they reorient their lives to tourism as the main source of income. Traditional culture such as rice-

¹¹⁶ “Republic Act No. 9593,” *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, 12 May 2009 <<http://www.gov.ph/2009/05/12/republic-act-no-9593-s-2009/>>. Accessed on 15 September 2013.

¹¹⁷ The Philippine Star, “Travel exec urges support for Tourism Act of 2009,” *ABS-CBSnews.com* <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/business/05/31/09/legacy-group-pdic>>. Accessed on 15 September 2013.

terraces farming, weaving, carving, rituals and communal celebrations will lose their meaning and will increasingly be contrived as simply commodities for sale.”¹¹⁸

It is not surprising that the DOT would advertise festivals as tourist attractions; they have played a significant role in the DOT’s campaigns for many years. The 2013 campaign, for instance, which has the slogan “It’s More Fun in the Philippines,” includes a tourism video that advertises what the country has to offer to potential visitors. In addition to the many varieties of food, animals, beautiful beaches, and landscapes that appear in the video, images of street dancing performances are shown along with large white text that reads: “Here, a party is called a fiesta. We have rice fiestas, flower fiestas, giant fiestas, mask fiestas. We have one every day of the year and everyone’s invited.”¹¹⁹ The DOT depicts festivals as the epitome of “It’s More Fun in the Philippines,” inviting tourists to travel to the country and take part in the celebrations.

With the implementation of TEZs, however, the concern is that communities will prioritize tourism and profits over the significance that festivals and other traditions may have for the people who participate in them. It is important to point out that the DOT cannot automatically designate an area as a TEZ. It can only be designated as a TEZ upon the recommendation of the local government, a private entity, or joint ventures between the public and private sectors that have jurisdiction over the area.¹²⁰ The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), an attached agency to the DOT, can then decide whether or not to approve it. If approved, TIEZA encourages those who have

¹¹⁸ Julie L. Po, “Nationalism vs the Tourism Act of 2009,” *Bulatlat.com* <<http://bulatlat.com/main/2009/03/14/nationalism-vs-the-tourism-act-of-2009/>>. Accessed on 15 September 2013.

¹¹⁹ The tourism video can be found on the DOT Philippines YouTube channel: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADNgEHFDYzo>>.

¹²⁰ Republic Act 9593.

rights to land and other resources within the TEZ to participate in policymaking and planning, and the private sector will be provided with incentives for participating in the construction and operation of public utilities and infrastructure in the TEZ.¹²¹ Thus, TIEZA works together with local governments, investors, and communities to provide



Figure 2.1. A corporate sponsor's advertisement on the side of a parade float depicting the Christianization of two Filipino natives during the civic parade at the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City, Camarines Sur. Above the float are *banderitas* with a corporate sponsor's logo on each individual flag. Photograph taken by the author.

¹²¹ Ibid.

environmental protection, community development, and cultural heritage preservation for the well-being of the people in areas surrounding the TEZs.¹²²

The prioritizing of tourism in festivals is still a very real concern. The private sector provides a considerable amount of the funding that allows festivals to take place; sponsorship from corporations is not difficult for local governments to obtain. But in return, the local government must provide corporate sponsors with spaces in which they might advertise their brand name and/or logo. The most popular spaces are on floats during civic parades, on banners, and on numerous *banderitas*, or little flags, that are strewn all over festival grounds.

Additional funding comes from the NCCA. In 1992, Republic Act 7356 created the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), which was given the task of developing, promoting, and preserving Filipino culture and the arts through the formulation of policies in coordination with private and public cultural agencies. It administers the National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts (NEFCA), which was established to help fund culture and arts programs and projects in the Philippines.¹²³

The NCCA also encourages and facilitates the organization of regional and local councils for culture and the arts. One such council is the municipality of Guinobatan, Albay's Municipal Council for Culture, History and Arts (MCCHA). It is given the following tasks:

¹²² Carmina Angelica C. Valeroso, "Industry Report: Tourism incentives body approves first two ecozones," Business World Online < <http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Beyond&title=Industry-Report:-Tourism-incentives-body-approves-first-two-ecozones&id=49134>>. Accessed on 17 September 2013.

¹²³ "About NCCA," National Commission for Culture and the Arts <<http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about-ncca/about-ncca/about-ncca-history-mandate.php>>. Retrieved 14 February 2013.

1. To develop culture and arts and create community awareness of its cultural history.
2. Coordinate with the National Historical Institute, National Commission for Culture and Arts, other NGA'S [National Government Agencies] and NGO'S [Non-Government Organizations] involved in cultural, historical and artistic activity.
3. Prepare a comprehensive development plan for local culture, history and arts.
4. Coordinate all cultural, historical and artistic activities in the municipality.
5. Create working committees as may be necessary for effective management and implementation of program, projects, activities.
6. Hold regular meetings at such frequency as may be determined by the Council.
7. Give due recognition to Guinobatenos with outstanding contribution to the arts, local history and culture.
8. Conduct activities as may be necessary to develop and sustain people's awareness of their history, culture and arts.¹²⁴

The Arandurugan Festival was created as a result of a series of workshops held by members of the council, and it debuted in 1996 to promote the highly regarded values of unity and cooperation among community members, and to develop awareness of the history, culture, and arts of the community. In 2009, for example, the street dance presentation's theme was "Baileng Bicolnon Sa Tinampo" ("Bicol Dance in the Street"). Each school in Guinobatan, from elementary to college, presented various folk dances that

¹²⁴ Efren O. Oliva, "Caring for Guinobatan's Cultural Heritage," Arandurugan Festival '96 Souvenir Program, August 1996.

originated in Bicol, such as the Carinosa de Rapu-Rapu, Pandango Rinconada, and Jota Bicolana.

While the arts are regarded as highlights of the festival and as a means through which the community can become more aware of their traditions and values, the festival organizers are very aware of their potential in attracting tourists: “Considering that the national leadership had identified tourism development as the flagship project for Bicol, there is a need to infuse color to the fiesta celebration in order to attract more visitors. And one of the ways by which this can be achieved is by showcasing our indigenous culture and traditions.”¹²⁵ Bicol, no doubt, has many natural wonders and man-made landmarks that attract both domestic and foreign visitors, but festivals, with their activities and performing arts, are also strategies through which Bicol’s Department of Tourism operate. Maria O. Ravanilla, Bicol’s Regional Director of the Department of Tourism, states:

[Festivals are] very important to us. It’s actually where culture emanates. So it’s actually looking back to the past. And so, we would like that to be shown to the present generation so that the next generation will really appreciate it, you know? So as far as the DOT [Department of Tourism] is concerned, festivals are our strategies.¹²⁶

Festivals, which are held year round, are appealing because they provide a condensed yet entertaining version of what makes a particular community unique. They learn a short

¹²⁵ “Arandurugan Festival (Guinobatan Town Fiesta)” [Document], Department of Tourism, Guinobatan, Philippines.

¹²⁶ Interview with Maria O. Ravanilla, Legazpi City, Albay, Philippines, 27 October 2009.

history of the municipality or city, the music and dances of the community, and the industries that the people thrive upon.

The municipality of Nabua, Camarines Sur, for example, celebrates the Alinsangan Bowa-Bowaan Festival every May 1 to May 3. The highlight of the festival is the reenactment of the traditional “Boa Feast,” a thirteenth century rite where ancient Bicolanos offered chains of coconut embryos called *boa* to their deities in the belief that this would make their lives more prosperous throughout the year.¹²⁷ Participants in the street dancing competition carry props that look like *boa* as they dance down the street to make their way to the competition venue. While the festival celebrates a pagan ritual, the dancers also portray the introduction of Christianity to the residents of Nabua, which was an important event in the municipality’s history.

There is an abundance of Christian festivals in Bicol because of the high percentage of Roman Catholics in the region. Most of these festivals pay homage to a town’s patron saint, among other things, and include religious masses and prayer events in which the saint can be honored. The most famous religious festival is the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City, Camarines Sur, which is a nationally recognized Marian festival (see Chapter 4 for an in depth discussion about this festival). But other festivals in Bicol are just as colorful and include music and dance to honor a patron saint. The Tig-Aw Festival in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, for example, includes a street dancing competition and a devotional dance event in which contingents offer their performances to the town’s patroness, St. Clare of Assisi. St. Clare was the first Franciscan nun, and she founded the Order of Poor Clares, a monastic religious order for nuns in the Franciscan tradition. She is also the

¹²⁷ Carpio 2002.

patron saint of childless couples and of good weather.¹²⁸ Participants in the devotional dance in the Tig-Aw Festival might perform as an offering to become parents or for good weather, but because St. Clare is also Tigaon's patron saint, the dancing devoted to her is generally a way to give thanks and to pray for good health and protection.¹²⁹

Still, there are other festivals that are more commercial and geared toward tourists. The Kaogma Festival is a much larger celebration for the entire province of Camarines Sur because it commemorates the province's foundation day. Different major festivals from towns all over Camarines Sur are represented in the street dancing presentation. In addition, because of its location on the capitol grounds of Camarines Sur and its proximity to the Camsur Watersports Complex (CWC), the inclusion of television personalities, free outdoor concerts by famous Filipino rock bands, and extensive media coverage, the Kaogma Festival—advertised as “The Hottest Festival in the World”—is meant to draw in tourists.¹³⁰

There are also festivals in which music is at the forefront of the celebration. The Sarung Banggi Festival celebrates the Bicol region's signature love ballad. Composed by Potenciano Gregorio of Libog (now Santo Domingo) in Albay, the song “Sarung Banggi” (“One Night”) recounts an enchanted evening encounter between a love-struck man and his beloved. The composer, who auditioned for, and was accepted into, the Philippine

¹²⁸ Jocelyn R. Uy, “St. Clare is here, don't bring eggs” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 26 February 2012 <<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/26787/st-clare-is-here-dont-bring-eggs>>. Accessed on 6 March 2012.

¹²⁹ Lizel S. Macatangay, “LGU-Tigaon Celebrates Tig-Aw Festival” *Philippine Information Agency*, 5 August 2011 <<http://pia.gov.ph/?m=7&r=r05&id=47346>>. Accessed on 6 March 2012.

¹³⁰ Kara Ortiga, “Kaogma: The hottest festival in the world,” *philSTAR.com* <<http://www.philstar.com/travel-and-tourism/583428/kaogma-hottest-festival-world>>. Accessed on 5 February 2013.



Figure 2.2. The Kaogma Festival commences as the flags of the cities and municipalities of Camarines Sur are brought into the capitol grounds. Photograph taken by the author.

Constabulary Band in 1920 under the direction of Colonel Walter H. Loving, played the song on bandurria, and then on piano, as his audition piece.¹³¹ The song grew immensely popular in Bicol and around the country, and the festival in Santo Domingo, which began in May 2002, commemorates both Gregorio's birthday and the song's composition anniversary. The main attraction of the festival is the street dance presentation, where participants perform their own musical versions of the song as dancers interpret its

¹³¹ Merito B. Espinas, "Sarung Banggi: Bicol's Regional Song," originally published in the *Philippine Free Press* of 7 April 1962, reprinted in the *Unitas*, Vol. 41, No. 2, June 1968, 257-260.

meaning. The festival thus celebrates the town's pride for the composer and song that introduced the Philippines to Bicolano music.

In order to encourage further Bicolano songwriting, Bicol music festivals, and other music festivals open to all regions of the Philippines, seek submissions from amateur and professional songwriters. The Goa Songwriting Festival, held every December in Goa, Albay, attracted participants from all over the Bicol region.¹³² Many song entries celebrated Bicol culture and were nostalgic of a bygone era when nature was abundant and untouched by development. The top song entries were compiled onto compact discs and videoke (video karaoke) CD's and sold to promote tourism in Bicol.¹³³

The Magayon Festival, also in the province of Albay, takes place in April, and it showcases the arts and cultural heritage of the province.¹³⁴ One of the events during the festival is a songwriting competition in which local musicians and songwriters participate. Explaining why the competition was significant, one of the participants in the 2011 competition said: "This event develops the talent of amateur Bicolano musicians and it brings us closer to appreciating our own culture through songwriting. It exposes our talents not only here in Albay but also globally..."¹³⁵ Thus, the festival event is an outlet for Bicolano musicians to share their love of music and culture.

Music festivals in Bicol have their roots in major songwriting festivals in the Philippines. The Metro Manila Popular Music Festival, which was held from 1977 to 1985

¹³² It is unclear whether or not the Goa Songwriting Festival is still ongoing. There have not been any advertising or information about the festival since 2005.

¹³³ Juan Escandor, Jr., "Bicol songwriting contest revives vanishing traits," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 27 June 2002.

¹³⁴ Aluit 1969.

¹³⁵ Jesseshan B. Marbella, "Local Bands Play Original Pieces for Magayon," *Magayon Festival 2011* <<http://magayonfest2011.blogspot.com/2011/07/local-bands-play-original-pieces-for.html>>. Retrieved 12 February 2013.

and relaunched in 1996 as the Metropop Song Festival, sought to discover new Filipino talent and popular music.¹³⁶ The songwriting competition became the biggest and most prestigious venue in which songwriters could showcase their music and perhaps contribute to Original Pilipino Music (OPM), a genre of Filipino pop songs. Many famous Filipino performers and songwriters launched their careers in this competition. The Metro Manila Popular Music Festival is also the forerunner of the more recent Philippine Popular Music Festival (PhilPop), which was launched in 2012. The festival, which seeks to revitalize the OPM industry, is open to amateur and professional songwriters of Filipino descent whose song is written in a popular or new song genre in Filipino, a Philippine regional language, a Philippine dialect, English, or any combination thereof.¹³⁷ What is significant about this competition is that the festival actively encourages submissions from all regions of the Philippines. In November 2012, Ryan Cayabyab, an OPM songwriter and industry veteran, conducted a songwriting workshop in Naga City in order to inspire Bicolanos to make music as well as to enter the competition.¹³⁸

While the highlights of most festivals in Bicol are the beauty pageants and street dancing presentations, those that feature songwriting competitions are worth noting because of the active participation of Bicolanos in creating and sharing music that is important to them. These songs carry messages of love, nature, and everyday life that are unique to Bicolanos yet expressive enough to affect those who listen. In this dissertation, however, I am more interested in community festivals that involve music as a component

¹³⁶ *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, edited by John Shepherd (London: Continuum, 2005).

¹³⁷ "Mechanics," *Philippine Popular Music Festival 2013* <www.philpop.com.ph>. Retrieved 14 February 2013.

¹³⁸ "PhilPOP sets stage for next year's songwriting contest," *Bicol Mail* <<http://www.bicolmail.com/2012/?p=5248>>. Retrieved on 14 February 2013.

in street dancing performances and how issues affecting festivals are reflected in the music and dances performed. The following chapters will give insight on the mechanics of street dancing competitions and how performances are affected by tensions between government and religion, the two most powerful institutions in Bicol.

Chapter 3

Reinventing an Invented Tradition: the Tinagba Festival of Iriga City

Iriga City is a place that is at once constant and familiar but also continually growing and evolving. Many buildings in the *centro*, or the city center, have remained mostly unchanged, surrounding Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, the heart of the city both geographically and in community life. The fabled Mount Iriga, an old but still active volcano, is ever-present as an indelible part of the city landscape. The roads are always full of tricycles transporting people from place to place. The coliseum, both a public stage and basketball court, and the Emerald Grotto, which features an image of the Virgin Mary, remain landmark structures; however, many changes have occurred over the last five years. A public library was built, City Hall moved from the *centro* to a new building in another *barangay*, and a new hotel and small shopping mall was built. Iriga City, it seems, slowly but surely continues to make strides in becoming more urban and cosmopolitan, despite the pervading sense of tradition.

Change is a big deal to the people of the city, who seem to have become accustomed to daily routines. Early morning in Iriga City is filled with the sounds of the city coming to life: roosters crowing, tricycles zooming up and down streets, vendors shouting to let

people know that they are in the vicinity and have delicious food to sell. It is a bustling city that never seems to rest during the day as people make their way to the market, school, work and other destinations. But when a big event takes place, the daily flow that people are accustomed to is disrupted. Tricycles can no longer be driven on the major roads, policemen have to direct traffic, and barricades are set up where people once could roam freely. Daily routines are put aside as people become curious and line the streets with anticipation about what will happen.

One of the biggest events celebrated in Iriga City is the Tinagba Festival, a week-long celebration that culminates every February 11. The origins of Iriga City's Tinagba Festival can be traced back to the early 1970s, when lawyer, businessman, and historian Jose Calleja Reyes revived an old Bicol thanksgiving ritual called the Tinagba. The staging of the ritual in 1974 stemmed from Reyes' interest in Bicol culture, his personal devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, as well as a way to further his hotel business in Iriga City.¹³⁹ In his book *Bikol Maharlika* (1992), which describes the history and cultural heritage of the people of Bicol through topics such as indigenous peoples, religion, Bicolano economy, Spanish conquest, and other major historical events, Reyes writes that the Tinagba celebration stems from the animist beliefs held by Bicolanos before the Spanish introduced Christianity.¹⁴⁰ The ancient Bicolanos offered the best part of their first harvest to a supreme god of good called *Gugurang* as a gesture of thanksgiving for an abundance of food and to pray for another good harvest next year. After the arrival of the Spanish, the Tinagba was allowed to

¹³⁹ Francisco P. Peñones, "The Spirituality of the Tinagba," *Bikol Reporter*; quoted in Ricardo E. Perez, "The Tinagba Festival and the Agta," *Bicol Mail*, Vol. XXV No. 6, 23 July 2009 <<http://www.bicolmail.com/issue/oyax29.html>>.

¹⁴⁰ Jose Calleja Reyes, *Bikol Maharlika*, Philippines: JMC Press, Inc, 1992.

continue as long as it was “Christianized,” that is, instead of offering the harvest to *Gugurang*, the people had to make their offering to the Christian God.¹⁴¹

Reyes revived the Christianized version of the Tinagba and held it on the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11. Instead of offering the harvest directly to God, it is presented to the Lady of Lourdes, who accepts it on His behalf. Interestingly enough, there is not a direct connection between Our Lady of Lourdes and Iriga City, that is, the Catholic Church has not officially recognized miraculous events in Iriga attributed to the Lady of Lourdes; however, Reyes was a devotee. Our Lady of Lourdes is a title of the Virgin Mary in honor of the Marian apparitions that occurred in southern France to a poor, fourteen year old girl named Bernadette Soubiroux. There were eighteen apparitions in total, with the first occurring on 11 February 1858.¹⁴² These apparitions occurred in a grotto of a rock called Massabielle, and after the Catholic Church recognized the apparitions, the grotto became a Marian shrine. Inspired by his personal devotion, Reyes commissioned the construction of Iriga’s own grotto at his hotel complex to house an image of the Lady of Lourdes year round and to serve as a backdrop for the first staging of the Tinagba revival in 1974.

Reyes’s hotel complex, which was called Hotel Ibalon, was a standard-class hotel that included a coffee shop, shopping arcade, and because Reyes was very interested in Bicol history, the Bicol Folkloric Museum, which housed a fragment of the Ibalon legend, a Bicol folk epic, and other artifacts.¹⁴³ The hotel was located in the barangay of San

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Alan Neame, *The Happening at Lourdes: the Sociology of the Grotto* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

¹⁴³ “Iriga City,” *Biyahero Philippine Travel Portal*

<http://www.biyahero.net/index.php?option=com_sobi2&sobi2Task=sobi2Details&catid=40&sobi2Id=1009&Itemid=56>. Accessed on 15 February 2012.

Francisco, across the street from the city's Catholic church, and it lay at the foot of Calvario Hill, so called because of the street play depicting the Passion and Death of the Christ that culminated there every Easter.¹⁴⁴ Reyes recognized the historic significance of the hill: it was thought to be the lair of an *aswang*, or witch, in pre-colonial days; Iriga's first mission chapel and a building that served as a meeting place for Spanish officials were built during the time of Spanish governance; the Japanese built a watchtower on the hill to spot guerrillas during World War II; and it was a site where many Filipino martyrs were tortured.¹⁴⁵ Reyes built the Emerald Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes on the hill not only because of his devotion to the Virgin Mary, but because it would draw people to his hotel as a tourist attraction and as a site for religious activities, especially for the Tinagba Festival.

As introduced by Reyes, the Tinagba begins with the beating of a *patong*, a single-headed cylindrical drum,¹⁴⁶ to signal the start of the caravan of carabao-drawn carts full of offerings from farmers' first harvests around the main streets of the city. The procession then ends at the foot of the Emerald Grotto on Calvario Hill, where Mass is celebrated and the offerings are blessed by the priest. The offerings eventually are distributed to prison houses, the home for the elderly, hospitals, and other recipients. Street dancing was not introduced as a part of the festival until the 1990s, when organizers who worked with then Mayor Emmanuel R. Alfelor, were inspired by other festivals like the Sinulog in Cebu and Ati-Atihan in the Visayan Islands.

¹⁴⁴ *Experience...Iriga City*, Iriga City: Office of the City Mayor [Pamphlet]. According to the Gospels, Calvary, located just outside of Jerusalem, was the site at which Jesus Christ was crucified.

¹⁴⁵ "Iriga City," *Department of Tourism – The Philippines Ultimate Guide for Tourist*, 14 February 2012 <<http://www.visitmyphilippines.com/index.php?title=IrigaCity&Page=1&pid=1699>>.

¹⁴⁶ Reyes describes the patong as a wooden gong but is also described as a type of drum in the pamphlet "Bicol Ethnic Instruments" by Fr. Lorenzo-Juan B. Jarcia III.



Figure 3.1. The Emerald Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. Photograph taken by the author.

For many years, the Tinagba Festival followed the same format, focusing on offering prayers and thanksgiving to the Lady of Lourdes. In 2010, however, the Tinagba Festival underwent changes and became the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival. In a similar fashion to the Olympic Games, where cities bid for the opportunity to host during a particular year, Madelaine Alfelor-Gazmen, the mayor of Iriga in 2010, offered a bid for the city to host that year's Gayon Bicol Festival of Festivals Showdown. The mayor won the bid, and the planning of the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival commenced. As a first-time host city of the Gayon Bicol Festival of Festivals Showdown in 2010, Iriga City continued the tradition of

holding the regional street dancing competition in a different city in Bicol each year.¹⁴⁷ For the people of Iriga, whose city would receive a large amount of attention in the days leading up to the competition, there was excitement and anxiety over the numerous people that would be coming to the city from all over Bicol, and whether or not Iriga, a small city with few hotels, could be a successful host city.

The reinvention of the Tinagba Festival as a regional festival and its subsequent transformation back to a community celebration forms the basis of this chapter. Why did some people think there was a need for change, and how did Iriguenos react to the proposed reinventions of the Tinagba Festival? As an invented tradition, according to Eric Hobsbawm (1992), the festival consists of a set of practices that instills certain values and norms, and these practices are repeated over and over every year in expected ways. This repetition implies continuity with the past, not just with the first celebration in 1974, but also with the idea that Tinagba is linked to ancient rites of thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest. Some Iriguenos even believe that the Tinagba festival is the most ancient festival in Bicol.¹⁴⁸ The festival, however, is continually evolving, reflecting the ever-changing needs of a growing city. This adaptation, Hobsbawm furthers, is a characteristic of invented traditions: “Adaptation [takes] place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes.”¹⁴⁹ Invented traditions, importantly, are not static and can be changed as needed. This reinvention complicates simplistic notions of what constitutes tradition, and the Tinagba Festival is a potent example of how tradition is lived.

¹⁴⁷ Iriga City hosted the Gayon Bicol Festival of Festivals Showdown again in 2012 but was not the host city in 2011.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Eladio D. Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 21 January 2010.

¹⁴⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing tradition,” In *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

The Tinagba Festival began as an expression of Jose Reyes' devotion to the Lady of Lourdes, but it came to serve a variety of purposes, including as a strategy to draw in visitors to stay at Reyes' hotel. Because of its ability to attract crowds and its emphasis on the acts of offering, thanksgiving, and helping the poor, the festival quickly became popular and was instituted as an annual celebration. In 2010 it became a regional festival in which groups from all over the Bicol region gathered to compete in the region-wide street dancing competition, but in 2011, it shifted back to a community festival for the citizens of Iriga City (even though tourists were encouraged to join). In the early stages of planning the 2011 Tinagba Festival, organizers wanted to emphasize Iriga's animist past, pre-dating the arrival of the Spanish. Instead, they decided on the theme of "Tinagba Around the World," a festival that celebrates Iriguenos in Iriga and abroad. It should be noted that Iriga's citizens did not necessarily dictate the reinventing of the festival. Rather, the city government decided what was thought to be best for the people, and it is very likely that the decisions made had to do with creating a city and festival that is "tourist friendly."

According to data from the Department of Tourism, the province of Camarines Sur, in which Iriga City is located, received the most number of foreign and domestic visitors aside from Cebu in 2009.¹⁵⁰ Cebu, a province that has long enjoyed being known as a top tourist destination, is well known for its Sinulog Festival and its many winning street dancing groups at national competitions. The success that Cebu has had in drawing in tourists has long been sought by other places in the Philippines, and the national Department of Tourism has used festivals as a strategy for attracting people to different

¹⁵⁰ Mayen Jaymalen, "Camarines Sur now RP's top tourist destination," PhilStar.com <<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=551707&publicationSubCategoryId=67>> Retrieved on 23 June 2010.

locations. Maria O. Ravanilla, a regional director of the Department of Tourism, notes that festivals are important for boosting the local economy:

That's why when people say, "There's no return in investment in festivals so why does a local government keep spending a lot for that?" And I'm telling them, I used to tell them, "You're wrong." Because the return in investment, it doesn't go back to the local government unit, but definitely it goes back to the private sector. Because the more tourists you have, the better for our economy. They sleep here, they use the transportation, they eat here, they shop here. So at the end of the day, if you're going to monetize it, it goes directly to the private sector. Now, the better for the private sector, the better revenue also for the local government, right? So, I was telling them, "If you expect that it will go directly to the LGU, no way." Even for the Department of Tourism, we usually spend millions for one festival, especially for major [ones]. It doesn't go back to us. It goes back to the private sector.¹⁵¹

A local government unit thus favors tourism because it is seen as an opportunity for local businesses to earn extra income and create jobs. Iriga City's city government recognizes that citizens benefit greatly when the Tinagba Festival takes place.

Of course, there are negative aspects about tourism, especially in how it affects the performing arts that take place within the festival. Because government officials and festival organizers want to attract tourists and have them visit more than once, there is

¹⁵¹ Interview with Maria O. Ravanilla, Legazpi, Albay, 27 October 2009.

pressure to make presentations bigger, grander, and more exciting. Therefore, performing arts that may have originally been smaller in scale become spectacles, events that are memorable because of their visual impact. In spectacles, according to John J. MacAloon, “what is private or hidden becomes publicly exhibited; what is small or confined becomes exaggerated, grand or grandiose.”¹⁵² Events such as festivals fit into the category of spectacles because they include performances meant to entertain and impress audiences. Ideas or important aspects of culture that could be presented in smaller, intimate settings are instead incorporated into grand performances such as parades and street dancing competitions within festivals that are continually being “improved” upon in order to pique an audience’s interest. Eye-catching costumes, detailed props, and intricate movements are thus very important to the visual appeal of performances.

Eladio D. Nagrampa is an organizer and the Technical Committee Leader of the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival. He works closely with Iriga City’s mayor to make sure that events that take place in the city are coordinated well and in line with the expectations of the city government. His technical team takes care of everything from guest accommodations to road closures and planning the festival schedule. Nagrampa also helped implement street dancing in the Tinagba Festival, and in the first few years that it took place, he felt the need to make it more appealing to spectators:

So what happened is, when we staged the Tinagba, and then started the street dancing, people who participated in the street dancing—oh my God! They made it so primitive. They made use of leaves as their costume. Oh my

¹⁵² John J. MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984) 244.

God! It has no color, actually. So eventually I muttered to myself, “Who do you think—do you think people will be flocking to Iriga and these are the things that they will see? They spend on our transportation, then they have to buy our food and then this is all that they got to see? Oh my God.” So eventually what we did was to make some innovation.¹⁵³

Innovation started in the music accompaniment. In the first street dancing performances, the music consisted of rhythms played on the patong, which were taught to him by members of the Agta ethnic group, the aboriginal people who live in the surrounding areas of Mount Iriga. The *kalutang*, which consists of two sticks that are struck together, were also played; however, because these instruments were all made of bamboo, there was little variation in sound and limitations in dynamic range. Drums and brass instruments were eventually incorporated because of their louder volume and different timbres. Over time, these instruments replaced the bamboo instruments that were difficult to hear when played with drums and brass instruments.

Innovation occurred in the choreography as well. For the first celebration featuring street dancing, Nagrampa, who is also a choreographer, guided groups in thinking about how they might portray aspects of the Tinagba Festival through dance. For instance, dancers could use movements that simulated planting and harvesting rice and fruits.¹⁵⁴ Since the festival focused on giving thanks, the dancers’ movements could include gestures that represented thanksgiving, such as raising the arms to the sky. As groups became more

¹⁵³ Interview with Eladio D. Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 22 January 2010.

¹⁵⁴ Motions simulating working in the fields, especially rice planting and harvesting, have long been popularized in Filipino folk dancing. *The Rice Festival Suite*, for example, depicts the different steps involved in rice growing. See Francisca Reyes Aquino, *Philippine Folk Dances*, Volume 5 (Manila, 1966), 81-99.

aware of how street dancing groups were performing in other festivals, they began to borrow elements from their performances and use them in their own. As such, traditions of the festival were born from individual creativity but survived through popular adaptation.

Competitions are thus venues for the exchange of ideas regarding performance standards. In order to be competitive, costumes had to be flashier, movements had to be more technical and innovative, and impressive props became necessary to add visual appeal to a group's performance. Folkloric dance spectacles, like those performed by the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company, may have influenced this lean towards theatricality. Honored as the national dance company of the Philippines, Bayanihan has had international success in presenting folkloric dances that incorporate flashy costumes and visually appealing choreography since its institution in the 1950s. According to Anthony Shay, in his study of professional folk dance ensembles, it is very common for state folk dance companies to present "an often highly stylized, carefully choreographed and staged genre of dance that differs from dances found among nonprofessional populations of villagers and tribal people..."¹⁵⁵ Bayanihan recognizes that their dances are interpretations of traditional dances. Lucrecia R. Urtula, the founding dance director of the company, writes:

In terms of choreography, the guiding principle observed by the Bayanihan is the adaptation of indigenous dance to the conventions and possibilities of theater. This principle satisfies two needs. One, the need to situate the dances

¹⁵⁵ Anthony Shay, "Parallel Traditions: State Folk Dance Ensembles and Folk Dance in the Field," In *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Companies, Representation, and Power* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 13.

within their cultural context and thus to design them while keeping the richness of native artistic traditions. Two, the need to enhance and structure the original material to suit the format of sophisticated, contemporary theatrical performance.¹⁵⁶

The dissemination of Bayanihan's dance choreography worldwide has had a profound impact on the way audiences view Philippine traditional dance: it is often believed that the company's flamboyant renditions are traditional when they are actually theatrical pieces showcasing dances from different Filipino cultures. Dance groups, like those who participate in street dancing competitions, thus view Bayanihan as the professional standard and incorporate theatrical elements into their own performances.

This phenomenon of taking elements observed in other groups and incorporating them into future performances is similar to what scholars have observed in other types of competitions. In her study of Hawaiian hula competitions, Amy Stillman found that the events designed to preserve the hula tradition have actually fostered its transformation, especially since winning groups and innovations are widely emulated by others.¹⁵⁷ Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza also noted that competitions encourage innovation in performances. In her analysis of how competitions in school festivals have been instrumental in redefining *baakisimba*, a music and dance genre of the Baganda people of central Uganda, performers incorporate innovations to make them stand out while remaining within the guidelines of

¹⁵⁶ Lucrecia R. Urtula, "Keeping in Step with Yesterday," In *Bayanihan* (Manila: Bayanihan Folk Arts Center, 1987) 117.

¹⁵⁷ Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, "Hawaiian Hula Competitions: Event, Repertoire, Performance, Tradition." *Journal of American Folklore* 109/434 (1996): 1-24.

the adjudicators' judging criteria.¹⁵⁸ There is simultaneous stability and continual dynamism within competitions, since innovation must stay within a particular framework.

Nevertheless, because festivals contain elements by which communities define themselves, there is concern that if the Tinagba Festival incorporates innovations similar to those of other festivals, the people who celebrate it will lose touch with what makes it unique to Iriga City. Nagrampa explained, "Since there was already so much introduction, so much borrowing of ideas from other festivals, so that is why it was really so alarming since what you can see in Cebu, what you can see in Bakolod, you can see it here. So there's no more identity."¹⁵⁹ The search for an identity unique to Iriga City has taken many turns in terms of decisions of how to represent the people who live there. Festival organizers continually think of ways that the festival can serve Iriguenos, and the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival represents a shift, a change into a regional festival that makes way for the Tinagba's subsequent transformation into a community celebration of Iriga's animist past.

The Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival

Before coming to Iriga and combining with the Tinagba Festival, Gayon Bicol was implemented by the Bicol region's Department of Tourism in 2003 to draw domestic and international tourists and promote various regional attractions through the national "Visit Philippines 2003" program. The aggressive international marketing campaign, spearheaded by Richard J. Gordon, the Philippine Secretary of Department of Tourism at the time, was initiated to overcome the notion that Asia is an unsafe tourist destination.

¹⁵⁸ Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, "Competitions in School Festivals: A Process of Re-inventing *Baakisimba* Music and Dance of the Baganda (Uganda)," *The World of Music* 45/1 (2003): 97-118.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Eladio D. Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 22 January 2010.

The goal was to offer new travel packages and destinations in order to boost the Philippines' tourism industry.¹⁶⁰ The year 2003 thus showed a flourishing of festivals in the Philippines, and Gayon Bicol, which showcases the best street dancing groups competing in one place to represent different festivals from all over Bicol, began as an event to bring tourists specifically to the underserved Bicol region.

Gayon Bicol is usually hosted by different cities in Bicol every year. It is an opportunity for the host city to show visitors all that it has to offer in terms of natural resources, shops and restaurants, as well as the arts and social values that are important to the people who live there. The 2010 Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival was geared toward educating and, in some respects, impressing all who attended because of the large number of visitors from other towns and municipalities in the city. One way that the local government adapted the Tinagba Festival was to attract tourists by featuring parade floats representing the different *barangays*, the villages or districts of the city. During the day, most of the colorful floats carried well-known celebrities, both locally, such as the mayor, and nationally, such as movie stars and TV personalities Jericho Rosales, Kristine Hermosa, and Mark Herras.¹⁶¹ Each float was decorated with live plant material, similar to floats seen at the Rose Bowl Parade every New Year's Day in Pasadena, California. At night, the floats were lit up, inspired by Disney's Fantillusion spectacle parade. This marked the first time that an evening parade was featured in the Tinagba Festival.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ "Gordon: Revitalizing RP Tourism," *Lakbay Pilipinas*, http://www.lakbaypilipinas.com/press_releases/20030901_revitalizing_tourism.html, Retrieved on 3 July 2010.

¹⁶¹ Isah V. Red, "Star-studded Tinagba Festival in Iriga City," <http://www.manilastandardtoday.com/insideEntertainment.htm?f=2010/march/8/entertainment1.isx&d=2010/march/8>>. Accessed on 8 March 2010.

¹⁶² Interview with Eladio D. Nagraampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 22 January 2010.

In 2010, each float represented the various values promoted by Iriga City under its Character City program, which seeks to create strong government and citizenry by emphasizing and strengthening good values. For instance, the mayor stood on a float that featured the words, “Magkausad Kita Para Sa Iriga” (“Let’s be united for Iriga”), which were written in big, bold letters. At the front of the float sat three Agta, aboriginal people who live near Mount Iriga, and at the back stood two more. The mayor stood among small replicas of well-known landmarks in Iriga: MCM Restaurant, the new city hall, the public library, and Eco Park. She stood among the replicas with pride, since the city hall and public library were built during her term as mayor. Also on the float was the cartoonish-looking mascot of the Tinagba festival: a woman who carried different kinds of fruit on her head. Yet, while unity was the value represented by the float, the participants on the float seemed anything but unified. The mayor and the mascot stood and waved in the center of the float among the building replicas, but the Agta looked out of place: the Agta in the front just sat and stared at the crowds, and the Agta near the back of the float stood stoically by the greenery of the Eco Park replica. While the Agta participate in the Tinagba Festival every year, their presence on the float made it seem as if they were just a part of the display rather than living people. It spoke volumes about how much (or how little) of a sense of unity the Agta feel with the rest of the community. Distinguished by their dark skin color, fuzzy hair, and short stature, the Agta are rarely seen in the center of the city, preferring to stay near their homes at the base of Mount Iriga. Unfortunately, many non-Agta Iriguenos look down on them because of their physical characteristics.¹⁶³ They also continue to be the poorest and most marginalized people in the Bicol region despite their recent partnership

¹⁶³ During my fieldwork in Iriga, it was not uncommon for me to hear discriminatory remarks said about



Figure 3.2. The mayor, mascot, and Agta ethnic people on a float emphasizing unity. Photograph taken by the author.

with the city government and the University of Northeastern Philippines to improve their living conditions and economic life.¹⁶⁴

Beyond the problematic relationship between city dwellers and the Agta, the value of unity was also displayed in the day parade through the combined performance of the

Agta people whenever my companions and I would cross paths with a person of Agta descent.

¹⁶⁴ "UNEP, Iriga government help Agta tribe," *Vox Bicol*, 1 March 2012, <<http://www.voxbicol.com/story/unep-iriga-government-help-agta-tribe>>.

University of Northeastern Philippines' (UNEP) and the University of St. Anthony of Padua's (USANT) marching bands and baton twirlers. Well-regarded as notorious rival universities in Iriga City, the combined performance was meant to show the city as unified through sight and sound—a sea of green and gold and another sea of red and gold blended together as the marching band performed “Beautiful City of Iriga” by Noel Cabangon. The catchy and upbeat pop song, which is always played during large city events (I heard it hundreds of times during my stay in Iriga), was commissioned for city tourism purposes and invites the listener to experience Iriga's natural beauty, cuisine, and hospitality. The marching bands' rendition showcased the different sections of the combined band, starting with the trombones and other low brass playing the melody in the beginning verse, and then the woodwinds and trumpets as the melodic range became larger. The syncopated melody accompanied by the drums' heavy backbeat made the song ideal for the dance movements of the baton twirlers as both schools performed together to promote their city.

Although the UNEP and USANT combined performance delighted spectators, the highlight of the festival this year, as in most years, was the regional street dance competition, which had nine contingents representing festivals from different cities and towns in Bicol: Palong Festival (Camarines Norte); Lapay Bantigue Festival (Masbate); Pinili Festival (Pili, Camarines Sur); Paraw Festival (Sorsogon); Catandungan Festival (Catanduanes); Tabak Festival (Tabaco City); Sosogon Festival (Sorsogon City); Ibalong Festival (Legazpi, Albay); and Pulang-Angui Festival (Polangui, Albay). As the host of the festival, Iriga City did not participate in the competition.

According to the guidelines, the concept/theme of the Tinagba Gayon Bicol Regional Festival of Festivals Showdown is to showcase “the different major festivals of the Bicol

Region depicting the richness and diversity of the Bicol Culture, Practices and Traditions.”¹⁶⁵ The purpose of the Gayon Bicol street dancing competition is to find a group who best represents their culture, practices, and/or traditions and send them to Manila to represent the Bicol region at the Aliwan Festival. The judging criteria are as follows:

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

A. Moving Choreography

1. Choreography	50%
- Concept / theme	
- Interpretation (historically and culturally correct and accurate)	
- Elements of Dance	
2. Persistency	20%
3. Performance	30 %
- Consistency of Movements and props to music/Presentation	
- Mastery	
- Synchronization/Coordination	
TOTAL	100%

B. Exhibition

1. Choreography	30%
- Concept/theme/Idea	
- Interpretation (historically and culturally correct and accurate)	
- Elements of Dance	
2. Interpretation	20 %
3. Performance	30%
- energy/sustained	
- mastery / dynamics	
- characterization	
4. General Effect	20%
- Costume/Props	
- Entrance and Exit	
- Impact	
TOTAL	100%

¹⁶⁵ “2010 Tinagba Gayon Bikol Festival of Festivals Showdown General Guidelines,” Office of Tourism, Iriga City, Philippines.

The judges of the competition included Douglas Nierras, Shirley Halili-Cruz, Jess de la Paz and Dr. Larry Gabao, all of whom are affiliated with dance. The fifth judge, Eric Pineda, is a well-known Filipino fashion designer. Therefore, the criteria for judging emphasize the dancers' movements more than any other element in the street dancing competition. The music accompanying each dance performance is not an important element in the competition, though it is necessary that one complements the other and that the dance movements fit the music well. Because the actual performance of the music is not judged, many groups chose to dance to recordings rather than to live musical accompaniment.

One interesting aspect of the judging criteria is that the judges are looking for a "historically and culturally correct and accurate" interpretation of each group's culture or traditions. Since the majority of the judges are not from the Bicol region, it is fair to ask how they judge this criterion. Even if the judges were from Bicol, how could they be sure that each group was accurately presenting (indeed, representing) their culture or traditions? Before each group performed at the exhibition portion of the competition, a narrator delivered a one-minute synopsis of the festival dance being presented, but I questioned whether that was enough to inform the judges or whether the criteria was more political rhetoric than a concern with "accuracy." I believe that the judging is based more on the interpretations of the synopses provided than accurate representation. Because the majority of the judges are more knowledgeable about dance, it is only natural that they pay more attention to technical aspects, such as how well the dancers synchronize and execute dance steps, and how they use movement to portray ideas gleaned from their group's synopsis. In other words, the judges most likely focus on how

well a group can portray the information given in their synopsis through dance. Creativity plays an important role: impressive stunts and formations are received well by audience members, and the judges take notice when a group is able to excite the crowd. Historical or cultural accuracy as a criterion, however, remains problematic because judges (almost always brought in from Manila) simply may not be able to gauge what is accurate and what is not. This may make it easier for groups to take liberties with their portrayals of culture.

Perhaps what is most interesting about the street dancing presentations is that even though the festivals showcased (each competing group represents a different Bicolano town or city festival) are fairly recent in origin, their synopses describe them as having some kind of connection to the ancient past. In giving the history of the Lapay Bantigue Dance Festival from Masbate, for example, the synopsis states that “*As far as history can remember, this dance has existed* and has become an important aspect of the local culture of the people of Barangay Bantigue and the entire Masbate.¹⁶⁶ The dance, where dancers portray *lapay*, or seagulls, flying at the seashore and eagerly awaiting fishing boats full of fish, was researched by Ramon A. Obusan and later formally recognized as a Philippine folk dance.¹⁶⁷ The purpose of the Lapay Bantigue Dance Festival, which was first celebrated in September 2002, is to institutionalize the Masbateño dance tradition.

The group representing the Lapay Bantigue Dance Festival at the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival regional street dancing competition on 11 February 2010 was the second to perform. I had a very good view because I was given a front row seat after visiting the Iriga City tourism office. I had told the employees there a little bit about my research, and

¹⁶⁶ “History of Lapay Bantigue Dance Festival.” Synopsis retrieved from the Office of Tourism, Iriga City. Emphasis is mine.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

they generously provided me with a pass that allowed me to sit in an area reserved for press photographers associated with different newspapers and television channels. I felt out of place and somewhat embarrassed of my two small cameras when I saw the expensive equipment they had set up to record the performances. We sat to the right of the judges, in a structure called the ceremonial grandstand, which consisted of bleachers and a roof that provided shade from the bright sun. The dancers performed in the street directly in front of the judges. Instrumentalists, if any, would set up across from the photographers' area to the left of the grandstand, and they faced the dancers they were accompanying. On all sides of the designated performance space, hundreds of spectators crowded together to watch the competing groups. The following is from my fieldnotes, a description of a performance from the group representing the Lapay Bantigue Festival:

As the Lapay Bantigue dancers walk onto the stage area, they are hidden behind props and scenery in order to conceal their costumes. The trumpets play a fanfare as the paintings of white seagulls are moved, revealing a forest of trees. The drums enter with rhythms that seem to startle the seagulls out from their hiding places. The trumpets play a melody consisting of arpeggios in G major while the bell lyres play an obbligato line and the drummers provide the rhythmic patterns that the seagulls are dancing to. Men with swords chop down the trees, and the music stops. The background scenery splits apart, and a woman walks forward, holding the small image of St. Philomena, a virgin martyr who is the patron saint of the town of Bantigue, to whom the Lapay Bantigue dance is performed. As the woman makes her way forward, the bell lyres play a gentle melody, and then repeat the melody accompanied by the drums as the other dancers walk to the middle of the stage. As the dancers march and spin, the trumpets enter with their fanfare. The music stops as the dancers

kneel and shout their praise to St. Philomena. At this point in the performance, the frenzied rhythms provided by the drums are the main musical accompaniment. Pre-recorded sounds of birds chirping are heard intermittently as the dancers imitate seagull movements. The trumpet fanfare makes a few more appearances as well. It isn't until the dancers stop to kneel in front of the large statue of St. Philomena that the melody of the Lapay Bantigue folk dance is heard. Unlike the rest of the musical accompaniment, the melody is played in F major. As the bell lyres play the melody, the drums play syncopated rhythms and the dancers walk around in circular formations swaying their arms; however, it doesn't take long before the trumpets and drums take over.

The most spectacular and crowd pleasing part of the performance occurs at the end, when the dancers hold props that look like waves of the ocean and giant fish. The spectators cheer as the dancers move the props in a circular motion to simulate fish jumping in and out of the ocean waves, and two of the dancers, including the woman carrying the small image of St. Philomena, are lifted up so that it looks like they are riding the waves. In the background are multiple paintings of St. Philomena, and in the prop trees sit a couple of the dancers fully dressed as seagulls, flapping their wings as everyone moves offstage.

The differences between the Lapay Bantigue dance performed in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival and the Lapay Bantigue folk dance recognized by the Cultural Center of the Philippines are striking. First, in the five and a half minute festival performance, the time in which the melody of the folk dance can be heard clearly is only fifteen seconds, and the trumpet fanfares and drums dominate the entire performance. The topic of this folk melody



Figure 3.3. Dancers representing the Lapay Bantigue Dance Festival conclude their performance at the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival. Photograph taken by the author.

is similar to the Tagalog folk song “Magtanim Hindi Biro,” though one deals with the land and one with the sea. “Magtanim Hindi Biro,” which in English translates to “Planting rice is no joke,” is a song about the hard work that goes into planting rice. Similarly, the Lapay Bantigue folk song pays tribute to the hard work that fishermen must do on a daily basis off the shore of Bantigue. “Lapay Bantigue” has more of a lilting quality to its melody due to the predominance of dotted eighth, sixteenth-note rhythms, but both melodies are performed in duple meter and have contours that rise and fall in a similar fashion.



Example 3.1. “Lapay Bantigue” melody. Transcription by the author.



Example 3.2. Excerpt of “Magtanim Hindi Biro” melody. Transcription by the author.

The folk dance is a plea for a good harvest and healing from St. Philomena, as well as an expression of gratitude for bountiful fishing. The dancers imitate the movements of the seagulls by gracefully flapping their arms, bending to the ground, and looking upward to the sky with one of their hands on their forehead representing the bird’s beak. While the dancers in the festival performance incorporated some of these movements, there was more of a focus on complex dance steps and formations. The performance looked and sounded more like a tribal dance than a rural folk dance: it featured trumpets, drums, and a lyre band as the musical accompaniment instead of a rondalla ensemble,¹⁶⁸ and most of the dancers wore bright orange costumes with nude-colored sections that looked like skin covered in tattoos, and headdresses that looked like seagulls (the other dancers were fully

¹⁶⁸ A rondalla ensemble is a plucked string ensemble consisting of instruments such as the banduria, laud, octavina, guitar, and string bass. It was introduced by Spanish colonists in the 16th century.

dressed as seagulls, feathers and all). While these changes did not affect the overall theme of the folk dance (one can still understand that the dancers are imitating seagulls and are praising St. Philomena), the folk dance is hardly recognizable, and it is apparent that the festival performance took many liberties with the dance. The festival rendition is directed towards impressing judges and spectators rather than performing a well-known folk dance. It is, in short, a public spectacle. While it can be argued that the folk dance is also a spectacle in the sense that it is mostly performed in staged productions, the difference is that there is more of an emphasis on visual appeal in the festival rendition. When watching the staged folk dance, there may be theatrical elements such as props, costumes, and stage lighting to enhance the performance, but the focus is always on the folk dance. In the festival rendition, it is more important to tell a story through props, costumes, and choreography, and that sometimes involves straying from the folk dance. Thus, the folk dance choreography may be the foundation of the festival performance, but it is not necessarily always prominent.

While it is easy to be critical about the differences between the Lapay Bantigue festival dance and its well-known folk dance counterpart, other festival dances are less tied to existing performance genres, because they are based on Bicolano epic poems and stories. These festivals include the Ibalong Festival of Legazpi, Albay and the Sosogon Festival of Sorsogon City, Sorsogon. I discuss these two festivals below as case studies in how festivals from different places provided unique depictions of their community festivals through street dancing performances at the 2010 Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival. I then conclude with the Aliwan Festival, the national street dancing competition, which features the winners of every regional competition held in the Philippines. To be able to take part in the Aliwan

Festival is considered a great honor because every group's goal is to gain recognition at the national level. For the groups that competed in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival, the winner would represent the best that Bicol has to offer.

The Ibalong Festival

The Ibalong Festival was first celebrated in 1992, and each street dancing group portrays its own interpretation of the Ibalong epic poem fragment. The sixty stanzas that remain of the full-length epic poem describe the deeds of three ancient heroes of extraordinary strength and abilities named Baltog, Handyong, and Bantong. Their heroic stories of fighting the wild animals and monsters of Ibalon (the name for Bicol in ancient times) are recounted in the poem fragment that is held as the main feature of the Ibalong Festival.¹⁶⁹ The story is as follows:

In ancient times, Ibalon was a very rich land full of monsters that roamed the dark forests. The first Bicol hero, Baltog, fearlessly wrestled and killed a monstrous, wild boar that wreaked havoc in the land and destroyed crops. After breaking apart the beast's huge jawbones with only his arms, Baltog hung them on a tree in front of his house. The people prepared a feast and celebrated. The second Bicol hero, Handyong, and his men fought thousands of battles and defeated many monsters, such as winged sharks and giant crocodiles. The serpent Oryol, however, was the hardest to kill. It had a beautiful voice and could change its image to deceive enemies.¹⁷⁰ Handyong spent many days and nights in pursuit of Oryol, but he could never capture it. Oryol came to admire Handyong's bravery

¹⁶⁹ See Merito B. Espinas, *Ibalong: the Bicol Folk Epic-Fragment* (Legaspi City, Philippines: M.C. Espinas, 1996).

¹⁷⁰ It is interesting to note that in all of the street dancing performances I have seen, an attractive woman always plays the role of Oryol. Handyong was skilled at defeating monsters, but he could never capture the beautiful, seductive serpent skilled in the art of deception.

and decided to help the hero conquer monsters and restore peace to Ibalon. Handyong went on to build a town, and under his leadership, the people flourished and invented many things, such as the plow, loom, stove, and a writing system. Suddenly, there came a big flood with terrifying earthquakes. Volcanoes erupted, and many towns in Ibalon were ruined. Then, a giant monster named Rabot appeared. This time, Bantong, the third Bicol hero, was called upon to kill the new monster. He took a thousand warriors to attack the monster's den, but he did not attack right away. He wisely observed the monster's ways and learned that it liked to sleep during the day and stay awake at night. When Bantong was sure that the monster was sound asleep, he cut the giant monster in two with his sharp bolo knife, and without any struggle, successfully killed it. Ibalon was at peace once more.

Out of all the festivals present at the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival, the Ibalong Festival is the only one that does not represent just one city or municipality. According to a representative from the Office of the City Mayor of Legazpi, the Ibalong Festival represents all of Bicol:

The Ibalong Festival is city-wide. But there's a sense of regionalism in Ibalong Festival since we are focusing on the Bicol historical, cultural heritage of Bicolanos. It's really regional. So bigger in scope. The Ibalong Festival is actually bigger in scope in terms of the Ibalong epic.¹⁷¹

Therefore, even though the Ibalong Festival takes place in Legazpi, Albay, and the street dance competitors consist of schools from around the city, it is a festival that is intended to

¹⁷¹ Interview with Anonymous, Legazpi, Albay, 17 November 2009.

relate to all Bicolanos because of the values represented in the epic poem depicted through dance and music.

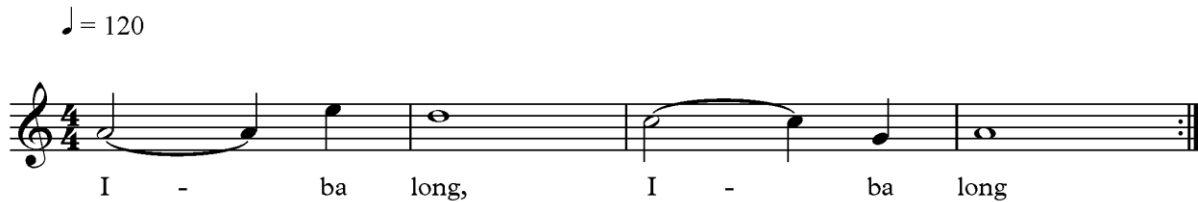
Before the exhibition section of the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival street dancing competition, each group was judged on moving choreography during the Parade of Festivals. One by one, starting from Iriga City Central School until they reached the ceremonial grandstand, each group danced down the street as hundreds of spectators looked on. The Ibalong Festival, the eighth group to perform, was distinctive because of the characters and monsters from the epic story being brought to life.

Each dancer wore bright red and gold costumes, executing dance steps that included shuffle steps, spins, and arm movements that appeared martial in nature. Behind the dancers were people dressed up as wild animals, such as a crocodile and a carabao (water buffalo), and monsters such as the sarimao, a giant with sharp fingernails.¹⁷² These creatures dance and sway with the music, even going up close to some of the spectators to try and scare them, as one of the heroes start to “fight” one of the animals. Children scream with delight whenever the animals growl and get too close.

A band consisting of bell lyres, trumpets, saxophones, and drums play the signature Ibalong Festival melody as the group dances down the street. The drums accompany the melody by playing steady rhythms to which the dancers can keep pace. The melody, which is played by the bell lyres, trumpets, and saxophones, consists of six notes that are repeated over and over again (see Example 3.3), and the word “Ibalong” is sung with the melody, one syllable per note. The predominance of intervals of fifths and fourths give the impression that the music is a type of tribal melody, which sounds fitting for the stories of the Ibalong since it

¹⁷² Espinas 1996.

took place in ancient times. This same music was played during their performance in front of the grandstand as the dancers depicted the heroic deeds of the three heroes.



Example 3.3. The theme song melody of the Ibalong Festival. Transcription by the author.

Because the Ibalong Festival is based on an epic story, the group representing it at the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival has a different set of concerns when creating a street dance performance. Unlike the group representing the Lapay Bantigue Dance Festival, which must include a specific folk dance and music in some way, the group representing the Ibalong Festival has more freedom: they can incorporate refreshing, innovative ways of portraying the Ibalong epic. With the exception of the music and the characters of the story, the group can experiment with different costumes, movements, stunts, and props as long as the story remains the same.

The Sosogon Festival

The Sosogon Festival is held in Sorsogon City, Sorsogon every December, and it celebrates the city's foundation day. Of all the festivals presented in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival, it is the newest, with its first celebration in 2007. Sorsogon formerly celebrated the Pili Festival every June, which coincided with the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul, the patron saints of the municipality of Sorsogon. The Pili Festival celebrated the

Pili tree, which is indigenous to Sorsogon, for its many uses. The Pili tree is particularly well known for its nuts, which can be used in a variety of dishes and pastries, and the pili nut industry is a source of work for many families in Sorsogon City.¹⁷³

When Sorsogon became a city, the local government decided to combine the Pili Festival and celebrations of the city's foundation to create the Sosogon Festival. Street dancing groups representing this festival portray the story of how the city of Sorsogon got its name. According to popular folklore, a group of Spaniards asked the local inhabitants for the name of the place in which they lived. Unable to understand the Spaniards, the local inhabitants answered "Sosogon," which means "to trace."¹⁷⁴ They pointed towards the river in a gesture of showing them on their way. The name of the place became set as "Sosogon," then "Solsogon," and finally, the city of Sorsogon.¹⁷⁵

During the Parade of Festivals in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival, the moving choreography of the group representing the Sosogon Festival reflected the story of how the city got its name.

The dancers start in a triangular formation, their bodies bent to the ground, slowly marching as the music starts, and then crossing one leg over the other as they continue to move forward. They then move to a linear formation where each dancer moves forward at a robust pace using wide arm movements. They then take off the blue and orange discs that they were wearing on their backs and use them to create wave effects in various formations, which has the effect of portraying the Sosogon River the local inhabitants pointed to in the story of the city.

¹⁷³ "Pili Day," *Sosogon Newsletter in Developing Awareness* [Official Newsletter of Sorsogon City, Year 1, Vol. 3] (Sorsogon City: City Government of Sorsogon, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ "Sosogon Festival," City Government of Sorsogon [Print].

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

The musicians accompanying the dancers were almost entirely made up of people playing drums, and the accompaniment was largely polyrhythmic. According to Manny Daep, the tourism officer of Sorsogon City's Department of Tourism, the city purchased many large drums specifically for the festival and commissioned a small group to create the music.¹⁷⁶ The street dancing groups who competed in Sorsogon for a place in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival all had to perform moving choreography to the same recording by the group commissioned to create the festival music. During the exhibition portion of the competition, a group of trumpet players and percussionists performed the same music for each competing group. The instrumentalists traveled with the winning group to recreate the music for their performance in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival.

The festivals represented in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival portray different things: animals, stories and legends, and city histories. Some festivals also distinguish themselves through music that was specifically created for them, such as in the case of the Ibalong Festival and the Sosogon Festival. However, all of the festivals that competed are similar in that they all strive to impress the judges and spectators with interesting props and effects, and innovative dance steps. Sometimes innovation is even emphasized over the traditional, such as in the Lapay Bantigue dance, where only a few elements from the folk dance were incorporated into the performance. From my observations, the street dancing groups work hard to please the crowds because they have an effect on the judges. While it is not known how much it influences them, I have noticed that the highest placing groups in the competition were the ones that the spectators cheered for the most. More often than

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Manny Daep, Sorsogon City, Sorsogon, 11 December 2009.



Figure 3.4. Dancers representing the Sosogon Festival at the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival. Photograph taken by the author.

not, these were the groups that incorporated interesting innovations in their performances, such as the Lapay Bantigue dance of Masbate, which came in first place. The group's clever use of props to create what looked like fish jumping in and out of rolling waves had a profound impact on the audience and the judges. For better or worse, street dancing competitions, such as the one featured in the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival, provide stages on which Bicolano expressive culture can flourish.

There is no doubt that street dancing competitions are controversial. There are many who believe that the groups that compete are only performing spectacles in order to

boost their city's tourism industry. In some ways, they are correct. Winning street dancing competitions may entice people to visit the group's city and attend the festival they represent. But more importantly, street dancing competitions are a part of Bicol culture. Almost every city and town in Bicol has a festival, and street dancing competitions are an important highlight. They are significant as vehicles of expression, incorporating elements of what is important to one group and sharing them with others in a fun, unique way.

The Aliwan Festival

In addition, all groups strive to win the Gayon Bicol regional competition because the winners are sent to Manila for the Aliwan Festival, which features a street dancing competition at the national level. Like Gayon Bicol, the Aliwan Festival began in 2003 as a part of the "Visit Philippines 2003" program and was organized by the Manila Broadcasting Company (MBC) and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) along with the cities of Manila and Pasay. "Aliwan" is a Tagalog word that means "amusement" or "entertainment," and it is a fitting name for the festival that takes place every April or May at Star City Complex in Pasay City, which is located just to the south of Manila, the capital of the Philippines. The Aliwan Festival is known as "The Mother of All Fiestas" because it features the best street dancing groups from every region of the Philippines, usually those who have won a regional competition such as Gayon Bikol.

There are three main events that comprise the Aliwan Festival: the Cultural Street Dance Competition, the Float Parade, and the Reyna ng Aliwan (Queen of Aliwan) Beauty Pageant. The street dancing competition, however, is the highlight of the festival and the event in which each region puts the most investment. The festival is tourism driven, not

only in terms of attracting tourists to its events, but also in order to entice people to visit the regions represented by each street dancing group present. The hope is that the presentation given by a particular group will impress and pique the interest of both the thousands of spectators at the festival and the larger number of television viewers watching the competition unfold (many different television stations broadcast the event live). Winning the one million Philippine peso grand prize is alluring, but the prestige that comes with being chosen as the best festival in the Philippines is a matter of pride (as well as a potential economic boost) for each region represented. The Bicol region, however, has never won at the Aliwan Festival.

Finding Identity Through Reinvention: The 2011 Tinagba Festival

After the success of the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival, it was time for organizers to begin working on next year's Tinagba Festival. It would no longer be a regional festival; instead, it would once again be a celebration for the people of Iriga. Still, it would not be the same Tinagba Festival that has been celebrated since 1974. The organizers planned to make changes that would educate residents and others about Iriga's ancient, animist past. After being asked why they wanted to make changes, Eladio Nagrampa explained,

You know, in Bicol region, Tinagba is considered to be one of the oldest. In fact, one of the pioneers among all the festivals that is in existence here in Bicol. It's the pioneer among festivals. And then from 1975 until perhaps last year, we've been observing that the identity of Tinagba started to diminish,

started to depreciate. So the real identity of Tinagba is losing its authenticity and everything. So meaning to say—so the mayor was alerted when anytime that she watched the festival, it's now becoming a poor copy of other major festivals in the Philippines.¹⁷⁷

He continued, revealing how the festival came to incorporate aspects of other festivals from around the Philippines. He explained that in order to choreograph street dancing performances, choreographers would go to different cities and draw inspiration from the dances they had seen.

City officials and organizers thus felt that in order to bring Iriga City's identity back into the festival, the street dances would need to reflect how Tinagba was celebrated in ancient times. In order to find out more about Tinagba's origins, Mayor Madelaine Alfelor-Gazmen sent a team of researchers to the National Archives and National Library in Manila to conduct research.

What resulted was a document entitled "Tinagba Festival: Revisited." In it, the researchers described Jose Reyes' role in conceptualizing the festival, which was an amalgamation of his interest in Bicol history, his devotion to the Lady of Lourdes, a tourism boost for Iriga City, and a marketing strategy for his hotel business. Reyes' Tinagba was based on a paper by Jose Castano about the ancient practices and beliefs of pre-colonial Bicol. According to Castano, the people of Bicol would hold a thanksgiving ritual called *atang* that was presided by an effeminate priest called an *asog*. His female counterpart, called a *baliana*, assisted him and led the women in singing what was called the *soraki*, in

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Eladio D. Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 21 January 2010.

honor of Gugurang. The first fruits of the land called *himoloan* were offered. After the ritual, the people would engage in a bacchanalia of sorts that included eating, drinking, dancing, and even fighting.¹⁷⁸

The document “Tinagba Festival: Revisited” provides information about native clothing in order to inspire costumes as well as recommendations for the music of the street dances: the music should be “ethnic but upbeat using mostly percussion instruments and utilizing chants in the Iriga dialect.”¹⁷⁹ The document also raises topics for further discussion, such as how the Tinagba Festival should be revamped. One option is to stage the festival in a similar fashion to the *atang*, the thanksgiving ritual performed before Spanish colonization, which would symbolize a connection to the animist past and would require creativity in terms of costumes, dance, music, and ritual. The other option would be to present two versions of the Tinagba: the precolonial version and the Christianized version similar to the one Reyes introduced. Interestingly, the writers of the document warn that depicting two versions may be confusing since the festival would contain both animist and Christian aspects.¹⁸⁰

The festival organizers were leaning toward presenting an animist Tinagba Festival in which an *atang* would be performed. Nagrampa explains how this new festival would require elements of Christianity to be taken out:

So if the usual Tinagba that people have been accustomed—for example, we don’t want to change the actual date of Tinagba because people have been

¹⁷⁸ José Castano, “Breve Noticia Acerca del Origen, Religión, Creencias y Supersticiones de los Antiguos Indios del Bicol,” (Madrid: Colegio de Misioneros de Almagro, 1895).

¹⁷⁹ “Tinagba Festival: Revisited” [Print].

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

accustomed to celebrating Tinagba Festival in time with the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, which falls on February 11. But since I told you that we again go back in animistic in nature already, so there will be no more Our Lady of Lourdes. There will be no more Our Lady of Lourdes because if we will be very strict with our research, there is no such a thing. And the friars, the Spaniard researchers, the historians, did not—they never mention about Our Lady of Lourdes. None at all. ¹⁸¹

The organizers began designing concepts for floats that would be paraded around the city featuring items and characters involved with the ancient thanksgiving ritual, such as the structure in which the ritual took place, an asog and and baliana, and the fruits offered in thanksgiving. One of the floats called “Atang Ki Gugurang” (“The Thanksgiving Ritual for Gugurang”) would depict the ritual presided by an asog. There would not be an image of Our Lady of Lourdes on any of the floats.

The idea of an animist Tinagba Festival that excluded the Lady of Lourdes was not received well by everyone. While the new festival would have the potential to educate Iriguenos about their history and the origins of the Tinagba, it would conflict with the people’s religious beliefs ,since they are predominantly Catholic. Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, after all, stands directly in the heart and center of Iriga City, and to have a ritual that offers the harvest to a deity other than the Christian God would be considered unthinkable. Some of the members of the festival technical committee believed that

¹⁸¹ Interview with Eladio D. Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 21 January 2010.

“Tinagba is for the religiosity of the Iriguenos. It should always not be far behind.”¹⁸² Others have also criticized the new festival by saying that it would be changing what Iriguenos have traditionally practiced.¹⁸³ They are resistant to the notion that the annual celebration as they know it would be entirely different next year.

Still, the festival organizers were hopeful that the people would accept the changes that they would make to the Tinagba Festival because it would be more like the celebration of thanksgiving as it was practiced by the Iriguenos’ ancestors:

Since we found already that we are losing our true identity, that’s why it’s very imperative for us to make all this important information available to the community. We don’t intend to consult them. Only, what we do, is to inform them that this is the essence of the real Tinagba. I doubt if [the] popularity of the Tinagba will be losing its appeal. I doubt it. Since Tinagba, region-wide, is considered to be one major festival the Bicol region can actually boast of. So I don’t see any risk that perhaps people will be losing interest in watching. In fact, what I am thinking about, this might steer curiosity among its people since they will be watching a new kind of Tinagba. This is the original, and this is the real Tinagba Festival. ¹⁸⁴

What is interesting about Nagrampa’s statement is that he is willing to go forward with the new festival even if the people do not want the Tinagba to change. He feels that he does not

¹⁸² Interview with Gener Navales, Iriga City, Philippines, 10 February 2010.

¹⁸³ Interview with Eladio D. Nagrampa, Iriga City, Philippines, 22 January 2010.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

need their permission. His hope is that, in time, they will embrace the changes once they understand why the organizers are making the changes.

Perhaps surprisingly, what resulted in February 2011 was a festival that was entirely different from what organizers were planning the year before. The Lady of Lourdes remained a big part of the festival, likely because of criticism given from the people of Iriga. The carabao-drawn carts filled with the farmers' first harvest were still one of the festival highlights. Thus, the elements of the Tinagba Festival with which Iriguenos were familiar continued to be celebrated in 2011. Instead of on an animist past, the festival focused instead on a cosmopolitan theme that celebrated Iriguenos around the world. Jose Rizal Park, located in the city center, had miniature landmarks from countries in which Iriguenos have settled, like Big Ben, the clock tower in London, England, and the Eiffel Tower. At the center of the park was a large globe with the theme of the festival, "Tinagba Around the World," written in neon-pink lights.

The grand homecoming of Iriguenos who live abroad was an important part of the festival. "Magbinaydan," which means "to see each other" in the Rinconada dialect spoken in Iriga and surrounding areas, is a reunion that occurs every three years for alumni from Iriga City's University of Northeastern Philippines. Alumni have settled in various parts of the world, such as North America, the Middle East, and Europe, so each Magbinaydan reunion always takes place in a different city where alumni are situated: Washington D.C. in 2002; Toronto, Canada in 2005; Vienna, Austria in 2008; and Iriga City, Philippines in 2011 are recent examples. Because it took place in everyone's hometown of Iriga, in addition to dinners and galas, Magbinaydan 2011 consisted of community projects such as providing medical services and food for the poor, planting trees, and house repairs. Alumni also

participated in the Tinagba Festival by creating a float that was included in the caravan of carabao-drawn carts carrying the harvest offerings.

The research about the origins of the Tinagba Festival played only a small role when dances performed by the Agta were featured during the parade. Other than that, the 2011 festival was similar to those that were held in the past. Besides the first harvest offerings being presented to the Lady of Lourdes, the festival also included the civic parade featuring floats made of indigenous plant material, the nighttime Fantillusion parade, and a street dancing competition featuring competing groups from every barangay in Iriga.

It is significant that the traditions that are incorporated in the Tinagba Festival are those that are the most familiar to the Iriguenos. Reinvention was not embraced so easily, especially when it introduced concepts that were very different from what Iriguenos have practiced for years. In order for a reinvented tradition to be successful, there needs to be justification for the change that is agreed upon by those who propose it and those who will be affected by it. Festival organizers thought that the true “essence” of Iriga City lay in the Tinagba Festival’s ancient origins; however, the repetition of formalized practices within the festival turned out to be representative of Irigueno community identity. Iriguenos wanted to continue giving thanks to the Lady of Lourdes and to continue the caravan of carabao-drawn carts full of the first fruits of the harvest because these traditions have been in place since the festival began in the 1970s. They have been ingrained into their minds as how the Tinagba Festival should be celebrated.

The Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival was a successful reinvention because, while the regional street dancing competition was the highlight, there were still religious celebrations taking place that honored the Lady of Lourdes, and many Iriguenos were able

to attend them while other activities took place. Thus, the regional festival still remained familiar to those who wanted to give thanks to their patron saint. In contrast, many found the proposed new community festival unfavorable because it would celebrate animist beliefs that many felt were contrary to their faith. It was important that the Tinagba Festival retain elements of previous celebrations because festivals are seen as a reflection of the people who celebrate them: the events and activities that take place allow the community to educate others (and remind community members) about their heritage and values. Like in street dancing competitions, representing the identity of a community relies not in just presenting the past (which many may feel no connection with), but in celebrating the familiar and important in new, refreshing ways.

Chapter 4

Street Dancing in Hybrid Space: Religiosity and Commercialism in The Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia

It is a humid day in Naga City when I attend the traslacion procession of the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia from her sanctuary at the Peñafrancia Shrine to the Peñafrancia Cathedral. Different brass bands on the side of the street play the hymn “Resuene Vibrante” as people walk behind the vehicle carrying the image of “Ina,” or “mother,” as she is affectionately called. Most of the musicians do not play very well; there are lots of squeaks and pitch problems. But everyone knows the words to the song by heart, and the people in the procession often sing along:

“Resuene vibrante el himno de amor
Que entona tu pueblo con grata y emocion
Resuene vibrante el himno de amor
Que entona tu pueblo con grata emocion
Patrona del Bicol Gran Madre de Dios
Se siempre la Reina de Nuestra Region
Patrona del Bicol Gran Madre de Dios
Se siempre la Reina de Nuestra Region!”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Let it resound vibrantly, the hymn of love
That your people intone with gratitude and affection.
Let it resound vibrantly, the hymn of love
That your people intone with gratitude and affection.
Patroness of Bicol, Great Mother of God,
Be always and evermore the Queen of our region
Patroness of Bicol, Great Mother of God,
Be always and evermore the Queen of our region!

When the image arrives at the Cathedral, it is met with applause and cheers from the crowd. Military officers sit at the front of the outdoor gazebo, where the novena and mass (both of which are in English) take place, in order to protect the image from devotees who want to get too close to it. People in the crowd cheer and wave white handkerchiefs in the air to be blessed by the Archbishop of Caceres. They listen intently to the mass and are not deterred when it begins to rain very heavily. While some people, including myself, run to get inside the church in order to prevent from getting even more wet, many choose to remain outside and finish the mass, only coming inside the church to receive Holy Communion. As I watch the devotees move past me in their soaked clothes, their devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia impresses me greatly. At the church, the devotees focus on paying homage to the saint. It is not until I leave the church grounds that I start to notice the dual nature of the festival in the city. There are banners and posters that praise or bear photos of the Lady of Peñafrancia but advertise events like beauty pageants, celebrity appearances at malls, and job fairs. I also notice pictures of the Lady of Peñafrancia that display the names or logos of corporations that I would normally not associate with a saint, such as those of tobacco and beer companies. Beyond the church grounds, the secular and sacred seem to share a strange coexistence.

The Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia takes place every third week of September in Naga City, and hundreds of people, rain or shine, flock to the numerous masses, rites, and novenas in order to pay homage to the Virgin Mary. Because of the large volume of people, many rites take place outside, and the faithful often compete to get as close as possible to the image of “Ina.” While standing in a crowd waiting for the image to pass by, there were many instances where I was physically pushed around, leaned upon, and squashed in huge

crowds of people trying to make their way to the traveling image. The *voyadores*, the men charged with taking the image from place to place and protecting it, are notoriously rowdy and sometimes drunk, and they will do almost anything to have the honor of being near the image. This is how devotion is showed to Ina; the pushing around, the rowdy behavior, and the fervent cries of “Viva la Virgen!” (“Long live the Virgin!”) demonstrate the intensity of the Bicolanos’ faith. The people yearn to get close and touch the image, because they believe that it possesses miraculous powers.

Along with the solemnity of the nine-day religious feast, many city-sponsored activities take place, such as beauty pageants, a beer plaza (which is notorious for people getting drunk during the event), and dance shows. Religious activities predominate during the feast, and rightly so, but civic activities provide entertainment and city revenue. While civic events are seen as good for the economy, the Catholic Church disapproves of them, because many believe that they distract the faithful from attending mass or engaging in prayer. Through various forms of print media, the Archbishop of Caceres in Naga City and other church officials have warned that the devotion must be preserved and protected from becoming too commercial and de-Christianized.

The relationship between the Catholic Church and the local government is complicated. The Philippines borrowed the concept of separation of church and state from the United States, but because the Philippines is predominantly Roman Catholic, the two countries have moved in very different directions. Despite the “Separation of Church and State” clause in the Philippine Constitution, Catholic rituals are routinely held in government offices, politicians seek blessings from religious leaders, and prayers are



Figure 4.1. The backside of a pocket calendar featuring the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia with the logo of a tobacco company.

commonly said at schools and government functions.¹⁸⁶ Conservative church interests also tend to dominate state policy, such as in the hotly debated subject of women's sexual and reproductive rights. Former Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-2010), for example, adopted policies that restricted access to certain modern methods such as emergency contraception.¹⁸⁷ Religious leaders routinely have gotten involved in politics, the most famous being the late Cardinal Jaime Sin, who called people out to the streets to overthrow Presidents Ferdinand Marcos (1986) and Joseph Estrada (2001).¹⁸⁸

It is this interaction between the sacred and secular/commercial that characterizes the festival and its myriad transformations over time. The Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia occupies hybridized space in that it comprises both religious and commercial aspects in the ways in which it is organized and celebrated. Hybridity, a concept first discussed in Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, is "not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures, or the two scenes of the book, in a dialectical play of 'recognition'.... colonial specularly, doubly inscribed, does not produce a mirror where the self apprehends itself; it is always the split screen of the self and its doubling, the hybrid."¹⁸⁹ For Bhabha, hybridity is not synonymous with syncretism, in which there exists a mixing of different elements; rather, it is a space in which different elements encounter and transform one another. In the feast, religiosity and commercialism exist together in an uncomfortable dynamic, which creates conflict between the Church and the local government, both of which have a stake

¹⁸⁶ Raul C. Pangalangan, "Transplanted Constitutionalism: The Philippine Debate on the Secular State and the Rule of Law," *Philippine Law Journal* 82 (3).

¹⁸⁷ Carolina S. Ruiz Austria, "The Church, the State and Women's Bodies in the Context of Religious Fundamentalism in the Philippines," *Reproductive Health Matters* 12 (24), Nov. 2004, 96-103.

¹⁸⁸ Joel Rocamora, "Reflections on Religion and Politics in the Philippines and Indonesia," In *Religion and Religiosity in the Philippines and Indonesia*, edited by Theodore Friend (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006) 63-70.

¹⁸⁹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 162.

in the celebration. While both are invested in doing what is best for the people under their care, their divergent interests do not always mesh well with one another.

My use of the concept of hybridity in describing the tensions between the Church and the local government deviates somewhat from Bhabba, in that it describes a literal negotiation between different parties, the demarcation of space, and individuals with modern, hybrid identities. Usually when we think of hybridity in Bhabba's terms we envision the conflicted self trying to make sense of and come to terms with different aspects of identity that result as a consequence of colonialism. But I believe that the hybridity concept is flexible enough to be applied to the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Instead of a conflicted person or community of people trying to make sense of identity that is theoretically framed in relation to postcolonialism, I examine how representation in the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is affected by the conflicts between the Church and the local government and how people perceive the festival as a combination of both.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the hybrid aspects of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia that originate from the relationship between Naga City's local government and the Roman Catholic Church, especially in planning the feast. I examine the social hierarchy that is in place, the conflicts of interest between the Church and local government, and the inclusion of the Voyadores Festival, which features a street dancing competition and is one of the only city-sponsored events that the Church approves of taking place during the feast's nine days of solemnity. I discuss the festival's street dancing performances as works of art, analyzing components of street dance performances that appeal to the Church and contribute to the view that the religiosity of the feast should be preserved. While dance is usually emphasized, music plays a vital role in these

performances as a vehicle of expression but also as a driving force. I also describe the local government's interest in street dancing performances as tourist attractions that entertain the tourists who help boost the local economy. I argue that as long as the differing viewpoints on the role of the Voyadores Festival within the feast continue to cause conflicts between the Church and the local government, change and reinvention is necessary for the two institutions to cooperate and find a balance between religiosity and improving the community through tourism.

Naga City as Bicol's Center of Roman Catholicism

Christianity was first preached in the Bicol region in 1569 when the Augustinian friar Alonso Gimenez arrived with the party of Capitan Luis Enriquez de Guzman. They made their way to Sorsogon province, located at the tip of the peninsula of the Bicol region. A second group of Augustinians arrived in 1573 in Libon, Albay, and a third group arrived at Catanduanes Island in 1576. However, it was not until the Franciscan friars were permanently assigned to serve in Bicol that the Catholic missions began to progress. Friars Pablo de Jesus and Bartolome Ruiz established the first four parishes in Naga, Quipayo, Nabua, and Bula in 1578. On 27 April 1594, Philip II of Spain assigned the Franciscans to be the sole evangelizers of "Tierra de Camarines" so that conflicts would not arise due to overlapping jurisdictions, which was the case in Mexico, another Spanish colony. The Franciscans stayed in the region until the end of the Spanish colonial regime.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ See James J. O'Brien, *The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bicol People: A Textbook for the Use of the Ateneo de Naga* (Naga City, Philippines: Ateneo de Naga, 1968) and Domingo Abella, *The Bikol Annals, Vol I* (Manila, Philippines, 1954).

While most Bicolanos were receptive to Catholicism, the Franciscans did not succeed in converting everyone. The mountain peoples remained animistic and resisted changing their way of life well into the twentieth century while the lowlanders became Christianized and Hispanicized. The mountain people, whom the Spanish eventually called *monteses* (mountain people) or *cimarrones* (wild horses), were looked down upon by lowland Bicolanos. At the same time, a number of lowlanders who were against colonial rule fled to the mountains to escape the changes that the Spaniards brought to Bicol. These people were called *remontados*, or “those who returned to the mountains.”¹⁹¹ Thus, the mountains became known as a place of refuge as well as the place where the uncivilized lived.

The city of Naga was first founded as a township for Spanish nationals and was given the name *Nueva Caceres* in honor of an incumbent governor whose birthplace was Caceres, Spain. It later became the capital of the old province of Ambos Camarines and the seat of ecclesiastical authority.¹⁹² In 1919, an act of the Philippine Legislature changed the name of Nueva Caceres to Naga, the name of the original settlement before the coming of the Spanish.¹⁹³ As the heart of the Bicol region, Naga City remains a center of trade, education, government and culture. The city is also the center of Roman Catholicism in the region since it remains the ecclesiastical seat of the Archdiocese of Nueva Caceres.

¹⁹¹ James J. O'Brien, *The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bicol People: A Textbook for the Use of the Ateneo de Naga* (Naga City, Philippines: Ateneo de Naga, 1968).

¹⁹² Naga City is no longer a capital city. Pili became the capital municipality of Camarines Sur by virtue of the Republic Act No. 1336 enacted on June 16, 1955.

¹⁹³ O'Brien, 110.

The Separation of Church and State in the Philippines

In contemporary usage, Church refers to both the individuals who profess the Roman Catholic faith and the institutional entity, which includes the pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, nuns, and lay faithful. Most often, it refers to the teaching authority, the bishops who make up the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). As the official organization of church governance for the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, the CBCP helps project a united front by expressing positions on political, social, and cultural issues through church sermons, pastoral letters, and blogs maintained by current bishops called “Bishops on the Blog” on the CBCP website.¹⁹⁴ The organization is looked to as a moral compass for the 82.9% of the Filipino population who profess the Roman Catholic faith.¹⁹⁵ After the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) addressed the Roman Catholic Church’s readiness to acknowledge the circumstances of the modern world and become more involved in modern social life, the CBCP followed its example with the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) to renew the Church’s mission and integration into Philippine society according to Vatican II. The PCP-II discusses the relationship between the Church and State under the title “The Church and the Political Community” (nos. 330-347).¹⁹⁶ It states that the Church should judiciously analyze the government’s actions without subverting its power: “The Church’s competence in passing moral judgment even in matters political has been traditionally interpreted as pertaining to the clergy. Negatively put, the clergy can teach moral doctrines covering politics but cannot

¹⁹⁴ *CBCP Online: Official Website of the CBCP* <www.cbconline.org>.

¹⁹⁵ Data taken from “A View of the Philippines,” National Statistical Coordination Board <<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/view/people.asp>>. Accessed 7 May 2012.

¹⁹⁶ Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila: Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, 1991), 113-119.

actively involve themselves in partisan politics” (PCP-II 340).¹⁹⁷ It further states that, “the requirements of the Gospel in regard to human dignity, justice, charity, the common good, cannot be sacrificed on the flimsy pretext that ‘the Church does not engage in politics.’ Concretely this means both clergy and laity must be involved in the area of politics when moral and Gospel values are at stake” (PCP-II 344).¹⁹⁸

The controversy regarding the Church’s role in political matters lies in the Separation of Church and State clause in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. It declares that, “The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable” (Article II, Section 6), and that “No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights” (Article III, Section 5).¹⁹⁹ According to theologian, priest, and social activist Luis G. Hechanova, the separation of Church and State should be interpreted as a division of labor: the Church takes care of spiritual, moral, and religious affairs while the government is in charge of secular, “material” matters.²⁰⁰ The Church cannot interfere with how the government is run, but it believes it has the right to act as the moral conscience of the people by speaking out against issues or politicians it deems immoral and by influencing state policy.

The declaration of Martial Law in 1972 under the oppressive rule of President Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1985) heralded a period in which the Church became more

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 116.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 117-118.

¹⁹⁹ Igmidio Cuevas Lat, *Notes and Cases on Constitutional Law* (Quezon City, Philippines: Central Book Supply, Inc., 2005) 66, 70.

²⁰⁰ Luis G. Hechanova, “Role of Church People in Politics.” In *Church, Politics, and Transformation: Essays by Fr. Luis G. Hechanova*, edited by Juan V. Sarmiento, Jr. (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2002).

conscious of its role in Philippine society.²⁰¹ It not only took on pastoral responsibilities but also fulfilled its ambition of becoming a “Church of the Poor,” a local version of the Vatican II ecclesiological project of encouraging lay participation in politics and the church, especially by the poor. While the Church did not escape attack during the period of Martial Law, religious personnel had more room to maneuver than did the lay people serving the Church. The Church invested resources towards socio-economic development projects to help the poor, and some clergy, such as those affiliated with the Mindanao Catholic Church, worked closely with marginalized sectors of the community, defending the oppressed and those who were unjustly deprived of human rights.²⁰² Church leaders began to realize that political issues could intersect with their sphere of the spiritual and moral. Thus, the Church adopted a policy of “critical collaboration” with the Marcos regime, in which church leaders like Cardinal Jaime Sin did not flatly condemn the Marcos dictatorship but reserved the right to be critical of and vocal about certain abuses of human rights and political persecution. The Church’s eventual role in the February 1986 overthrow of Marcos in the People Power Revolution, or EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue) as it is most commonly referred to in the Philippines, in order to pave the way for the democratic presidency of Corazon Aquino (1986-1992), revealed the power of Church leaders who believed that they

²⁰¹ When President Marcos placed the Philippines under Martial Law, civil rights were suspended and the entire country was under military authority. Marcos defended the declaration by stressing the need to pacify violence allegedly caused by communists. While initially well received by some segments of the population as a way of solving massive corruption in the country, martial law became unpopular when the military was found to have abused its power.

²⁰² Mindanao is the second largest and southernmost main island in the Philippine archipelago (the other two main islands are Luzon and the Visayas). The Mindanao Catholic Church was the first to set up a coordinated program for marginalized sectors. While this diocese became very involved with the community, not all dioceses in the Philippines were as involved. Each diocese was left to decide how to be involved with their community, if at all. See Karl M. Gaspar, “The Mindanao Catholic Church’s Involvement in Contemporary Social Issues,” in *Civil Society Making Civil Society*, edited by Miriam Coronel Ferrer (Quezon City, Philippines: Third World Studies Center, 1997).

were acting as a moral compass for the people to engage in political actions. In 2001, the Church invoked the spirit of People Power again in what is known as EDSA II, or the Second People Power Revolution, when it issued the call for the ouster of President Joseph Estrada, who the Church deemed an immoral and corrupt leader of the country, from office. Estrada was accused of receiving millions of pesos from illegal gambling operations and government financial transactions, and when it was determined that a crucial piece of evidence would not be used in his impeachment trial, the opposition took to the streets, calling for Estrada's resignation.²⁰³ Thus, the Church has always concerned itself with ensuring the integrity of political institutions and the morality of the politicians who govern the people, encouraging the perception that it represents the will of the people even if it goes against state agenda. In the case of EDSA II, it is debatable which class of people formed the opposition, but it is clear that the Church held great political influence in the change of government.

While the Church acts as a "morality checker" for the government, there are limits to what is considered proper and justifiable involvement in matters that affect the political sphere. Church leaders, for example, cannot run for public office without the Church's permission, nor can they publicly endorse or campaign for certain candidates. They also cannot officially comment on political issues if there is no bearing on morality. As citizens, they are allowed to take personal stances regarding political issues, but they cannot say that their viewpoint officially represents that of the entire Church.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Greg Hutchinson and Ellen Tordesillas, *Hot Money, Warm Bodies: the Downfall of President Joseph Estrada* (Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, 2001).

²⁰⁴ Hechanova, 2002.

Even with these limits in place, some may argue that there really is not a separation of Church and State in the Philippines. During election time, for example, controversy erupts when priests attempt to influence politicians and state policy, and when they advise people not to vote for politicians whose views are not in line with those of the Church.²⁰⁵ The Philippine Constitution, however, specifies only two points regarding the relationship between the state and religion: 1) the prohibition of an official state religion or a religion favored by the state, and 2) the guarantee of protection of the free exercise of religion. There is no mention of a “wall” separating religion and government in which religious views cannot be considered in the crafting of laws and public policy, that it be kept out of public debate, or that public officials must abandon religious beliefs in the performance of their duties. Still, it is difficult not to recognize the Church’s powerful influence on Philippine society, causing many people to believe that religious beliefs should be kept out of the political sphere.

But when a local government unit must team up with the Church to hold a large religious feast in which thousands of people are expected to attend, a hybrid space is created in which religious and commercial interests must coexist. In order to understand the dichotomies that affect the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, I must first address the significance of the feast to Bicol and the local government of Naga City and describe the events and controversies surrounding the celebration.

²⁰⁵ Agence France-Presse, “Church leaders wield power in Philippine elections,” ABS-CBNnews.com, 5 May 2010 <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/05/05/10/church-leaders-wield-power-philippine-elections>>. Accessed 5 May 2012.

The Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia

The popular and intense devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia in the Philippines dates back to 1710 and is said to have started with a seminarian from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila named Miguel Robles de Covarrubias, who experienced and received many blessings and miracles from the Lady of Peñafrancia.²⁰⁶ When he became a priest, Covarrubias was assigned to Nueva Caceres, and because of his devotion and gratitude towards the Lady of Peñafrancia, he built a chapel for her. It was built near the bank of the Bicol River in order to make it more accessible to the *cimarrones*, an indigenous tribe from Mount Isarog, who requested that a chapel be erected to meet their spiritual needs. A stone church was later built. Covarrubias also commissioned the sculpting of an image of the Lady of Peñafrancia believed to possess miraculous powers. The first miracle attributed to the image involved a slaughtered dog whose blood was used to paint the image. The dead dog was thrown into the Bicol River but stirred to life and began to swim away.²⁰⁷

Covarrubias promoted and popularized the devotion, becoming personally involved with celebrations for the annual feast day that takes place during the third Sunday of September. It endured and spread throughout the Bicol region. On 10 June 1895, Pope Leo XIII declared the Lady of Peñafrancia as “Patroness of Nueva Caceres” and then on 20 September 1924 was declared “Queen of Bicol” by the Edict of Pope Benedict XV.

In its present state, the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is a novena, a devotion consisting of nine days of prayer. During these nine days, several religious activities take

²⁰⁶ Francisco Gainza, *The Lady of Pena de Francia* [1866], translated by Jose V. Barrameda, Jr. (Naga City, Philippines: Synergetic Communication Systems and AMS Press & Paper Company, 1981).

²⁰⁷ Vitaliano R. Gorospe and R. Javellana, *Virgin of Peñafrancia: Mother of Bicol* (Manila: Bookmark, 1995).

place, such as novenary masses and processions involving the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia as well as that of the Divino Rostro.²⁰⁸ There are three religious centers or zones that are significant to the celebration of the feast: (1) the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, (2) the Peñafrancia Shrine, and (3) the Our Lady of Peñafrancia Basilica Minore. Out of the three, the Naga Cathedral plays a more prominent role. It is the main venue in which official daily novenary masses presided by the bishops of each Bicol province takes place. During the feast, these areas are off limits to vendors and motorists in order to create a prayerful environment.

In order to understand the events that take place during the feast, I talked with Mrs. Amelita Zaens, the chairperson of the Developmental Institute for Bicolano Artists (DIBA) and the director of the Jumels Learning Center, an elementary school that incorporates the visual and performing arts into the students' curriculum. While talking to Mrs. Zaens, a chance meeting with Fr. Mario Gaité, also a member of DIBA, occurred when he walked into her office to discuss plans for a performance event that DIBA was organizing. DIBA is a foundation that creates cultural awareness in the city by helping artists find ways of showcasing their work and organizing arts events throughout the city. One event that DIBA has helped organize since its inception is the Voyadores Festival during the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

²⁰⁸ The Divino Rostro is a painting that depicts Saint Veronica holding a white veil on which is imprinted Christ's face. According to legend, Saint Veronica encountered Jesus carrying the cross on his way to Calvary. When she wiped the blood and sweat off of his face with her veil, an imprint of his face appeared on the cloth. The devotion to the Divino Rostro began in Spain when it was deemed miraculous after it was said that the image perspired droplets of blood. When cholera struck Spain in 1834, 1853, and 1855, people turned to the Divino Rostro for protection. When cholera struck Manila in 1882 and eventually Bicol, it was suggested that an image of the Divino Rostro be placed alongside the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia in the Naga Cathedral and that prayers to both Christ and the Virgin be made. Afterwards, these two images were inseparable (Gorospe 1995).

The festivities begin with the *traslacion* procession during which the images of the Lady of Peñafrancia and the Divino Rostro are brought by *voyadores* from the Peñafrancia Shrine through the main streets of the city to the Naga Cathedral. The *voyadores* are male devotees who are charged with safely transporting the images from one place to another. The images are mounted on *andas*, specialized carriers that transport both the images and priests. Devotees crowd around the *andas* and throw handkerchiefs and articles of clothing up to the priest riding atop each one so that he can touch the image with them and then



Figure 4.2. During the *traslacion*, a priest and the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia ride atop an *anda*, a specialized carrier that will transport them from the Peñafrancia Shrine to the Naga Cathedral. Photograph taken by the author.



Figure 4.3. The Fluvial Procession. Photograph taken by the author.

throw the items back to its owners (Figure 4.2). The traslacion, which usually lasts for hours, is participated in by thousands of devotees from all over Bicol and other parts of the country.

The fluvial procession is the most famous event of the feast. After the last mass is celebrated on the ninth day, the voyadores transport the image from the Naga Cathedral to the banks of the Bicol River, where it is placed on the barge that will carry it, accompanied by bishops and priests representing each of the Bicol dioceses, down the river to the Basilica Minore. The barge has no motor; it has to be pulled by numerous river boats paddled by the voyadores as well as men using bamboo poles to guide the barge away from the river banks and obstacles along the way. Multitudes of people gather, waving their white handkerchiefs in the air as they watch the image travel down the river. Shouts of

“Viva la Virgen!” (“Long Live the Virgin!”) and the hymn “Resuene Vibrante,” written by a priest named Maximo Huguera in 1924, can be heard. Some people, mostly voyadores who are not paddling boats, may even choose to jump into the river in order to be as close as possible to the barge carrying the image.

The inclusion of the fluvial procession in the celebration may be traced back to a time when the chief means of transportation was by boat. The absence of roads made the rivers that are spread out across Luzon supremely important in the people’s daily economic and social wellbeing. In addition to travel, rivers were a source of food and water. It served as a bathing place, natural sewage, and the dwelling place of good and evil spirits.²⁰⁹ Rivers were so important that the location of important landmarks, missionaries and villages were described in relation to the waterways.

Missionaries thus traveled by boat, bringing religious articles such as the crucifix and a statue of a saint as they made their way to villages to Christianize the people. Since the rivers were still wild (no man-made barriers were in place to control strong currents) when the Spanish conquistadors arrived, they could be difficult to maneuver. If a boat capsized, those on board usually abandoned their belongings in order to save themselves. The religious articles that were on board missionary boats that capsized may have been carried by the current or washed ashore, and many of the people who found the items considered the event to be the origins of a town’s devotion to a saint. When missionaries successfully converted villages to Christianity, they taught them pious practices, such as the procession of patron saints. Because of the absence of roads, it was more convenient to

²⁰⁹ Pedro Chirino, *Relacion De Las Islas Filipinas: The Philippines in 1600*, translated by Ramon Echevarria, (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1969).

have the processions on the river. The fluvial parade thus became a common practice and a continued tradition even after roads had been constructed.²¹⁰

During the fluvial procession, enthusiasm (some may even say rowdiness) is how the faithful show their devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia. As a participant in the feast in 2009, I could see how the processions can easily become dangerous. Whereas the *traslacion* is much more orderly, with devotees slowly walking behind the image, pandemonium breaks loose during the fluvial procession. Everyone wants to be able to touch the cloak of the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia, and they will push, shove, and press upon people in order to get as close as possible. As a part of the crowd, I was drenched in sweat, not only because of the humidity, but also because I was shoved into people as others were trying to make their way closer to the image. I saw people trying to snatch flowers off of altars and the barge because they believed that they had healing powers. People also tried climbing on altars and other structures in order to get closer, or at least, to get a better view, and in one instance, a *voyador* punched a priest when he was pushed off of the altar containing the image. While the devotees' enthusiasm is touching, its ability to spiral out of control as well as being shoved whichever way the crowd moves, makes it difficult for a person to enjoy the experience of being among the devotees and watching the fluvial procession.

²¹⁰ Rosario Unson Lazaro, "The Religious Fluvial Festivals of Central Luzon: Historical Background and Liturgical Significance," [Microform] MA Thesis: University of Santo Tomas, 1974.



Figure 4.4. The fluvial procession's destination: the Our Lady of Peñafrancia Basilica Minore. Photograph taken by the author.

The nine days of prayer are the most significant and most solemn days of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, and they end on the third Sunday of September. However, civic events take place during the entire month of September, and many of these events take place during the nine days of prayers, which is frowned upon by the Church. In 2008, the traslacion of the Image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia and the Divino Rostro was marred by a stone-throwing incident. A brawl occurred, resulting in damage to the glass cover protecting the Divino Rostro. The Archbishop wrote the mayor, asking that civil authorities limit or prohibit the holding of street parties during the Peñafrancia celebration in order to

preserve the solemnity and the religious character of the festival.²¹¹ It was evident that cooperation and the assigning of roles was needed between the Church and the local government in order to keep the sacred objects safe and to control and preserve the well being of the crowds.

The Roles of the Church and Local Government in the Feast

Relating back to the concept of separation of Church and State as a division of labor, Leonardo Z. Legaspi, the Archbishop of Caceres, states that he and the clergy are primarily responsible for caring for the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia and the devotion to her, since they have received the gift of becoming the seat of the devotion. He establishes the central role of the Catholic Church:

The Peñafrancia Fiesta is a celebration of the Church, particularly, the local Church of Caceres. The devotion pre-existed the local government and the Republic of the Philippines. History shows that it does not owe its existence to civil authorities or to the State. The local government cannot but acknowledge the devotion. The Church takes the lead, and the local government in the exercise of its duty, supports the activities of the Peñafrancia Fiesta.²¹²

²¹¹ "Peñafrancia fest in Bicol off to rocky start," *GMA News Online*, 15 September 2008 <<http://www8.gmanews.tv/story/120485/regions/pentildeafrancia-fest-in-bicol-off-to-rocky-start-report>>. Accessed on 24 June 2010.

²¹² Leonardo Z. Legaspi, "Top 30 Questions: Caring for our 300 Year-Old Devotion," Pamphlet compiled by Fr. William Tria (Naga City, Philippines: Ateneo de Naga University, 2008), 65.

The archbishop makes it clear that a social hierarchy exists in the oversight of the feast. The local government cannot contradict the Church nor can it have any influence over how the feast should be celebrated because it is not its jurisdiction. Instead, the archbishop argues that the local government's role is to ensure peace and order and to provide for the needs of the devotees. Promoting the devotion is more important than making a profit.

While the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia as a religious feast is not universal in the Catholic Church (Catholics in the United States or in Latin America, for example, do not celebrate this particular feast, although there may be similar celebrations honoring the Virgin Mary, particularly in Latin America), the Church in Naga City believes that it is their right to assume power and dominance over how the feast should be run.²¹³ It establishes a social hierarchy based on authority given to them by the people who celebrate the feast.

Sociologist Max Weber, who tends to interchangeably use the terms power, authority, domination, and legitimation in his work *Economy and Society*, writes that power is "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests."²¹⁴ It relates to the ability to command resources in a particular domain. The Church's power, for example, rests in matters considered to lie in the religious domain. Weber defines domination as the exercise of authority or:

²¹³ While the majority of Catholics in the United States do not celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, many Bicolano organizations throughout the U.S. put on their own celebrations. More on this in Chapter 5.

²¹⁴ Max Weber, *Economy And Society: an Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968) 53.

... the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons...Domination (“authority”) in this sense may be based on the most diverse motives of compliance: all the way from simple habituation to the most purely rational calculation of advantage. Hence every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance, that is, an *interest* (based on ulterior motives or genuine acceptance) in obedience.²¹⁵

Thus, authority is power accepted as legitimate by those subjected to it, and the possession of power in a particular domain results in dominance.

Weber distinguishes three pure types of authority: charismatic authority, traditional authority, and legal authority.²¹⁶ Charismatic authority rests on the character of a leader. His or her ability to inspire, charm, coerce or lead causes people to believe that he or she has power. It is very difficult for a leader to maintain authority because followers must continue to believe that his or her power is legitimate. Once the leader loses charisma or dies, systems based on charismatic authority tend to transform into traditional or legal systems.²¹⁷

Traditional authority comes from tradition or custom; it is based on the belief in the legitimacy of well-established forms of power. The leader or leadership group’s exercise of power is accepted by followers, or at least not challenged: “Authority will be called traditional if legitimacy is claimed for it and believed in by virtue of the sanctity of age-old rules and powers. The masters are designated according to traditional rules and are obeyed

²¹⁵ Ibid., 212.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 215.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 250.

because of their traditional status.”²¹⁸ Therefore, followers believe that the leadership’s authority is legitimate because tradition or custom dictates that it is inherent or natural for them to dominate. Unless it is challenged, the leader or group’s authority will continue.

Legal authority is based on a set of rules and the belief in the legitimacy of the process of rule creation and enforcement; it is “a continuous rule-bound conduct of official business.”²¹⁹ It remains independent of particular individuals because a person or institution can only exert power if they hold legal office. Authority thus lies in the office rather than the office holder: once a person or institution leaves office, they lose their authority. This form of authority utilizes a bureaucratic structure. Authority is given based on the leadership’s knowledge and experience instead of personality or custom, and it functions by means of obedience to the rules rather than individuals.²²⁰

While Weber classifies different pure types of authority, he also notes that they are not always separate in the real world: “The forms of domination occurring in historical reality constitute combinations, mixtures, adaptations, or modification of these ‘pure’ [or ideal] types.”²²¹ The Church, for example, establishes legitimacy through its age-old traditions, but it also relies on laws outlining its property and rights in regards to its members and in relation to other institutions, such as the State. In the case of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, the Church relies more on traditional authority to justify its control over how the celebration should take place. The people recognize the Church’s authority because it has traditionally been dominating the feast for hundreds of years.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 226.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 218.

²²⁰ Ibid., 218-219.

²²¹ Ibid., 954.

The local government of Naga City, in contrast, has legal authority over civic matters, such as law enforcement, the local economy, and infrastructure, and city government officials only have power for as long as they hold office. The local government cannot control religious matters or events because the Church considers them to be under its dominion. Thus, because the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is a religious feast, the Church believes that it has authority over it. As long as they do not interfere with the religious masses and activities that take place during the feast, the local government has legal authority to hold events, solicit corporate sponsors, and make use of city resources to entice tourists to spend time in the city.

The Church makes it known that it does not approve of certain city-sponsored events being held during the feast because they may distract devotees from prayer and may disrupt the religious activities taking place during the Peñafrancia celebration. Civic events include various beauty pageants such as the Miss Bikolandia Pageant, the Little Miss Bikolandia Pageant, Ginoong Bikolandia Pageant, and even a Miss Gay Bikolandia Pageant. There is also a Civic Parade, Military Parade, and beer plazas sponsored by alcohol vendors such as Ginebra and San Miguel Beer. While some of these events may be what some consider wholesome entertainment, there have been occasions when people at certain events would drink alcohol in the middle of the street, disrupting religious activities.²²²

The Church believes that civic events held during the nine days of prayer compete with those that are religious for the devotees' attention:

²²² Elmer Abad, "Church, city gov't join hands in preserving solemnity of Peñafrancia," *CBCP News Online* <<http://www.cbcnews.com/?q=node/4700>>. Accessed on 9 May 2012.

There's nothing wrong with the Miss Gay, but please don't do it during the Feast of the Peñafrancia because people come here primarily for the feast of Ina. Now if you offer distractions then maybe my purpose for coming was to visit Ina but I was distracted because there is a pull there between what is spiritual and what pleases the senses. There is greater attraction to what pleases the senses than to the spirit. That was pointed out by the Church. We have to make a stand on this because otherwise, look what happened to Mardi Gras in Brazil. That's supposed to be a religious feast. What is it now? It's an orgy.²²³

Fr. Gaité's statement both confirms the belief that civic events may distract devotees but also brings up concern over the future of the feast. The Church worries that the feast is becoming more and more secular and that eventually, it will become just an excuse to party.

The media in the Bicol region have documented the Church's concerns and its push and pull over authority with the local government. The *Inquirer Southern Luzon* noted that local priests criticized the local government for encouraging "creeping commercialization." It also quoted a response from the mayor of Naga City, Jesse Robredo: "The local church could focus more on formation of the devotees. Yes, we have civic activities but if the devotees are well-informed, their faith in the Virgin of Peñafrancia would not be affected despite the commercial activities."²²⁴ In other words, the Church should focus on strengthening the will of the devotee to participate in religious activities instead of being

²²³ Interview with Amelita Zaens and Fr. Mario Gaité, Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.

²²⁴ Jonas Cabiles Soltes, "Peñafrancia fiesta suffers hangover," *Inquirer Southern Luzon*, <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view/20080925-162760/Peafrancia-fiesta-suffers-hangover>>. Accessed on 15 February 2009.

distracted from the civic events being held. If his or her devotion is strong enough, civic activities should not cause harm.

For the local government, the Peñafrancia feast offers an opportunity to stimulate the local economy. Thousands of people visit Naga City to take part in the celebration, and businesses can take advantage of the large influx of potential customers through sponsorships, advertisements, promotions, and special events. Civic activities take place in venues lined with banners and streamers displaying the names of sponsors. Stores hold special sales meant to draw in customers. Events sponsored by businesses take place all over the city.

The challenge, therefore, is to reinvent the feast so that its traditions stay intact but also so that it accommodates the interests of the local government. While the Church establishes itself as the true authority over how the religious feast is run and expects that the local government will concede to its wishes, compromise between the two entities must be enforced in order for the feast to be successful: “It is not right to say that there are two separate activities during Peñafrancia Fiesta: the religious and the civic. The religious is essential, the civic is only supplementary. The two must form an integral whole.”²²⁵ Maria O. Ravanilla, the regional director of the Department of Tourism for Bicol, also states that even though the civic events are a significant boost to the economy, the Church must be respected: “I always respect the opinion of the Holy Church sector, like many of the local governors. I talked it out with Mayor Robredo, so I was telling him, ‘Okay, if that’s the decision of the diocese—the archdiocese—then maybe what we can do is to support it.’”²²⁶

²²⁵ Legaspi, 75.

²²⁶ Interview with Maria O. Ravanilla, Naga City, Philippines, 27 October 2009.

The local government, however, would not agree to eliminate civic events entirely. Both the religious and civic events comprise the feast, and the Church and local government must figure out how they can coexist without disrupting each other's objectives.

One city-sponsored event, the Voyadores Festival, is also Church sanctioned and has always been given permission to take place during the nine days of solemnity. In order to understand why the Church approves of the festival, it is important to describe its relevance to both the Church and the local government and how the music and dance performances it showcases reflect the religiosity, tourism, and commercialization with which the Church and local government must come to terms.

The Voyadores Festival

As the group from Tigaon, Camarines Sur makes their way down the street, young ladies in yellow dresses resembling a cross between a terno and baro't saya march, spin and sway from side to side as they wave their white handkerchiefs in the air.²²⁷ They depict the devotees of the Peñafrancia celebration. Their dance moves are smaller and daintier than the young men that follow behind, most likely because their long, slender skirts constrict some of their movements. The young men depict voyadores, using small oars in their crisp, powerful movements. Taking large steps forward, their right arms swing in synchronized fashion, the oars resting on their left shoulders. All of a sudden, they grab their oars with both hands and simulate rowing a boat while lifting their knees to the side, spinning around, and moving back

²²⁷ A *terno* is a long dress with butterfly sleeves. It evolved from the *baro't saya*, which is a blouse and skirt ensemble.

and forth. They once again rest the oars on their shoulders as they march forward, continuing on their way. Behind them is a float made to look like a boat carrying the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Several men moving poles up and down and side to side occupy it. The poles that they carry are similar to those used to guide the boat down the river during the fluvial procession. During the street dance, they are used to provide visual interest.

The marching band follows, its members dressed in costumes matching those of the dancers. Consisting mostly of teenagers, the musicians step in time to the music they play, but their upper torsos are rigid, as if they were a disciplined military band. While the musicians move rigidly, the music is the opposite: it “swings” as the brass and woodwinds play the chorus of “Resuene Vibrante,” among other melodies, with interesting rhythms that emphasize weak beats, and the drums complement what they play with various complicated rhythms. Even the dancers’ tsinelas (slippers), the footwear of choice for all of the competing contingents, add to the rhythms of the music. The dance steps performed cause the tsinelas to create a slapping sound that accent certain beats.

The group of dancers that follow behind the marching band use their bodies to create wave effects, as if recreating the flow of the river that the boat floats upon. The ladies huddle together holding hands and bend down, moving the top half of their bodies in a counterclockwise, circular manner. They then spread out into four straight lines, the front row lifting their handkerchiefs in the air while turning to the back and crouching down. The movement cascades down from row to row and returns to the front as each row gets up from their crouching position. As the ladies continue waving their handkerchiefs in the air, the men hold their oars with both hands and line up oar to oar in rows. Each row moves to opposite sides as a group and alternately raise and lower their oars. They then separate, each dancer

continuing to raise their oars over their heads and move them from side to side, at times spinning, at other times moving forward.

The Voyadores Festival, named after the male devotees who guard the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia, is a street dancing and music competition in which competing groups portray the journey that the image takes during the traslacion procession and the fluvial procession. It is one of the only events that takes place during the nine days of prayer that is both religious and civic in nature because it is jointly initiated by the local government of Naga City, the Archdiocese of Caceres, and the Developmental Institute of Bicolano Artists (DIBA) Foundation. The festival features street dance performances by representatives from the various provinces, such as Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Norte and other municipalities and cities within Camarines Sur.

According to Mrs. Zaens, the festival dates back to 1995, when the mayor at the time wanted to conceptualize an identity for Naga City. Festivals, with their emphasis on showcasing heritage and important values, were a good way to express identity:

There came a time in the Philippines that festivals became in vogue. That's to give identity. Actually, it was the mayor who approached us and asked us, "What identity can you give Naga" because they had been trying to imitate Sinulog, Cebu. Because when you say "Cebu," "Sinulog," you can immediately identify Cebu with Sinulog. So the question was: What can you identify [with] Naga? So the group conceptualized Voyadores. So that was the start of the Voyadores dancing, street dancing. And if you

will notice, every municipality, every town, every city has its own festival...It has evolved into that seeking for identity.²²⁸

The most famous festivals in the Philippines, such as the Ati-Atihan Festival and the Sinulog Festival, are heavily associated with the cities in which they originated (Kalibo, Aklan and Cebu City, Cebu, respectively), and they are a huge draw for people to visit and learn about what is important to the people who live there. Thus, the purpose of the Voyadores Festival was to express what Naga City was most known for: the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

With the feast's tercentenary celebration in 2010, a call for change was issued in order to preserve its religiosity. In the past, many civic events deemed unrelated to the devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia were criticized as diminishing the religiosity of the



Figure 4.5. Female dancers from Tigaon, Camarines Sur waving white handkerchiefs in the air. Still image from footage taken by the author.

²²⁸ Interview with Amelita Zaens. Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.



Figure 4.6. Male dancers from Tigaon, Camarines Sur portraying *voyadores* as they paddle their boats down the Bicol River. Still image from footage taken by the author.

feast. At meetings between the Church and the local government in 2009, the Archbishop, Rev. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, and the mayor of Naga City, Jesse M. Robredo, reached an agreement about how the feast should be celebrated. One of the significant points of agreement between the Church, the local government, and the business sector included the establishment of religious zones. Forming a triangle from the Naga Basilica to the Naga Metropolitan Church to the Peñafrancia Shrine, the religious zones would be closed off to traffic during the *traslacion* and the fluvial procession, and civic events would not be

allowed to take place in these zones so that devotees would not get distracted during the nine days of solemnity.²²⁹

The decision to establish religious zones turned Naga City into a hybrid space: physical spaces were marked as either public, in which civic events could take place, or religious, in which events associated with the devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia could take place. The archbishop and the mayor further reinforced the separation of commercial and religious interests by agreeing to ban street parties and beer plazas from the feast, as well as banning beauty pageants from taking place during the nine days of solemnity.²³⁰ Activities that were allowed to take place during the nine days included the Voyadores Festival and the Military Parade, a marching competition attended by many schools from all over Bicol. While there weren't any complaints about the Voyadores Festival, the inclusion of the Military Parade was controversial. The only reason why the Military Parade was allowed to take place within the nine days of solemnity is because the archbishop was informed that the people who travel to take part in the event also visit the image of Our

²²⁹ Juan Escandor, Jr., "Pilgrimage area for Peñafrancia fiesta set," *Inquirer.net*, 23 August 2009 <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view/20090823-221700/Pilgrimage-area-for-Peafracia-fiesta-set>>. Accessed 3 June 2012.

²³⁰ Roy Lagarde, "Church, Naga Government Ban Peñafrancia Street Parties," *Vox Bicol*, 25 June 2009 <<http://www.voxbicol.com/bikolnews/1177/church-naga-government-ban-pe%C3%B1afrancia-street-parties>>. Accessed on 25 May 2012.

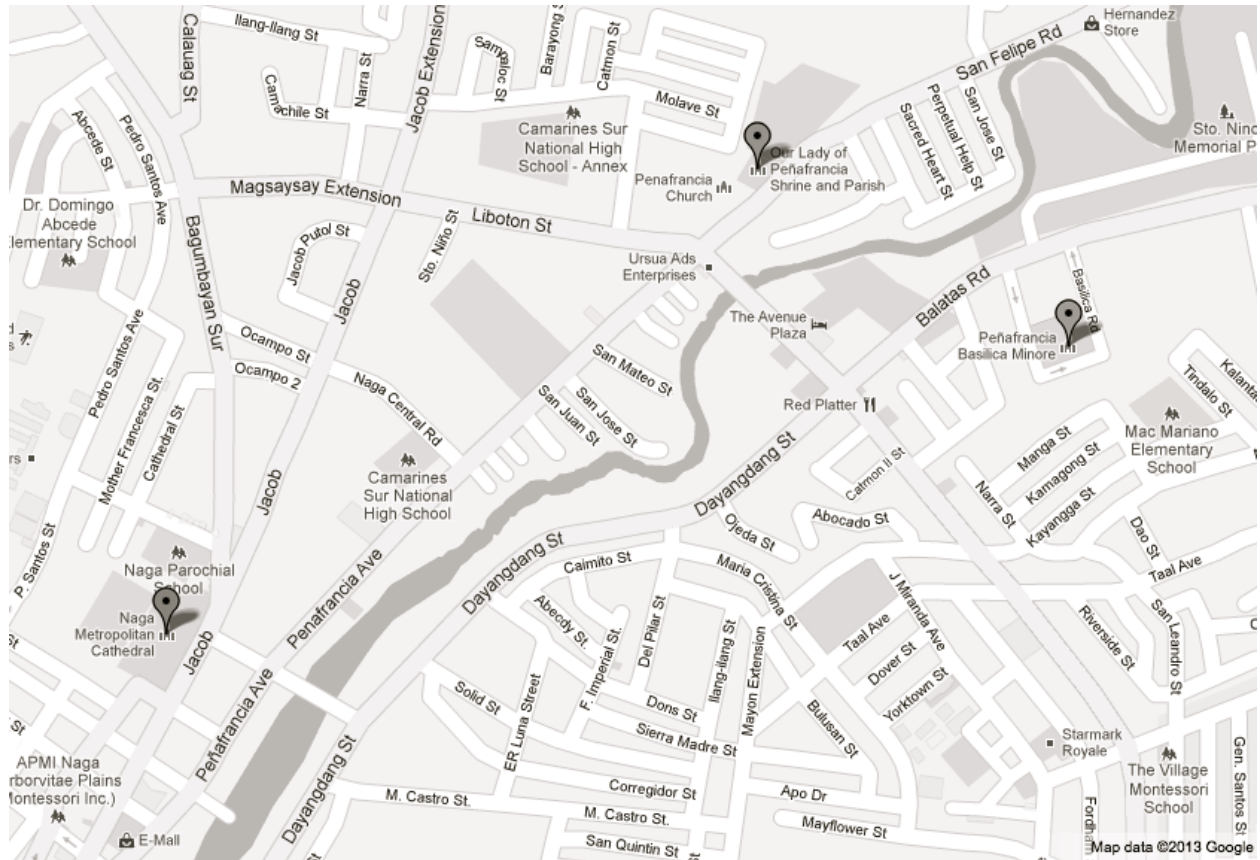


Figure 4.7. The Religious Zones of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. From left to right, markers indicate the locations of the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, Our Lady of Peñafrancia Shrine, and Our Lady of Peñafrancia Basilica Minore. Map data from Google Maps <maps.google.com>.

Lady of Peñafrancia.²³¹ But many argued that the Military Parade was not relevant to the Peñafrancia celebration and that the Philippines was not a military country.²³² The agreement to include the Military Parade in the feast caused nine Catholic schools, all

²³¹ Juan Escandor, Jr., "Pilgrimage area for Peñafrancia fiesta set," *Inquirer.net*, 23 August 2009 <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view/20090823-221700/Pilgrimage-area-for-Peaf Francia-fiesta-set>>. Accessed 25 May 2012.

²³² Some individuals who oppose the military parade taking place during the Peñafrancia feast believe that the parade emphasizes the power of the military, which they would like to avoid given the country's negative experience with military dictatorship during the Marcos regime. See Wilmer Joseph Tria, "On Military Parade during Peñafrancia Novena," *Vox Bikol*, 18 July 2009 <<http://www.voxbikol.com/bikolnews/1519/military-parade-during-pe%C3%B1afrancia-novena>>. Accessed 5 June 2012.

members of the Bicol Association of Catholic Schools (BACS) and past competitors in the Military Parade, to boycott the event, stating that it should instead be held during civic holidays, such as Philippine Independence Day.²³³

Furthermore, many religious groups felt that the city did not follow through with the agreement between the Church and the local government. In an open letter to the mayor of Naga City that appeared in the newspaper *Vox Bicol*, leaders of religious groups stated:

[We] are disappointed and dismayed when we saw the calendar of activities prepared by the city government of Naga published in its widely distributed Viva Naga, Viva Bicolandia pamphlet. Viva Naga, Viva Bicolandia Festival includes activities that have been banned within the Novena on moral grounds. In the joint statement, it is very clear that pageants and beer plazas should not be held within the period of the Novena.

With this, we express our objection to the Naga City government's approval of:

1. All forms of pageantries which may include among others: 16th Pretty Boy Bicolandia Pageant, September 12; 4th Munting Mutya ng Bicolandia Pageant, September 13; That's My Boy Bicolandia, That's My Boy Naga City Pageant, September 14; Miss Gay Young Bicolandia on September 16; Mr. Young Bicolandia Pageant, September 18

²³³ Roy Lagarde, "Church, Naga Government Ban Peñafrancia Street Parties," *Vox Bicol*, 25 June 2009 <<http://www.voxbicol.com/bicolnews/1177/church-naga-government-ban-pe%C3%B1afrancia-street-parties>>. Accessed on 25 May 2012.

2. Public Intoxication which may include among others: Ginebra Videoke King, September 17-18; Ginebra Night on September 19

We demand that those involved in the conceptualization, approval and implementation of these activities be made accountable for having violated a bilateral agreement that states that "pageants, street parties and beer plazas are no longer features of Peñafrancia Fiesta."²³⁴

While the theme of the 2009 Peñafrancia celebration was "Renewing Our Faith through Ina [Mother]," it is evident that finding a balance between religiosity and the interests of the local government still remained a struggle. There is no doubt that tourism is good for the economy of Bicol: in 2010 it contributed 1.5 billion pesos in gross receipts and 3,026,732 jobs for Bicolanos in various tourism-related fields in hotels, restaurants, resorts, transportation, handicrafts, and entertainment.²³⁵ But the concept of "renewal" and "reinvention" was particularly meaningful for people preparing for the tercentenary celebration of the Peñafrancia feast, and many felt that change was needed in order to reduce commercialism and help devotees concentrate more on their faith and devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia.

Unlike other civic events, the Church does not have a conflict with the Voyadores Festival, because street dance performances depict the Peñafrancia feast and how the voyadores and other devotees should behave. The voyadores are portrayed as fervent in their duties to protect the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia, but they are never rowdy. In

²³⁴ "Open Letter from the Council of the Laity," *Vox Bikol*, 13 September 2009

<<http://www.voxbikol.com/bikolnews/1746/open-letter-council-laity>>. Accessed 15 May 2012.

²³⁵ Danny O. Calleja, "DOT says Bicol tourist arrivals up 41% in 2010," *balita.ph*, 15 February 2011

<<http://balita.ph/2011/02/15/dot-says-bicol-tourist-arrivals-up-41-in-2010/>>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

addition, each street dance performance is considered a work of art. According to Father Mario Gaité, a priest I interviewed about the feast and the Voyadores Festival:

So these actions of the voyadores, they are presented in the street as a form of art. So it is just like, for example, a painting of the Peñafrancia celebration is a form of art. Now if they do it by performers on the street then that is art being performed in the street. If they do it on a stage then it's on a stage. It still has relevance to the Peñafrancia devotion because it caters to the devotion, not for tourist attraction. If tourists come for it, then well and good, but that is not its main purpose.²³⁶

What is interesting about Fr. Gaité's statement is the idea that the Church regards a street dance performance as art rather than entertainment and a tourist attraction. His opinion articulates one point of view in a longstanding debate within Christianity over the morality of public shows and spectacles.

Some theologians and philosophers viewed religious spectacles as immoral because they were derived from pagan ritual rites. For instance, Tertullian (c. 160- c. 225 AD), a very early Christian writer who wrote the treatise *De Spectaculis*, states that the arts, such as theater and music, were consecrated to Roman deities: the theater was considered the temple of Venus while music belonged to "the Apollos and the Muses, the Minervas and Mercuries."²³⁷ Tertullian believed that these associations with "evil spirits" (his term for Roman deities) should be reason enough to turn away from shows and spectacles, but he

²³⁶ Interview with Mario Gaité, Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.

²³⁷ Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, translated by T.R. Glover (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 261.

also argued that they lead to spiritual disruption because man is subjected to strong excitements aroused from natural lapses that create passionate desire and ultimately lead man to sin.²³⁸ Saint Augustine employed arguments similar to those of Tertullian in his work *The City of God*, stating that in addition to their dedication to pagan gods, theatrical entertainments move people to immoral behavior.²³⁹

Because Catholic mass was said in Latin, clergymen began enacting scenes from the Bible for the edification of the congregation, who could not understand the language. When a papal edict prohibited clergymen from acting, the town became responsible for the productions. Soon, the dramatizations were staged outdoors during the spring and summer months, in part because of the good weather, but also because of the establishment of the feast of Corpus Christi. Conceived by Pope Urban IV in 1264, it was instituted by Clement V in 1311 and widely celebrated in Europe by 1350.²⁴⁰ The feast takes place on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, varying in date from May 21 to June 24, and celebrates the Eucharist and the doctrine of transubstantiation. Mystery plays, or mystery cycles, grew out of this festival. In order to clarify the meaning of Christ through drama, it was deemed essential to include many events preceding his birth, as well as those relating to his life, death, and resurrection. Thus, during Corpus Christi a wide range of events, from the creation to the destruction of the world, were portrayed. Mystery cycles generally took the form of a procession of pageant wagons which stopped at appropriate “stations,” such as a market

²³⁸ Ibid., 271.

²³⁹ Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, In *Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, edited by Bernard F. Dukore (New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974).

²⁴⁰ Oscar B. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy, *History of the Theatre* (Boston: Pearson Education Group, Inc., 2003).

cross or an open space, to perform episodes of the Bible story.²⁴¹ While Corpus Christi provided the impetus for presenting religious dramas, the plays were not only associated with the festival. They were also performed at other times, such as during Easter and the feast day of a city's patron saint.

In Naga City, the street dance competition as art includes performances that set examples of how people should behave when taking part in the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia: devotees should be enthusiastic in praising the Virgin of Peñafrancia, but never drunk or rowdy to the point of violence. Drunken voyadores have continually been a problem even though the Church has always discouraged them from drinking alcoholic beverages before joining processions.²⁴² This is never portrayed in street dance performances, which are not literal portrayals of events, but are meant to encourage spectators to celebrate in an appropriate manner.

Music and Dance of the Voyadores Festival

The Voyadores Festival is made up of two parts: the Street Dance and the Pilgrims' Dance. The Street Dance is a presentation of dance choreography moving down the length of Elias Angeles Street to the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral. Each group of dancers is accompanied by its own instrumentalists, which can be made up of drums and other percussion instruments, whistles, cymbals, gongs, xylophones, and brass/wind instruments. The Voyadores Festival is one of the few dance competitions that include

²⁴¹ Terry Hodgson, "Corpus Christi plays" and "Mystery plays/Mystery cycles," *The Drama Dictionary* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1988), 79, 234.

²⁴² Jonas Cabiles Soltes, "Drunken 'voyadores' still Peñafrancia headache," *Inquirer News*, 10 September 2011 <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/56657/drunken-%E2%80%98voyadores%E2%80%99-still-penafrancia-headache>>. Accessed 23 May 2012.

music played by live musicians as a part of the judging criteria. In the Street Dance, all of the groups' musicians perform their own renditions of the hymn "Resuene Vibrante," and the judges listen for different elements: the interesting beats and lively rhythms played by drums and percussion; the performance of the melodic line by brass, woodwinds, and/or xylophones; and the incorporation of shouts of "Viva la Virgen!" and/or "Viva!" by the dancers. Each group's interpretation of "Resuene Vibrante" is judged on how well it enhances the dancing.

In 1924, Fr. Maximo Huguera won a region-wide song-writing competition that highlighted that year's coronation of the Virgin of Peñafrancia as "Queen of Bicol."²⁴³ His winning composition, "Himno a la Virgen de Peñafrancia," has become the official hymn of devotees in praise and honor of their Ina as the queen of the Bicol region. Originally written in Spanish (and eventually translated into the Bicol and English languages), it is more commonly known by the first two words of its beginning lyrics, "*Resuene Vibrante.*"

The hymn has a verse-chorus structure in which the verses contrast greatly with the chorus in terms of mode and tempo. The chorus, which is sung by everyone gathered, is in duple meter and is majestic and march-like in the key of G Major. A soloist (usually a male tenor) sings each verse in triple meter and in a much slower tempo. Each verse is in the key of B minor, which gradually shifts back into G Major in order to transition smoothly into the chorus. The slower tempo and minor key allows the soloist to be more expressive in praising the Virgin of Peñafrancia, especially when he sings pitches in his higher range.

²⁴³ Gorospe 1995.

"Himno a la Virgen de Penafrancia"

Maximo Huguera

Re-sue-ne vi-bran-te el him-no de amor Que ento-na tu pue-blo con
5 gra-ta emo-cion Re - sue-ne vi-bran-te el him-no de amor Que ento-na tu pue-blo con
9 gra-ta emo-cion Pa-tro-na del Bi-col, gran Ma-dre de Dios, Se siem-pre la Rei-na de
13 nues-tra re-gion Pa-tro-na del Bi-col, gran Ma-dre de Dios,
16 Se siem-pre la Rei-na de nues-tra re-gion!

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. There are measure numbers 5, 9, 13, and 16 indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it in measures 10, 13, and 16.

Example 4.1. "Resuene Vibrante."

In the Voyadores Festival, the musicians in each competing group usually only perform the melody of the "Resuene Vibrante" chorus (verse melodies are never used) and repeat it over and over again as the dancers make their way down Elias Angeles Street for the street dancing competition. Each group performs their own renditions of the chorus in order to make their performance stand out from the rest; therefore, while each group is performing the same melody, the interpretation is never the same between groups. The musical interpretations presented at the festival are interesting because of the many creative ways that each group transforms a stately hymn into music fit for dancing. They

are reinventions of a religious hymn that parallel the hybridity of the performances they accompany, as well as the feast. On one hand, each group pays tribute to a church hymn that, in turn, praises the Virgin of Peñafrancia. On the other, they entertain the crowd with catchy beats and rhythms that enhance the dancers' choreography.

The musicians reinvent the chorus by: (1) playing interesting rhythms and beats, either underneath the chorus melody or during drum breaks; (2) incorporating rhythmic chanting by the dancers; (3) inserting melodic and rhythmic interludes between the performance of each chorus; and (4) using unique instrument combinations.

The most important aspects of the music being played during a street dancing performance are its beats and rhythms: "Since we allow them to create their own music, that's it: what would be the beat that would enhance their steps in the dancing."²⁴⁴ Almost all of the renditions heard during the street dancing competition in 2009 were syncopated in order to make the normally stately and majestic melody livelier. The musicians from Tigaon, for example, performed the chorus in 4/4 time using predominantly dotted quarter notes in order to make the melody swing (see Example 4.2). Musicians from the Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City performed a "jazzy" version of the chorus in duple meter, performing rhythms of "short-long-short" (eighth note, quarter note, eighth note) (see Example 4.3). In addition, because beats and rhythms take precedence over melody, the drums are always featured during a performance. Drum breaks, in which no other instruments play besides the drums, can be found in all performances. They provide the musicians and dancers with the tempo, provide interesting rhythms, and signal which music and dance section will come next.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Amelita Zaens, Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.

Rhythmic chanting by the dancers is also important: "...the incorporated yells, 'Viva la Virgen, viva!' [are] essential. That's a requirement there. Movements should be interspersed with 'Viva!'"²⁴⁵ The lyre band from Magarao Central School, for example, played a straightforward rendition of the "Resuene Vibrante" chorus, that is, there were no syncopated rhythms that differed from those in the original, but what made it interesting was the dancers' rhythmic chanting involving eighth notes accented on certain syllables (see Exmample 4.5). They also chanted "Voyadores!" using a different set of rhythms as the "Resuene Vibrante" chorus was repeated.

The Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City (CBTG Sorsogon) included rhythmic chanting in both the chorus melody and interlude. During the chorus, the dancers repeatedly chanted "Voyadores!" in rhythmic patterns similar to the syncopated rhythms played by the band. They also chanted "Viva la Virgen, viva! Viva!" in rhythms that complemented those in the melody of the chorus (see Example 4.4). The majority of the chanting occurred in the interlude. Between each repetition of the chorus, the band would play and repeat three different sections that are not found in "Resuene Vibrante." The first is a syncopated melody made up of eighth notes and quarter notes in the key of C Major (see Exmample 4.6). It is repeated several times, and the dancers chant "Viva la Virgen, viva!" in complementing rhythms. The second section is a drum break; no other instruments are playing except for the drums and the dancers continuing to chant (see Example 4.7). The third section is a variation of the first section in which the melody, now in A minor, is played in a lower range (see Example 4.8). The dancers' chanting rhythms have changed as well, consisting mostly of eighth notes and triplets.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

Percussion

4/4

4

Perc.

7

Perc.

10

Perc.

14

Perc.

18

Perc.

22

Perc.

26

Perc.

Example 4.2. The “Resuene Vibrante” chorus as performed by musicians from Tigaon, Camarines Sur at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

5

3

1.

2.

Example 4.3. The “Resuene Vibrante” chorus as performed by the Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

Voice

2/4

Voy - a - dor - es, Voy - a - dor - es,

5

3

1.

2.

Voice

3

Vi - va la vir - gen, vi - va! Vi - va!

Example 4.4. Rhythmic chanting in the “Resuene Vibrante” chorus as performed by the Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

Voice

Vi - va Vir - gen de Pe - na - fran - cia!

9

1. 2.

Voice

Vi - va Vir - gen de Pe - na fran - cia! Vi - va Vir -

3

16

Voice

gen de Pe - na - fran - cia! Vi - va Vir - gen de Pe - na -

21

Voice

fran - cia!

3

Example 4.5. The “Resuene Vibrante” chorus as performed by Magarao Central School at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

Interludes, such as the one featured by CBTG Sorsogon, are a common feature in street dancing performances at the Voyadores Festival. Because every group is performing the “Resuene Vibrante” chorus, interludes provide opportunities to further distinguish one group’s music from another and allow for creativity. The interlude in the Mariners Polytechnic College’s performance also features the dancers’ rhythmic chanting as well as drum breaks, but differs from the jazzy melodies of CBTG Sorsogon’s interludes. The melody consists of a series of whole tone intervals: C moves to B flat, is repeated twice, and then rests on G (see Example 4.9). This melody, which is mostly made up of dotted half notes and quarter notes, allows the syncopated rhythmic chanting to take precedence. It also provides a tribal melody sound that is enhanced by the dancers’ shuffle steps as they guard the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia down the street. Although repetitive, the drum break rhythms included in the interlude add rhythmic complexity to the dancers’ chanting of “Viva la Virgen, Viva la Virgen, Viva la Virgen, Huh, Huh, Huh, Huh!” (see Example 4.10). It also signals the return of the “Resuene Vibrante” chorus.

Instrumentation among each competing group varies, and is most likely based on the availability of instruments and musicians who can play them. In one of the only references to the performance of music in the festival guidelines, loud instruments are favored: “Drums, percussions, whistles, cymbals, gongs, xylophones and/or brass/wind instruments (bugles, trumpets, trombones, and the like), producing best musical combination and impact of rhythm and musicality, are greatly encouraged. Electronic devices/instruments, however, are prohibited” [emphasis in the original].²⁴⁶ The most

²⁴⁶ 2009 Peñafrancia Voyadores Festival & Civic Parade Executive Committee, “2009 Peñafrancia Voyadores Festival” [Guidelines Document].

common instrumentation includes brass and wind instruments, as well as drums and percussion, because of their ability to create lively music that can be heard over large distances. Drums are numerous and the most featured because of their importance in the music. Many groups even paint their drums with striking colors to enhance their visibility.

In the 2009 Voyadores Festival, Magarao Central School was the only group that did not feature brass and wind instruments. Their musical accompaniment consisted of instruments commonly available to the elementary and high schools that can afford them: xylophones, bamboo slit drums, and snare and bass drums. While their rendition of the

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a voice part. Each staff is labeled 'Voice' and is in 2/4 time. The lyrics are 'Vi - va la vir - gen, vi - va!'. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff has a measure rest in the first measure, followed by notes for 'Vi - va la vir - gen, vi - va!'. The second staff has a measure rest in the first measure, followed by notes for 'Vi - va la vir - gen, vi - va!'. There is a small number '5' between the two staves.

Example 4.6. Section 1 of the interlude played between choruses by the Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

Voice

Vi - va la vir - gen, vi - va!

Example 4.7. Drum break. Section 2 of the interlude played between choruses by the Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

Voice

Vi - va la vir - gen, vi - va! Vi - va la vir - gen,

4

Voice

vi - va!

Example 4.8. Section 3 of the interlude played between choruses by the Community Base Theater Group of Sorsogon City at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

Voice

Sa - la - mat, sa - la - mat

6

Voice

sa sa-mong I - na, Sa - la - mat, sa - la - mat sa ma-nga bi - ya - ya

Example 4.9. The interlude played between choruses by the Mariners Polytechnic College at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. English translation of the text: *Thank you, thank you to our Ina (mother)/Thank you, thank you for all the blessings.* Transcription by the author.

Voice

Vi - va la vir - gen! Vi - va la vir - gen!

3

Voice

Vi - va la vir - gen! Huh, huh, huh, huh!

Example 4.10. The drum break in the interlude played between choruses by the Mariners Polytechnic College at the 2009 Voyadores Festival. Transcription by the author.

“Resuene Vibrante” chorus was straightforward (that is, syncopation was not a key element), the distinct timbres produced by these instruments allowed them to create music that sounded different from the other groups.

Thus, while the dancing takes precedence over the music performed, the music is very important in terms of distinguishing one street dancing performance from another. It provides the beat and tempo, as well as informs the dancers about what dance steps come next. It is one of the many components of a street dancing performance that makes it art: choreography, music, costumes, and props are combined in order to tell a story without words, educating and inspiring spectators while also paying tribute to the Lady of Peñafrancia. More importantly, the music reflects the hybridity of the street dancing performances and the feast, as well as the importance of reinvention in breathing new life into the music and choreography. Street dancing performances straddle the line between art and entertainment, as well as religiosity and commercialism.

Each group also designs its own choreography; however, they must incorporate elements of the Traslacion and/or the fluvial procession. Thus, dancers make use of paddles to enact the *voyadores* rowing boats to pull the barge carrying the image of Virgin of Peñafrancia. They wave handkerchiefs, just like the devotees as they watch the image travel down the Bicol River. They shout “Viva!” or “Viva la Virgen!” just like one hears many devotees shout throughout the nine days of prayer. Dancers, however, will never portray *voyadores* as drunk or rowdy like one may sometimes see at the feast. Good and moral behavior is always emphasized.

According to the festival guidelines, the street dance is “a lively presentation of street choreography, accompanied by the participating contingent’s created music of lively

beat provided by its own instrumentalists, using musical instruments...showcasing signature dances of each participating group, with touches of interpretation of the *Traslacion* and/or the *Fluvial Procession*. Each group is given **free reign in the rendition of the street dance**” [emphasis in the original].²⁴⁷ Thus street dance performances contain many art forms that require creativity: dance and music are at the fore, but creating costumes also requires some imagination, since visual appeal is so important.

The choreographer carries most of the responsibility of creating a street dance. According to Eladio Nagrampa, a top street dance choreographer from Iriga City, Philippines, choreographers are not only responsible for creating dance steps, but they also have to make sure that the dancers’ actions tell a story, even without words: “You know, when I do choreography, there should always be a concept. I make a storyline, I make a story board, everything I did I always depended on the story that I did.”²⁴⁸ Choreographers are always present during the many hours of rehearsal that take place before the festival, deciding what works and what does not. They also have to work with the musicians in order to create music that enhances and captures the mood of the different sections of the dance.²⁴⁹

The Pilgrims’ Dance takes place on the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral grounds, and each participating group dances as devotees of the Virgin of Peñafrancia: they portray praise, offering, and/or thanksgiving, and like the street dance portion, they include elements of the *Traslacion* and/or fluvial procession. Unlike the Street Dance, which

²⁴⁷ 2009 Peñafrancia Voyadores Festival & Civic Parade Executive Committee, “2009 Peñafrancia Voyadores Festival

²⁴⁸ Interview with Eladio Nagrampa. Iriga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

features moving choreography down the length of a road, the Pilgrims' Dance is more limited in performance space and has a strict time limit of five minutes. When each competing group performs, the musicians stand off to the side to provide the accompanying music (usually the same music they performed during the Street Dance). The dancers, with their colorful costumes and creative use of props, perform facing the gazebo in front of the cathedral, where the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia stays throughout every performance. During the Pilgrims' Dance, the dancers show off their best choreography: there are more complicated formations, quick transitions in order to spend more time on each set of choreography, and interesting uses of props to help portray the traslacion and fluvial procession. The Pilgrims' Dance is considered to be more religious than the street dance portion because each group performs in front of the image, as if they were offering their performance in honor of the saint.²⁵⁰ But they are also dancing in front of a panel of judges, who adjudicate each performance based on visual impact, precise movements, and coordination between the music and dance steps.

Both the Street Dance and Pilgrim's Dance are competitions for the participants. The judging criteria for the Street Dance and Pilgrims' Dance are as follows:

1. STREET DANCE (40% of TOTAL SCORE)
 - a. CHOREOGRAPHY 35%
(Creative dance interpretation; intricacy of movements and effective use of props; variations in formation)
 - b. MASTERY 30%
(Precision and synchronization of movements and the proper use of props that work well with the

²⁵⁰ Interview with Amelita Zaens, Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.

music.)

c. IMPACT OF MUSIC AND RHYTHM (Creativity and general effect and appeal to the public)	15%
d. COSTUME (Colorful effect and artistry of costumes)	10%
e. DANCE CONSISTENCY FROM START TO END (Consistency of street dance movements from assembly area until the dancers pass through the reviewing stand)	10%
HIGHEST POSSIBLE RAW SCORE (Total x 40% = Final Score for Street Dance)	100%
2. PILGRIMS' DANCE (60% OF TOTAL SCORE)	
a. CHOREOGRAPHY (Creative interpretation of praise, offering, and/or thanksgiving ritual; intricacy of movements and effective use of props; timing; variations in formation)	30%
b. MASTERY (Precision and synchronization of movements and proper use of props that work well with the music)	25%
c. ADHERENCE TO CONCEPT, COSTUME & OVERALL IMPACT (Faithful aesthetic interpretation of concept, appropriateness and artistry of costumes and in the use of props and general effect of ritual presentation)	25%
d. IMPACT OF MUSIC AND RHYTHM (Creativity and general effect and appeal to the public)	20%
HIGHEST POSSIBLE RAW SCORE (Total x 60% = Final Score for Pilgrims' Dance)	100%

The individuals invited to serve as judges at the Voyadores Festival are dance teachers from Manila who have experience judging festival dancing competitions. Individuals from Bicol are usually never asked to serve as judges so that there will not be any partiality to a particular competing group. Because the judges are dance instructors, they are more inclined to pay attention to the dancers than the music. In the judging criteria above, more weight is given to the choreography and the visual appeal of the performance: the ways in which movements are executed by the dancers, the complexity of their formations, and the effective use of props to beautify and add meaning to the dancing. The judges also look for the required depiction of elements from the Traslacion and/or fluvial procession.

Like the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in general, street dancing performances are examples of secular and religious hybridity accomplished through negotiation. First, they physically occupy hybrid space: the street dancing competition takes place on Elias Angeles Street, a public road, while the Pilgrims' Dance takes place on the Naga Cathedral grounds, a religious zone. Second, the performances themselves are hybrids of the required religious elements dictated by the judging criteria as well as the innovative choreography meant to thrill the judges and spectators. There must always be a negotiation between religious tradition and innovation and creativity in performance. In the street dancing competition, the dancers dressed in colorful costumes excite the crowds with complex formations and movements as they dance under streamers displaying the logos of corporate sponsors. But their choreography, as a reflection of the religious events that take place during the feast as well as the religious fervor of the devotees, must not deviate too far into the realm of the profane.

Moreover, individual and group intentions also reveal mixed motivations. While street dancing performances contain religious and artistic elements, the performers' motivations for competing are not solely based on the desire to express and depict devotion. Prize money is awarded to the groups that place first, second, and third, and there are awards for those deemed to be Best in Music and Best in Street Dancing, among others. The winner of the competition also receives the honor of representing Naga City and the Voyadores Festival at the Gayon Bicol Festival of Festivals Showdown, a street dancing competition at the regional level (more on this in Chapter 4). Therefore, the recognition and prestige that comes with winning the competition are important to the performing groups in a way that cannot be encompassed by religion.

The fact that the Pilgrims' Dance takes place on cathedral grounds brings up questions about how the Church might potentially benefit from the Voyadores Festival. The religious backdrop provided by the cathedral may dictate how the dancers and musicians conduct themselves during performances. In other words, because they are at a church, the competing groups are conscious of what may be considered offensive to the conservative views of religious individuals. Costumes, for example, are an important part of the visual presentation of competing groups. Costumes are expected to be colorful, enhance the movements of the dancers, and be pleasant to look at; however, they cannot be too revealing. Some groups consist of women wearing ternos and sometimes headdresses, and men wearing vests and pants. These costumes are seen as traditional and depict devotees from an era understood nostalgically as the remote past; they are not the modern day clothes that one sees being worn by today's devotees. Thus, the Church may have a sense of control over the performances when they take place on cathedral grounds, simply because

the religious aspects of the performances are so closely tied to the strictures of tradition. Costumes such as these are common in folkloric performances all over the Philippines, but they are completely secularized when onstage. The costumes of religious dancing are not just depictions of devotees; they become integral to devotion itself within the context of performance.

The Church may also benefit monetarily because the *Voyadores* Festival performances take place on cathedral grounds. The festival's popularity draws crowds of people, increasing the likelihood that they attend a mass or pray to the Virgin of Peñafrancia while they are at the cathedral. An increase in the amount of devotees at each mass may also mean an increase of money in the collection plate.

In addition to the hybridity located within the street dancing performances, the ways in which they are viewed affect their significance as a part of the feast. The Church justifies street dancing performances as art, but many people believe that the music and dance performances are really just entertainment for those who attend the *Voyadores* Festival. It has long been thought that entertainment has less value than art: while art has meaning and importance, entertainment is mindless and caters to the masses.

The debate between art and entertainment is based on distinctions made between high art and popular (low) art. High art is recognized as such by an elite group of people and is created for a serious purpose. Popular art appeals to a broader public and primarily functions as entertainment. According to Kaplan, familiar forms, easy comprehension, and an inclination towards simplicity and emotional indulgence characterize popular art.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ A. Kaplan, "The Aesthetics of the Popular Arts," In *Modern Culture and the Arts*, edited by J.B. Hall and B. Ulanov (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972).

Thus, it is regarded as lower in the implied hierarchy of the arts because it is made for unsophisticated consumers. Entertainment works, which belong in the category of popular art, are thought to be less valuable because its goals are pleasure and diversion. These goals are seen as negative because they may divert people from the more necessary affairs of life.²⁵²

While some may believe that the two form a dichotomy, I argue that art and entertainment are not on opposite sides, especially in the case of religious street dancing performances. It is possible for art to be entertaining and entertainment to have artistic merit. The groups involved in street dancing competitions rehearse for weeks and strive to create well-crafted performances that are executed with precision and impress audiences. All of the groups want to entertain the crowd and win the competition, but what makes the Voyadores Festival's street dancing competition different from other forms of entertainment that take place during the feast, such as beauty pageants and beer plazas, is that the performances have the ability to educate the community and celebrate the people's devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia. Street dancing performances, therefore, are hybrids of art and entertainment as well as the religious and commercial.

Religious Spectacle and Cultural Tourism

In 2010, President Benigno Aquino III issued Presidential Proclamation No. 33, which declared "the City of Naga and the province of Camarines Sur as pilgrimage capitals

²⁵² John A. Fisher, "High Art Versus Low Art," in *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., edited by B. Gaut and D. Lopes (London: Routledge Press, 2005).

of the Bicol region and recognized top tourist destinations of the Philippines.”²⁵³ It stated that the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia provides “an environment conducive to tourism, a venue for appreciation of Bicol arts and culture, its indigenous and culinary arts, natural wonders and archaeological treasures.”²⁵⁴ Thus, the feast is nationally recognized as a “cultural tourism” destination.

Jane Desmond defines cultural tourism as “leaving home (even if that just means going outside your own neighborhood) to encounter cultural practices different from whatever you conceive your own to be, done by (and this is the important link) people who are ‘different’ from you.”²⁵⁵ For many people who attend the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, the term “cultural tourism” is fitting: they venture out of their town or city and experience Naga City’s food, shops, and attractions, as well as the city-sponsored activities and religious fervor associated with the feast. The Voyadores Festival is, by Desmond’s definition, a cultural tourism attraction because the street dancing performers are expressing their devotion and portraying events of the feast in an artistic manner while spectators, who may not know a lot about the feast and how it is celebrated, watch them. As spectators, they learn about the feast as they enjoy in the revelry, stepping out of their everyday routines as they coexist in the same time and place as those who have celebrated the feast every year.

While the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia celebrated its tercentenary celebration in 2010, the Voyadores Festival only started in 1995 as an expression of identity for Naga

²⁵³ Benigno S. Aquino III, “Proclamation No. 33, s. 2010,” *Official Gazette*, edited at the Office of the President of the Philippines, 10 September 2010 <<http://www.gov.ph/2010/09/10/proclamation-no-33-2/>>. Accessed 4 May 2012.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999) xv.

City. Despite its short existence, the Voyadores Festival is valued because it showcases important elements of the feast, but it is also significant because it is connected to a celebration that has taken place in Naga City every September for over 300 years. The festival's association with the feast, as well as the approval of the Church as part of the nine days of solemnity, makes it an important invented tradition that fulfills the need to establish an identity for Naga City within the Bicol region and the Philippine nation.

The Voyadores Festival, however, does not solely conform to the concept of cultural tourism. The majority of people who attend are devotees of the Lady of Peñafrancia, and their community is not determined by geographical boundaries, but by devotion. Many members of the community of devotees, in fact, can be found worldwide (discussed further in Chapter 5), and when time and finances allow, often visit Naga City to attend the feast. For devotees, regardless of whether or not they are from Naga City, the Voyadores Festival reflects their experiences from the feast through performance (even though the performances omit negative aspects).

The city has found that the Voyadores Festival is profitable for the local economy. In the early years of the festival, the Developmental Institute for Bicolano Artists (DIBA) was in charge of recruiting corporate sponsors to help finance the event. But when they started partnering with the local government, DIBA received less money for the festival than when they were on their own. Amelita Zaens stated:

In fact, there was a time we were able to get 100,000 pesos from the [Department of Tourism]...the 100,000 pesos was intended for the Voyadores [Festival] but they [the local government] only gave us 30,000 pesos. See? Now they could see now it

could bring in money. And they centralized all solicitations. And of course a corporate sponsor would rather deal with the government than with private individuals.²⁵⁶

While the city generates revenue through corporate sponsorship that helps alleviate costs associated with putting on the festival and the feast, not all of the money intended for a specific event is handed over to its organizers. In addition, corporate sponsors require opportunities to advertise their products or business during the feast, usually through numerous *banderitas*, or little flags, and banners bearing the sponsors' names and logos strewn all over the city. During the *Voyadores* Festival, one cannot help but notice the *banderitas* flapping in the wind overhead as the dancers perform or the huge company logos on the sides of floats as they make their way down the street.

Thus, the threat of commercialism overtaking the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is at the core of the conflict between the Church and the local government, and it is the issue that calls for the *Voyadores* Festival to become a reinvented tradition. On one hand, corporate sponsorship eases the city's financial burden in accommodating the numerous visitors that make the journey to Naga City for the feast and stimulates the local economy. The events sponsored by corporations attract and entertain the visitors who, in turn, spend money on local food and other goods. On the other hand, people may start to only view the religious feast as a chance for fun rather than for prayer and thanksgiving, and the local government's reliance on corporate sponsors has made the organizers of the *Voyadores*

²⁵⁶ Interview with Amelita Zaens, Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.

Festival start to think of ways the festival can be reinvented so that it does not require the local government to be involved.²⁵⁷

Conclusion

The conflict of interests between the Church and local government reveals two important points about festivals that incorporate both religious and secular aspects, such as the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. The feast is an example of a cultural practice that is treated as a possession, an object that both the Church and local government feel belongs to them. The Church has dominated over the event for hundreds of years and its contemporary representatives feel that it should be in control over how the feast is organized so that devotees can concentrate on their faith. The local government believes that it should have power over the events of the feast, at least partially because they are responsible for the welfare of its citizens (through boosting the local economy) and the visitors who attend the feast (by entertaining them with local places to eat, sleep, shop, and sightsee around the city). Both institutions feel that they are doing good for the community, but the push and pull between them continues to remain a problem that requires constant negotiation.

Second, the conflict of interests exposes the hybridity of the feast and the need for it to become a reinvented tradition with every passing year. It is interesting to note that, for the Church, change is necessary to preserve the religious nature of the feast. Most reinvented traditions come about because the community needs them to fill a new purpose and/or better fit the changed needs of the people involved with them. While the local

²⁵⁷ Interview with Amelita Zaens and Mario Gaité. Naga City, Philippines, 22 September 2009.

government believes that the religious aspect of the feast is important, it is also important to cater to the tourists who spend money and stimulate the local economy. As Naga City and the province of Camarines Sur become more and more popular as tourist destinations, the tensions between religiosity and commercialism heighten also, since it is in the city's interest to take advantage of the boom in tourism. While there have been attempts to emphasize the religious aspect of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia over the commercial, finding the perfect balance between the two remains a constant struggle as well as a catalyst for creative performance and group expression.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Presidential Proclamation No. 33 states that the local government's role is to maintain peace and order, and to preserve the religiosity of the feast: "The government shall ensure that the conduct of the observances essential to the feast, which include but are not limited to the Traslacion, the Fluvial and Dawn Processions and other cultural and historical remembrance activities, shall be respected, and that commercial exploitation during the pilgrimage period such as street parties that may become rambunctious, drinking sprees in plazas, street vending that obstruct passages towards the pilgrimage sites, and other similar activities, shall be discouraged." See Benigno S. Aquino III, "Proclamation No. 33, s. 2010," *Official Gazette*, edited at the Office of the President of the Philippines, 10 September 2010 <<http://www.gov.ph/2010/09/10/proclamation-no-33-2/>>. Accessed 4 May 2012. The tensions between religiosity and commercialism, however, continue to exist within the feast.

Chapter 5

Negotiating Identity Through Memory: The Reinvention of a Bicol Festival Abroad

Wherever he is, the Bicolano will
always be in a place to celebrate Ina.
–Monsignor Romulo A. Vergara²⁵⁹

In the nine days leading up to the 2011 Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, the members of the Bicol Association of Michigan (BAM) celebrate in solidarity with the devotees in Naga City by praying the novena every night.²⁶⁰ I make the hour long drive to St. Rene Goupil Church in Sterling Heights, Michigan every afternoon to take part in their novena to the Lady of Peñafrancia. On the first night, I can feel the stares as I enter the room. The room is filled with about thirty people, all of whom are significantly older than me, perhaps in their forties, fifties, and sixties. They talk quietly with one another in the Bicol language while some of them rush around preparing the room. I quickly find a place to sit down and am greeted by a woman named Pilar, who remembered me from the 2010 Peñafrancia celebration in

²⁵⁹ Romulo A. Vergara, from his mass homily at the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, Camp Pendleton, California, 21 September 2013.

²⁶⁰ A novena is a devotion consisting of a series of prayers that is recited on nine consecutive days. The novena recited by BAM members was specifically prayed to the Virgin of Peñafrancia.

Rochester Hills. Fortunately, I had heard about the Peñafrancia novena in 2011, because, as it turns out, Pilar had sent me an email after I had given my contact information the previous year. I had hoped that I would receive information about upcoming events.

The night begins with a mass given by a priest also from Bicol. A tiny crucifix and candles stand before him on the makeshift altar, which is later replaced by the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia and the Divino Rostro. Mass is followed by saying the rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, novena to the Holy Face (Divino Rostro), and novena to Our Lady of Peñafrancia. The prayers are said rapidly and sound almost like chanting as the person leading alternates reciting half of each prayer with the rest of the group. They sing songs, such as “Immaculate Mary,” “Hail, Holy Queen,” “On This Day, O Beautiful Mother,” and “Resuene Vibrante.” These songs are very familiar to me; I recognize them from masses and novenas sung at the Naga Cathedral in the Philippines, as well as from my teenage years, when my family was involved with a Bicol association in San Diego, California. After singing, some of the women exclaim, “Viva la Virgen!” or “Viva el Divino Rostro!” People laugh because men usually do these exclamations, but none of the men in the room were doing the shouting.

When the third Saturday of September finally arrives, it is a brisk, cold morning in Rochester Hills, Michigan, and people start to trickle in to the Peñafrancia celebration at Thelma Spencer Park. A few laughs and conversations can be heard around the venue as people socialize with friends. Meanwhile, the person in charge of the microphones runs a few sound checks to make sure they are working. The event starts precisely on time, an anomaly in Filipino communities since people have a tendency to run on “Filipino time”— that is, to show up at events thirty minutes, an hour, or even two hours after the agreed upon starting time. The celebration begins with opening prayers led by Monsignor John Vargas, a priest who hails

from Bicol, as he stands in a gazebo-like structure that extends over a small lake. Immediately afterwards, a land and fluvial procession takes place. A processional crucifix and the image of the Divino Rostro lead the way as the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia is carried and accompanied by all in attendance. While saying the rosary, we make our way to the other side of the lake, where the voyadores are waiting in decorated rowboats to receive the Divino Rostro and Lady of Peñafrancia images. The voyadores, along with the priest, carry the images across the lake in their rowboats as we make our way back to the celebration site. As we approach, the choir, who had stayed behind, begins singing “Dios Te Salve,” the prayer “Hail Mary” in Spanish. My companion, an acquaintance of mine from Naga City, warmly reminisces, “This song...I’ve heard it every year since I was born. It’s a part of us.”

Festival songs not only become identifying “theme songs” associated with the event, they also live on in the memories of people who have attended and are able to evoke emotions even over great distances of time and place. In this third and final case study of the dissertation, I describe how the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is celebrated abroad to show what elements of the festival are retained and what are let go of when organized by the devotees, rather than the Church and the local government (as it is done in Naga City). By doing so, I believe that the festival is stripped down to the elements that Bicolanos far from home remember as the most essential, the ones deemed necessary to appropriately celebrate and pay homage to an image of the Virgin Mary that has come to represent “home.” As in Bicol, music plays a significant role in the celebration, but abroad it is especially effective as a reminder of the soundscape that participants would hear if they were at the feast in Naga City: many of the Marian hymns and songs performed during

masses are the same ones that are sung in Bicol. Thus, Bicolanos abroad remember an aspect of their lives that make them feel that they are in solidarity with each other, as well as with friends and family back home.

During the course of the nine days, I spent a lot of time with the BAM members, who were very welcoming and just as interested to know about me as I was about them. What struck me most about the group and their celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia was how similar everything was to my experiences in the Philippines as well as in my hometown of San Diego. I naturally became interested in the role of memory in recreating celebrations, and how groups of people, regardless of how far apart they are physically, can re-enact those celebrations in similar ways.



Figure 5.1. Members of the Bicol Association of Michigan praying to Our Lady of Peñafrancia and the Divino Rostro. Photograph taken by the author.

Memory, nostalgia, and cultural reconstruction are the most important themes of this chapter. I examine the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia as a product of collective memory and as a cultural practice that connects Bicolanos in the United States with their home region and with each other. While I mainly focus on the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia celebrated by the Bicolano Association of Michigan, I also discuss the feast in terms of memories from my own experiences in San Diego in order to show the cultural practices that are shared between Bicol associations that celebrate the feast. Because this chapter discusses the festival in an environment that is very different from where it originated (Naga City, Philippines), the most important elements of the celebration and their meaning are exposed.

Memory can be discussed in terms of a shared recollection of the past, such as members of a diaspora reconstructing a musical tradition from the homeland or a community continuing an ancient ritual or tradition year after year. Maurice Halbwachs' work on collective memory (1992) established him as a major figure in the history of sociology. Halbwachs was interested in the way people used mental images of the present in order to reconstruct the past. He defined collective memory as the ways in which different groups reconstruct the past by adapting historical facts or traditions to fit the present, such as through commemorations, celebrations, and other symbolic displays. When individuals look to the past, or their perceived sense of the past, they often create a sense of community. Halbwachs' primary thesis is that human memory can only function within a collective context and that collective memory is a socially constructed notion:

“...if we examine a little more closely how we recollect things, we will surely realize that the greatest number of memories come back to us when our parents, our friends, or other persons recall them to us...it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.”²⁶¹

Group members can recall individual memories, but a group context is necessary in order to remember and recreate a past that is significant to everyone in the group. It is important to point out, however, that individuals within a group may have slightly different memories of the same event. Consequently, the problem that arises is a question of power. Who decides which is the “correct” memory? Instead of strengthening a social bond through shared memory, differing memories may cause conflict.

Halbwachs’ strength is in defining what memory is and what it is not. He makes several distinctions between memory and history as well as different types of memory. According to Halbwachs, memory confirms similarities between the past and present while history begins where living memory ends. Memory involves recurring events while history involves events that happen once and for all. Autobiographical memory is synonymous with individual memory. This type of memory can be reinforced when people come together to reconstruct and reinforce the past, but it can fade over time unless other people periodically reinforce it. In contrast, historical memory is triggered by artifacts, written records, and photographs, but more importantly by commemorations and festive

²⁶¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, translated by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

enactments. Festivities that take place on July 4 every year in the United States, for example, reinforce the memory of events that led to American Independence.

Sociologist Paul Connerton (1989) takes the idea of historical memory further in his work *How Societies Remember*.²⁶² He argues that social memory is likely to be found in commemorative ceremonies, but they can only be deemed commemorative if they are performative. For Connerton, the most important aspect of ritual and commemorative ceremonies is that they are repetitive and explicitly claim continuity with the past. This leads into what Connerton calls the “rhetoric of reenactment,” which has three distinguishable modes of articulation: calendrical, verbal, and gestural. Calendars make it possible to structure religious or political institutions. When the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is celebrated every third Saturday of September, participants say the same prayers, and engage in the *traslacion* and fluvial processions, the same events in which they have participated in previous years. According to Connerton, this reenactment every year invokes the past and encourages social memory.

In theorizing about memory and music, many scholars directly or indirectly utilize Halbwachs’ and/or Connerton’s theories about memory. Edward Shils argues that societies preserve themselves through the perpetual reenactment and resaying of their communications. Oral/aural repetition, led by memory, preserves the past into the present and future.²⁶³ Likewise, there are various, common methods of preserving musical communications. Oral cultures remember through the repetition of metrically structured verbal and/or musical formulas, such as songs and poems, to strengthen collective

²⁶² Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²⁶³ Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

memory.²⁶⁴ The repetition of musical formulas is much more effective in helping people remember how they should be performed. While notation can indicate what musicians need to play, there can be many different interpretations of the notes because the exact replication of a performance is not emphasized.

Historian William Kenney's work (1999) discusses how recorded music plays an important role in stimulating and preserving collective memories.²⁶⁵ These collective memories help various groups of Americans locate and identify themselves within the many changing sounds of U.S. music. Kenney thus argues that the phonograph's repetitive function acted as a major aid to memory by resounding the patterns of commercialized musical formulas of the past. Americans re-experience and recall the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structures of the past as well as some of the surrounding social and cultural contexts from which they came. In this way, the past can be brought into the present through music.

Filipino immigrants have the task of dealing with tensions that occur between remembering their place of origin and navigating their day-to-day lives in their current country of residence. Because so many refuse to abandon their view of the Philippines as "home" and continue to keep in touch with friends and family who still live there, their sense of identity—what it means to be Filipino American—is influenced by traditions, rituals, and history learned both "here" (in the U.S.) and "there" (in the Philippines). One way that Filipino Americans both reconstruct and modify aspects of culture from the homeland is by staging celebrations in the United States that are shaped by shared

²⁶⁴ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982).

²⁶⁵ William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

memories and current circumstances. Music plays an important role in these events because it has the ability to trigger powerful recollections, bringing back memories of a particular person or place.²⁶⁶ Music associated with a particular celebration, such as the “theme song” of a festival, can trigger people’s memories of their experiences of the event in the Philippines. By continuing to use the same music at celebrations in the U.S., Filipino immigrants solidify not only their sense of what is traditional, but also reify specific acts of tradition. But because their residence in the U.S. influences how they express their identity within the celebrations, additional music that proclaims their love for their adopted country is also important to incorporate. The singing of the American national anthem, for example, is sung before the national anthem of the Philippines, and other American patriotic songs may be included as well. The celebration in Michigan is thus a reinvented tradition because, while its purpose continues to be the celebration of the Virgin of Peñafrancia, the modifications that have been added reflect the Filipino American identity of those who celebrate in Michigan.

Music thus plays a role in constructing cultural identity through collective memory because it is a vehicle through which the past can be collectively shaped, if not collectively experienced. According to Stuart Hall, there are two ways of thinking about cultural identity. The first defines cultural identity as a “shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self,’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves,’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.”²⁶⁷ Music has the ability to bring the past into the present: traditions are maintained through repetition, music can

²⁶⁶ Petr Janata, “The Neural Architecture of Music-Evoked Autobiographical Memories,” *Cerebral Cortex* 19(2009): 2579-2594.

²⁶⁷ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Colonial Discourse & Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 223.

reflect the past, and the body remembers through incorporating and inscribing practices. Collective memory is embodied through music when it is performed by individuals who can remember, and through it, be reunited with the collective. The second view of cultural identity recognizes that even though there are many points of similarity, “there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are;’ or rather—since history has intervened—‘what we have become.’”²⁶⁸ Hall thus defines cultural identity as a process of “becoming” as well as of “being,” and it is affected by continuous interactions between history, culture, and power.

In line with this notion that history and culture must be understood as interrelated, before continuing with observations on the Michigan Peñefrancia, it is important to understand the historical and social context of the participants.

Filipinos in Michigan

The earliest Filipino immigrants arrived in 1763, although the first Filipinos in the United States were documented as early as 1587, when Filipino slaves and servants aboard Spanish galleon ships, which traded various goods between the Philippines, Mexico, and Spain, escaped and landed in Morro Bay, California.²⁶⁹ Since then, other Filipino seamen aboard Spanish galleon ships escaped in areas of California and in Louisiana, such as those called “Manilamen,” who found their way to New Orleans and created the oldest Filipino settlement.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 225.

²⁶⁹ Barbara M. Posadas, *The Filipino Americans* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999) and Frank H. Winter, *The Filipinos in America* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1988).

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

Very little has actually been written about Filipinos in Michigan, but based on migration patterns and regional location, it is clear that the general history in this part of the country differs from other Filipino diasporic populations. Many Filipinos migrated to the United States because of the demand for Filipino labor supply. Contract laborers, called *sakadas*, were recruited from the Philippines from 1906 to about 1934 by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association to work on the sugarcane plantations of Hawaii, which was still a U.S. territory during that time. In 1924, the United States government passed an immigration act that excluded the entry of Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian peoples, but increased quotas for Filipinos. In California, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest, the 1924 Act affected farms and canneries. Because they were suddenly deprived of cheap labor, farms and canneries were forced to accept Filipino and Mexican workers, who were exempt from the immigration act. On California farms, Filipinos soon realized that immigrant life was hardly ideal: they faced prejudice, violence, and poor working conditions. Filipino workers began to form agricultural unions to protect their rights, and they were prominent participants in the United Farm Workers, which was famous for its 1965 Delano, California grape strike.²⁷¹ Others sought employment and/or education elsewhere. Many had heard about the booming auto industry in Detroit and decided to move to Michigan, where they worked at car factory plants like Ford, Chrysler, and Chevrolet, in Detroit. Some also worked at the post office, department stores, and hotels.²⁷²

They also enrolled in technical schools and colleges like the University of Michigan, University of Detroit, and what is now known as Wayne State University, just like the

²⁷¹ Lorraine Jacobs Crouchett, *Filipinos in California: From the Days of the Galleons to the Present* (El Cerrito, California: Downey Place Publishing House, Inc., 1982).

²⁷² Joseph A. Galura and Emily P. Lawsin, *Filipino Women in Detroit: Oral Histories from the Filipino American Oral History Project of Michigan* (Ann Arbor: OSCL Press, 2002).

Filipino scholars called *pensionados* who arrived in the United States before them, between 1900 and 1940. *Pensionados* consisted mostly of Filipino men who were given government grants and fellowships, known as government pensions (hence, the term “pensionados”), so that they could study at prestigious American universities on the East Coast and in the Midwest. The University of Michigan was one of these schools. Dean C. Worcester, a professor at the university, began anthropological studies in the Philippines. As a Philippine Commission member, he suggested that elite students from the Philippines take a competitive exam in order to study in the U.S. The first three students arrived in Ann Arbor in 1900. The University of Michigan also accepted some of the first female scholars from the Philippines.²⁷³ In 1903, the pensionado program began sending more Filipinos to American colleges and universities. Upon completion of their degrees, most pensionados went back to the Philippines to occupy important government positions; however, not all sponsored students completed their education, and instead, remained in the United States to work in menial jobs.²⁷⁴

Others came to the United States by enlisting in the military. Because the Philippines became an American territory after being liberated from Spain, Filipinos were considered American “nationals.” Thus, Filipinos were eligible to enlist, and those who served were eventually granted U.S. citizenship.²⁷⁵ Filipinos who were already in the U.S. also joined the military when World War II broke out. Many Filipinos in Detroit served in the 1st and 2nd Filipino Regiments of the U.S. Army, which were stationed in the Philippines.²⁷⁶ When the

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Posadas, 14-19.

²⁷⁵ Winter 1988.

²⁷⁶ Galura and Lawsin 2002.

war was over, many who were stationed there brought their wives and fiancées to the United States after the War Brides Act of 1945 was passed in Congress.²⁷⁷

It wasn't until the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that medical professionals and other skilled workers began immigrating in high numbers. Because their occupations were high on the list of preferred professions for U.S. immigrants, the Act allowed more doctors, nurses, engineers, and other professionals from the Philippines and other third world countries to enter the U.S. The 1965 Immigration Act also included family reunification provisions that allowed family members of Filipinos who had arrived in the United States prior to 1965 to immigrate. Thus, the Act resulted in two distinct groups of immigrants: relatives of Filipinos who had immigrated prior to 1965, and highly trained immigrants who entered during the late 1960s and early 1970s. By allowing Filipinos who had already immigrated to bring their relatives to the United States, the established Filipino communities in Hawaii, California, and Washington were rejuvenated. But because employers determined the destinations of occupational immigrants, Filipinos settled all over the United States, including Michigan.²⁷⁸ Filipinos who immigrated from 1965 to the 1980s and 1990s comprise the largest number of Asians coming into the United States.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Winter 1988.

²⁷⁸ Espiritu, Yen Le. *Filipino American Lives* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

²⁷⁹ Fred Arnold, Urmil Minocha, and James T. Fawcett, "The Changing Face of Asian Immigration to the United States," in *Pacific Bridges: The New Immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands*, edited by James T. Fawcett and Benjamin V. Cariño (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1987) 111-114.

Filipino American Organizations

Organized groups like the Bicol Association of Michigan originated as a way to bring together people from the same town, province, or region who happened to share the same fate of moving and settling into the same city or area in the United States. Numerous others exist, such as those for alumni, occupational, charitable, fraternal, and historical associations. But town, provincial, and regional groups remain popular because of the strong bonds that are created through shared memories of experiences at “home.” These groups provide its members with feelings of togetherness, pride, and solidarity.

As an illustrative example, the Iriguenos of Southern California is a Filipino American association that is primarily composed of people who emigrated from Iriga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines and have settled in and around San Diego, California. The majority of association members are middle class professionals and their families, and they are involved in a variety of projects throughout the year, mainly social events with the purpose of raising money for charities in Iriga City. In 2010, for example, members organized a Valentine’s Day ball that raised money for an orphanage and a children’s literacy program in their hometown. Frequent gatherings are held during holidays, such as Christmas and Philippine Independence Day on June 12. Novenas are held every Saturday preceding the feast day of St. Anthony, the patron saint of Iriga City. These events are usually held at a member’s house and, once the purpose of the event has been fulfilled (such as member meetings and novenas), have a party atmosphere because of the sharing of food contributed by everyone who attends. Thus, the association allows individuals to remember their hometown by giving back to their former community and continuing

traditions, especially those that are religious in nature, while simultaneously bonding with people who have become close friends through their involvement in the group.

Filipino American organizations both challenge and build on two of the most prominent theories that frame immigrants' integration into American society: assimilation theory and multicultural theory. Assimilation theory is the idea that in order to be successful in the U.S., migrants have to fully assimilate and "blend in" with the dominant population, that is, European Americans. Multicultural theory, on the other hand, is the notion that migrants bring unique cultural aspects to a diverse, multicultural society. Instead of "blending in," migrants are encouraged to share what makes their communities unique in order to improve the larger society.²⁸⁰ In the past, many Filipino Americans subscribed to the assimilation theory, believing that they must discard their Filipino identities in order to fully assimilate into American society. Racial discrimination towards them, however, contributed to the feeling that they could never really "blend in." Therefore, most Filipinos today build upon the multicultural theory, proudly displaying aspects of culture that make their communities unique.

Filipino Americans can be described as a "diaspora," a word of Greek origin that refers to the dispersal throughout the world, whether voluntary or not, of people from the same geographical origin. Until recently, the term was used to describe those whose dispersal was a result of historical trauma, such as slavery or the Holocaust. But nowadays "diaspora" can be applied to groups of people who have left their homeland for reasons besides forced exile or trauma, such as education or work overseas. Members of a diaspora

²⁸⁰ Joaquin Jay Gonzalez III, *Filipino American Faith in Action: Immigration, Religion, and Civic Engagement* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009).

may wish to assimilate into their new environment, but their tendency to preserve their national culture through religion, language, and traditions distinguishes them as a diasporic community.²⁸¹ Filipinos who have immigrated to the United States, for example, have adjusted to their new country of residence but have not lost concern for their original identity. They develop and maintain transnational relationships with friends and relatives in the Philippines through cultural practices, such as regular visits, frequent communication, and sending remittances.²⁸²

In his study of diasporic practices in New York City, Michel S. Laguerre argues that “diasporic new years, holy days, and holidays incubate the memory of the homeland, heighten the temporal dissimilarity between the mainstream and the ethnic enclave, intensify transnational relations, maximize revenues in the diasporic economy, slow down aspects of the mainstream economy because of the ephemeral absence of these actors in the labor market, raise the public consciousness about the presence of the group in their midst, induce changes in the ways of the mainstream to accommodate the needs of the diasporic community, and help the group reproduce itself as a transglobal entity.”²⁸³ The celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Michigan is not so large and powerful as to affect the mainstream economy; however, it provides an outlet for the cultivation and expression of Bicolano identity for those who are far from the homeland.

²⁸¹ Stephane Dufoix, *Diasporas*, translated by William Rodarmor (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁸² Jonathan Y. Okamura, *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998).

²⁸³ Michel S. Laguerre, *Urban Multiculturalism and Globalization in New York City: An Analysis of Diasporic Temporalities* (Houndmills, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 5.

Our Lady of Peñafrancia as Shared Symbol

Every September, members of the Bicol Association of Michigan (BAM) celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia.²⁸⁴ While not an official event of the association (events that are religious in nature are not considered official), many of its members have organized the celebration every year since 1999. The majority of BAM members are from Naga City, so many of them have attended the feast in Bicol since they were children. After immigrating to the United States and settling in Michigan, they joined BAM in order to build a community with other Bicolanos in the state. Members see each other on a regular basis for parties and other activities, but organizing the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Michigan is their biggest endeavor.

The Peñafrancia celebration takes place in Rochester Hills every year, and it is a smaller, condensed version of the one that takes place in Naga City. It is a collaborative event, organized and financed by the people who participate. The tensions between the Church and local government that exist in Naga City are non-existent in the celebration in Michigan. Instead of two of the most powerful institutions in Bicol trying to figure out how the Peñafrancia celebration can best serve the people under their care, the people themselves are in charge without any interference.

When asked why the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is held every year, Gil Manly, a former president of BAM, replied, “It’s because we are Bicolanos—we have to keep the tradition. Every state has a Peñafrancia celebration. Even the cardinals and bishops told us

²⁸⁴ BAM represents one of many Filipino community organizations in the United States that are formed based on categories such as gender, social function, province, hometown, school affiliation, and profession. See Rick Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000).

that we all should have our own Peñafrancia.”²⁸⁵ There are numerous Bicol associations across the United States, and many celebrate their own Peñafrancia festival in states like Washington, Nevada, Texas, Georgia, and Florida. Some associations, like BAM, are small, but in large cities there may be a multitude of Bicol associations under an umbrella organization. In San Diego, for example, the organization *Pag-Iribang Bikolnon* (United Bicol) includes associations based on hometowns in Bicol.²⁸⁶ Every year, the associations that belong in the organization come together to organize a joint Peñafrancia celebration.

BAM is a member of the Bikol National Association of America, an umbrella organization that provides opportunities for chapter members to connect with one another and to take part in medical missions, youth scholarships, and other charitable deeds. As the only Bicol association in Michigan, however, its members must organize the Peñafrancia celebration on their own. Thus, volunteers from the association are needed to provide the required resources for the celebration. Some volunteer to buy flowers, others are in charge of decorations, and almost everyone is required to bring a dish to share. Even attendees who are not active in the association are asked to bring a dish and a bottle of soda (see Figure 5.2). The men also volunteer to serve as *voyadores* (the men who protect and transport the image of the Lady of Peñafrancia) during the celebration. Because the celebration is entirely volunteer-based and financed by the members of BAM, their support and promotion of the Peñafrancia celebration is like their personal offerings to the Virgin of Peñafrancia.

²⁸⁵ Interview with Gil Manly, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, 10 September 2011.

²⁸⁶ Associations under the Pag-Iribang Bikolnon organization include Naga Ini (Naga City), Sogsoganon Ini (Sorsogon City), Iriguenos of Southern California (Iriga City), Batoenos of California (Bato), Nabuenos of Southern California (Nabua, Camarines Sur), Tinambac Association of California, and the Bicol Club of San Diego, among others.

PLEASE JOIN US IN HONORING
OUR BLESSED MOTHER UNDER HER TITLE OF
OUR LADY OF PEÑAFRANCIA
ON Saturday, SEPTEMBER 17, 2011 AT 10:00 A.M.



**Land and Fluvial Processions*

Flower Offering to Our Lady

**Holy Mass *Benediction*

Msgr. John Vargas

Celebrant & homilist

Thelma Spencer Park

John R Road, Rochester Hills, Michigan

(Between E. South Boulevard & Auburn Road)

**Picnic lunch, *entertainment.*

Please bring an entrée dish, dessert, & one (2) liter bottle of your favorite soft drink to share.

Figure 5.2. A flyer advertising the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Michigan.

Unlike the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Bicol, which spreads out key events (namely, the traslacion and fluvial processions) over the course of the nine days of solemnity, the celebration in Michigan is condensed, with all of the events taking place in one day. In the nine nights preceding the celebration, devotees (mostly members of BAM) take part in the novena, and each night, only about fifteen to twenty people attend. At the Peñafrancia celebration in Rochester Hills, however, there were about seventy-five to one hundred people in attendance. One reason that the celebration is more popular than the novena gatherings is that it takes place at a time that is conducive to most people's work and family schedules. Novena gatherings take place in the evenings, with the majority occurring on weeknights, and they take place in Sterling Heights, Michigan, which is only opportune for those who live nearby. For those who live further away, the condensed Peñafrancia celebration in Rochester Hills provides convenience for devotees who would like to pay homage to the saint and take part in the major events that are similar to those in Bicol, but cannot make daily trips due to time constraints. The celebration is also more family friendly in that it takes place at a park, which provides ample room for children to play and run around while their relatives participate in the Peñafrancia events.

Thelma Spencer Park is a large recreational park in Rochester Hills, Michigan, with a 38-acre lake and picnic tables, rowboat and paddleboat rentals (in warmer months), a fishing pier, playground, and tennis and volleyball courts available for use by the public. For the Peñafrancia celebration, access to the lake is important, since one of the highlights of the event is the fluvial procession, which requires a body of water and a vessel to transport the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. The celebration takes place every year

outside of a small shelter adjacent to the lake that leads out to the fishing pier and is close to a dock at which rowboats are tied.

The celebration always begins with the *traslacion* procession. In Naga City, the *traslacion* is held on the first of the nine days of the feast and involves the transferring of the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia from her shrine to the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral. The devotees walk slowly behind the image, either praying the rosary or singing the hymn “Resuene Vibrante.” In the Michigan celebration, the *traslacion* involves bringing the images of the Virgin and the *Divino Rostro* from one side of the lake to the other, which is only about half of a mile long. The devotees sound as if they are chanting, sometimes in sync and sometimes not, as they recite the rosary while walking in front of, with, or behind the image on a dirt trail that is used for walking or jogging around the lake. The procession occasionally passes people on the trail who are not at the park for the celebration, but politely step out of the way as they stare at the ornately decorated images being carried. Once the image arrives at its destination, it is carried onto a rowboat and held by one of the *voyadores*. The fluvial procession begins when, accompanied by two other rowboats, the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia makes its way back across the lake to where the *traslacion* began.

The fluvial procession in Michigan is very brief, calm, and peaceful. It contrasts greatly with the chaos that erupts during the fluvial procession in Naga City, where people will push and shove in order to get as close to the image as possible. At any rate, while both the *traslacion* and fluvial processions in Michigan are not as grand as those that take place in the Philippines, they have a significant amount of meaning to the devotees: they give a sense of being back home.



Figure 5.3. The traslacion at the 2011 Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrañcia in Rochester Hills, Michigan. Photograph taken by the author.



Figure 5.4. The Fluvial Procession during the 2011 Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrañcia in Rochester Hills, Michigan. Photograph taken by the author.

The mass is the source of the most common elements found in the celebrations in Naga City, San Diego, and Michigan, and it is the music that makes these celebrations familiar to the people who celebrate them. Within the mass, the parts of the Order of Mass²⁸⁷ are either sung in the Filipino or Bicol languages, which adds a touch of being “home” since mass parts in the United States are sung either in English or Latin. I found that the most familiar was the “Luwalhati sa Diyos” (“Glory to God”), the Filipino language version of *Gloria in excelsis* set to music by E.P. Hontiveros.²⁸⁸ I have heard this piece, as well as the Bicol language version “Kamurawayan sa Dios” (composed by N. Alforte and R. Dolor), countless times during my fieldwork in Bicol, and when I heard it again in the 2010 and 2011 celebrations in Michigan, I instantly recognized it. The piece was sung after the *Kyrie Eleison* and just before the Liturgy of the Word, in which the mass readings would be proclaimed. Those who were fluent in the Filipino language enthusiastically sang along with the choir during the chorus “Luwalhati sa Diyos (3x) sa kaitaasan”, many without the aid of written lyrics. The other sections were difficult to sing because the piece is through-composed; however, the chorus melody is short, catchy, and appears many times in the song (the appearance of the chorus is highlighted in the lyrics below).

²⁸⁷ The Order of Mass is the set of texts that are said or sung during a Roman Catholic mass, as indicated by the Roman Missal, a liturgical book. Texts that are usually sung include the *Kyrie Eleison*, *Gloria in excelsis*, *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei*.

²⁸⁸ “Kamurawayan sa Dios,” the Bicol language version of “Glory to God,” is also commonly sung in the Peñafrancia celebrations in San Diego, California.

“Luwalhati sa Diyos”

**Luwalhati sa D’yos (3x) sa kaitaasan
At sa lupa’y kapayapaan (2x)
Sa mga taong may mabuting kalooban.**

Pinupuri Ka namin, dinarangal Ka naming
Sinasamba Ka namin, niluluwalhati Ka
namin
Pinasasalamatan Ka naming
Dahil sa dakila Mong kalwalhatian.

Panginoong D’yos hari ng langit
D’yos Amang makapangyarihan sa lahat
Panginoong Hesukristo, bugtong na anak
Panginoong D’yos, Kordero ng D’yos
Anak ng Ama.

**Luwalhati sa D’yos (2x) Luwalhati sa
Diyos sa kaitaasan.**

Ikaw na nagaalis ng mga kasalanan ng
sanlibutan,
Maawa Ka, maawa Ka sa amin
Ikaw na nagaalis ng mga kasalanan ng
sanlibutan
Tanggapin Mo ang aming kahilingan (2x)
Ikaw na naluluklok sa kanan ng Ama.

Maawa Ka, maawa Ka sa amin

Luwalhati sa D’yos (3x) sa kaitaasan.

Sapagka’t Ikaw lamang ang banal at ang
kataastaasan,
Ikaw lamang O Hesukristo, ang
Panginoon.
Kasama ng Espiritu Santo sa kalwalhatian,
ng Diyos Ama, Amen.

Luwalhati sa D’yos (3x) sa kaitaasan

“Glory to God”²⁸⁹

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to His people on earth.**

We praise You, we glorify You.
We worship You, we honor You

We give You thanks
Because you are worthy of great praise.

Lord God, King of heaven
Almighty God and Father,
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father.

Glory to God in the highest

You take away the sins of the world,

Have mercy, have mercy on us
You take away the sins of the world,

Receive our prayer.
You are seated at the right hand of the
Father.
Have mercy, have mercy on us.

Glory to God in the highest

For You alone are the Holy One and in the
highest,
You alone, O Jesus Christ, are the Lord,

With the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of the Father. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest

²⁸⁹ English translation by the author.

What is interesting about the choice to sing the parts in the Filipino language at the Peñafrancia celebration in Michigan is that it allows those who are from the Philippines, but not from the Bicol region, to feel like they are included in the celebration. While the Virgin of Peñafrancia is the patron saint of Bicol, devotees are not limited to individuals with origins in the region. Thus, there is a sense of inclusiveness in the celebration despite the many references to Bicol in prayers and hymns.

In Bicol, “Kamurawayan sa Diyos” by N. Alforte and R. Dolor is more popular since it is usually sung every Sunday mass; therefore, its music and lyrics are very well known to those who attend church regularly.

“Kamurawayan sa Dios”

Kamurawayan sa Dios sa kaitaasan
Asin sa daga katoninongan
Sa manga tawong marahay an boot.
Ino-omaw mi Ika, rinorokyaw mi Ika,
Sinasamba mi Ika, pinapamuraway mi Ika,
Pinapasalamatan mi ika
Huli kan dakula mong kamurawan,
Kagurangnan na Dios, Hadeng langitnon,
Dios Amang makakamhan.
Kagurangnan Aking Bogtong, Jesucristo,
Kagurangnan na Dios,
Cordero kan Dios, Aki kan Ama,
Ika na nagpapara kan manga kasalan kan
kinaban, kaheraki kami;
Ika na nagpapara kan manga kasalan
kan Kinaban, ako-a an samong pakimaherak.
Ika na nagtutukaw sa too kan Ama,

Kaheraki kami.
Ta Ika sana an Banal,
Ika sana an Kagurangnan,

“Glory to God”²⁹⁰

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to His people on earth.

We praise You, we glorify You.
We worship You, we honor You
We give You thanks
Because you are worthy of great praise.
Lord God, King of heaven
Almighty God and Father,
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God,
Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
You take away the sin of the world:
Have mercy on us;
You take away the sin of the world:
receive our prayer.
You are seated at the right hand of the
Father,
have mercy on us.
For You alone are the Holy One
You alone are the Lord,

²⁹⁰ English translation by the author.

Ika sana an orog Kahalangkaw,
Jesucristo kaiba kan Espiritu Santo:
Sa kamurawayan kan Dios Ama. Amen.

You alone are the highest,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

At masses celebrating the Virgin of Peñafrancia, devotees heartily sing the mass part with ease not only because it has become habit, but because it contains variations of the beginning melody that help people remember how to sing the song even though it is through-composed (see Example 5.1).

Musical notation for Example 5.1(a) in 3/4 time, key of D major. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: Ka - mu - ra - wa - yan sa Dios sa ka - i - ta - a - san a - sin sa da - ga ka - to - ni - no - ngan.

(a)

Musical notation for Example 5.1(b) in 3/4 time, key of D major. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: Ka - gu - rang - nan A - king Bog-tong, Je - su - cris - to Ka - gu - rang - nan na Dios, Cor - de - ro kan Dios.

(b)

Ta i - ka sa - na an Ba - nal, i - ka sa - na an Ka - gu -
rang - nan, i - ka sa - na an O - rog Ka - ha - lang - kaw _____

(c)

Example 5.1. Prominent melody (a) and its variations (b) and (c) in “Kamurawayan sa Dios.” Transcription by the author.

Another familiar song that was performed at the Peñafrancia celebration was the hymn “Dios Te Salve, Maria.” The choir performed it after the fluvial procession, as people were returning to the site at which the mass would take place. As they sang, I noticed that not everyone around me was singing along. Some made a few attempts to sing the words, but instead settled for humming the march-like melody. The lyrics of the Marian hymn “Dios Te Salve, Maria” is the prayer “Hail Mary” in Spanish, but while the song is sung at Peñafrancia celebrations (and Santa Cruzan celebrations that honor the Virgin Mary in May), it is not one of the easiest to sing along to, particularly because not everyone can recite the prayer in Spanish.

Dios te salve Maria, llena eres de gracia
el Señor es contigo,
bendita tu eres entre todas las mujeres

Hail Mary, full of grace²⁹¹
the Lord is with you,
blessed are you among women

²⁹¹ English translation by the author.

y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre Jesus.

And blessed is the fruit of your
womb Jesus

Santa Maria, Madre de Dios,
ruega por nosotros pecadores,
ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte.
Amen.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

While the song is familiar and is recognized as a song that is appropriate for the celebration of the feast, the uncertainty among the spectators about how to sing it contrasts greatly with the chorus of the hymn “Resuene Vibrante,” which, because of its ubiquity in Peñafrancia celebrations, people sang loudly when the image made its way from the rowboat to the pedestal near the fishing pier. One reason for this occurs musically: while the “Resuene Vibrante” chorus is syllabic, “Dios Te Salve, Maria” contains melismas, especially in the second half of the song, that make it difficult to remember which syllables are sung with each pitch, preventing some devotees from picking up the song quickly.

The precision in which songs are sung by all of the devotees, however, is not as important as the meaning behind their incorporation in the celebration. Every year, BAM members comprise the majority of the choir that sings during the event, and they prepare by rehearsing the music and lyrics of each song in the days leading up to the event. The choir acts as a guide for those gathered at the celebration, performing music that has the ability to induce collective nostalgia in the Bicolanos who participate because they trigger memories of being home in the Philippines and celebrating at the feast. A concept introduced by Fred Davis, collective nostalgia is a condition in which symbolic objects from

the past are of a highly public, widely shared, and familiar character and can trigger a nostalgic feeling in a large number of people at the same time.²⁹²

The Virgin of Peñafrancia has become an important, shared symbol among the thousands of Bicolanos who have moved far away from the homeland. As the patron saint of Bicol, she has come to represent “home.” While Bicolanos living abroad do their best to reconstruct the Peñafrancia festival in Naga City, it is not the same, most notably because the prayers to the Virgin of Peñafrancia are framed in terms of those living in the diaspora. In a novena day leading up to the Peñafrancia celebration, for example, one of the prayers read: “You [the Virgin of Peñafrancia] know what it is to be away from home, away from family; away from friends in a strange land. We pray for all families displaced by poverty, or violence, or war. We pray especially for our Filipino brothers and sisters in other lands, alone, lonely, away from their family or alienated from relatives and friends.”²⁹³ The saint who symbolizes “home” comforts the sadness or melancholy of being away from home. But because the celebration abroad is not the same as the one celebrated in Naga City, it can trigger a nostalgic experience.

While commemorating the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Michigan is not entirely melancholy, the music and the image of the saint serve as reminders of the celebration in Naga City, a place many of the devotees call “home,” and where many friends and relatives still reside. They are not alone, however, because the connections they have made with one another within the association provide a sense of belonging and togetherness. Bicol associations like BAM remember the most important elements of the

²⁹² Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 122.

²⁹³ Jermias Rebanal, *Novena to the Virgin of Peñafrancia: Miraculous Patroness of the Bicol Region* (New Jersey: Archdiocese of Newark).

Peñafrancia feast and re-enact them with their available resources so that they can transmit these traditions to future generations. While not enacted in exactly the same way as those in the Philippines, they provide a sense of identity that is informed by memories of being “over there” and “over here.”

In the Philippines, for obvious reasons, festivals are much grander. Because they are a part of tradition and can be accommodated in the public realm, street dancing performances play a significant role in portraying the values and identity of a community in a way that simply is not possible in the United States. Dancers portray stories, re-enact historical events, and bring legends and myths to life through the use of props and dance choreography that artistically highlights what is important to a community. They may incorporate props that represent the industry or agricultural products for which a town or city is known, they may perform dance steps that mimic the actions of planting or harvesting the crops that supply the majority of individuals with their livelihood, or they may perform a dance that symbolizes thanksgiving for all of the blessings they have been given. Each festival is unique in the story it tells, but they all contribute to the larger picture of what it means to be a Bicolano: hardworking, resilient, brave, religious, and grateful for the blessings they have despite the hardships they may face.

In Michigan, the Peñafrancia celebration is organized by a small group of professional and middle class people with origins in Bicol. Unlike in Naga City, where devotion exists with an interest in boosting the local economy, the need to bring in revenue is not a priority for those who stage the celebration in Michigan. Instead, the celebration is akin to an offering to the Virgin of Peñafrancia, and those who organize the celebration make personal financial contributions and volunteer their time in order to ensure the

success of the event. The celebration is more personal; it is a way to socialize with friends and acquire a sense of fellowship with those who have similar experiences of immigrating and settling in the United States, but at the same time, feel connected to the homeland by continuing traditions learned from there.

Street dancing competitions do not take place in Michigan because emphasis is placed on prayer, masses, and the major religious processions associated with the feast. In terms of planning, dance performances would be too time consuming with the hours of rehearsals that would be required to create and perfect a grand dance routine. Singing in the choir, however, is a more reasonable endeavor, since many of the choir members already know the music. They sing the same songs year after year, and many are familiar to them because they sang them in their youth in the Philippines. They have their own copies of the music and have already made notes about how songs should be sung; thus, rehearsals do not require a large amount of time.

The organizers' collective memory determines which aspects from the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City are emphasized, thus highlighting what they perceive to be most important. The common denominator for all of the people who gather at the celebration is a devotion to the Virgin of Peñafrancia, whom they cling to as their "Ina," or mother, because she is the patron saint of Bicol. The continuation of traditions that honor her creates a connection between their past experiences with the feast in the Philippines, as well as the present, where they celebrate with one another in Michigan, as well as concurrently with friends and family in Bicol. The ability to stage the celebration on their own terms allows them to express a specific identity: even though they are far away from Naga City, they reconstruct, as well as reinvent, an event that represents who they are as

Bicolanos in the U.S. While the space in which the celebration takes place is very different from Naga City, they adapt based on resources that are available to them: a lake in the middle of a park replaces the Bicol River, and a rowboat transports the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia instead of a pagoda. They also add patriotic songs from the U.S. that proclaim their love and appreciation for their adopted country. But they continue to pray, participate in the traslacion and fluvial processions, and sing music that reminds them of being home.

EPILOGUE

By analyzing the different layers and components of festivals in Bicol, this dissertation demonstrates that festivals are complex, ever-changing phenomena that are shaped in many ways by the dynamic between religious and secular communities. While their content may have significant meaning to the communities that stage them, the colorful pageantry that comprises these events is appealing to tourists because of the condensed version of culture that is presented in street dance performances and other performing arts. The Department of Tourism on the local, regional, and national levels understands this, since festivals are one of the most effective strategies in drawing tourists to specific areas of the Philippines. In addition, because of the high volume of people who attend festivals, corporate sponsors are always interested in taking part in festivals, as long as they are given opportunities to advertise their names and logos.

The aim of Chapter 5 was to highlight certain elemental aspects of a religious festival by examining how devotees—instead of institutions with different, competing interests—stage it as a meaningful event. Because they rely on collective memory to reconstruct, as well as adapt it, to their needs, the choices that they make in terms of what aspects are included in the celebration reveal the core motivations of continuing festivals in abridged forms year after year. The main purpose of the festival, whether it is the feast day of a patron saint, the founding of a city, or the anniversary of an important historical event,

is the celebration of what binds a community together. For those that celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, she is what causes Bicolanos to gather together; hence, the quote from Monsignor Romulo A. Vergara that appears at the beginning of Chapter 5. As religious Bicolanos who have honored the saint in the past, they recognize her as a symbol that binds all of them together, no matter where they may be; they will always find a place to gather and celebrate her as a mother to all Bicolanos.

The findings in Chapter 5 contrast greatly with the case studies in Chapters 3 and 4. If both the Church and the local government are involved in the planning of a festival, they may have conflicts if each institution does not respect the boundaries of the other. If a festival is religious in nature, such as the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, the Church believes that it is theirs to organize and that the local government's role is to support the Church in its endeavor to enhance the people's spirituality. But the high appeal of the festival provides the opportunity to enhance the local economy, and the local government's viewpoint is that festivals can provide the community with a much-needed boost in profits. Thus, the local government implements civic events that may have nothing to do with the religious activities of the Church, but provide entertainment and attract even more tourists to the city. The festival becomes a hybrid celebration in which tensions between the Church and local government coexist, complicated even further by the demands of commercial interests.

It is not my intention in this dissertation to glorify any one institution and vilify another; the actors at play are only interested in doing what is right for the people that they serve, employ, and to whom they are beholden. I believe that communities need them both. On one hand, because of the high number of Christians in the Bicol region, people look to

the Church for guidance in their lives. On the other, the Bicol region as a whole is economically poor, and through festivals, local governments have the opportunity to help their people make a living. I understand that it is a tricky situation, and I am not in a position to be able to suggest a way in which a balance between Church and State might be accomplished. But instead of trying to determine which institution is at the top of the festival social hierarchy, and thus has complete control over a festival, both the Church and local government must compromise and complement each other in order to provide an enriching atmosphere for all participants of religious festivals.

The ongoing conflicts that arise between the Church and local governments are one of the reasons why festivals can become reinvented traditions. A community might decide that the religious aspects of festivals must be brought to the fore or that they must concentrate on bringing tourists to their town or city. In the case of the Tinagba Festival, the change into the Gayon Bicol Tinagba Festival was a way to bring more tourists to Iriga City and highlight what it had to offer them. The plan to reinvent the festival and remove paying homage to Our Lady of Lourdes, however, did not come to fruition because the people did not feel that celebrating the city's animist past was a part of their identity as Iriguenos. Since the start of the Tinagba Festival in the 1970s, many of the citizens of Iriga have become devotees of the saint. Thus, the local government's plan to bring focus away from the Lady of Lourdes did not go over well.

The example of reinventing the Tinagba Festival demonstrates the need for constant negotiations between everyone involved in the planning and staging of festivals. If there are tensions and conflicts between institutions and the people who participate, they will be reflected in the music and dances that take place within the festivals. The street dancing

performances that took place during the Voyadores Festival in Naga City, for example, reflected the hybridity of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia by highlighting both the religious and secular elements that pervade the city during the festival.

This dissertation lays the foundation for studying festivals in Bicol and the Philippines. It has served as an introduction to the Bicol region, explored the significance of festivals to communities, and examined the different factors that affect how festivals are staged, and consequently, how they influence music and dance choices within the celebrations. The study thus serves as a stepping stone towards the examination of performer roles and perceptions within festivals, and how they juxtapose with those who are at the top of the social hierarchy in festival planning. It is my hope that the discussion about the importance of festivals in the Philippines, and to those who participate them, will continue to develop further in future studies.

This project has illuminated the ways in which individuals, religious leaders, and government actors continuously negotiate tensions regarding hybridized religious and touristic festivals. They have done so in the nexus of tradition and modernity, invention and reinvention, and memory and creativity. While festivals are being looked to as tourism strategies by local governments, the street dancing performances that take place within them have proved to be an expressive outlet for conveying identity, as well as any issues affecting the communities in which they take place. The music and dances that are featured have the ability to reveal aspects of community life that are important to those who participate. They are more than dance shows and spectacles; they are vehicles in which Bicolanos can define themselves socially and on their own terms.

APPENDIX

A list of some of the festivals that take place in Bicol. Listed are the time of year and town/city in which they are celebrated, a description of what is celebrated, and the patron saints to which they are devoted.

Festival	Time of Year	Location	Theme	Patron Saint
Arandurugan Festival	August	Guinobatan, Albay	Unity, cooperation among people	Our Lady of the Assumption
Busig-On Festival	September	Labo, Camarines Norte	Busig-On epic	
Catandungan Festival	October	Catanduanes	Foundation anniversary of Catanduanes as a province	
Cimarrones Festival	October	Pili, Camarines Sur	Cimarrones, the warrior tribe which tried to resist the invasion of Spanish colonizers	
Ibalong Festival	October	Legazpi City, Albay	Ibalong epic	

Kaogma Festival	May	Pili, Camarines Sur	Foundation anniversary of Camarines Sur as a province	
Kassangayahan Festival	October	Sorsogon City, Sorsogon	Foundation anniversary of Sorsogon as a province	
Lambat Festival	Late November to Early December	Pio Duran, Albay	Nuestra Senora de Salvacion	Nuestra Senora de Salvacion
Lapay Bantigue Festival	September	Masbate City, Masbate	Foundation anniversary; Lapay Bantigue folk dance	St. Philomena
Layag Festival	May	Rapu-Rapu, Albay	Festival of Sails	Our Lady of Peñafrancia
Libon Paroy Festival	July	Libon, Albay	Foundation anniversary and rice farming	St. James the Greater
Mambulawan Festival	October	Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte	Gold mining industry	Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary
May Ilaoud Festival	Late April to Early May	Milaor, Camarines Sur	Foundation anniversary	St. Joseph the Worker
Naro Festival	June	Dimasalang, Masbate	Fishing industry	
Nipa Festival	October	Balading, Manilao, Albay	Environmental preservation and sustainable development	St. Raphael the Archangel
Pabirik Festival	Late January to Early February	Paracale, Camarines Norte	Mining industry and gold products	Nuestra Senora de Candelaria

Palong Festival	May	Capalonga, Camarines Norte	Etymology of the municipality derived from the abundance of a plant called "palong manok" (rooster combs)	Black Nazarene
Peñafrancia Festival/Voyadores Festival	3 rd Saturday of September	Naga City, Camarines Sur	Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia	Our Lady of Peñafrancia
Pinangat Festival	June	Camalig, Albay	Foundation anniversary	St. John the Baptist
Pintakasi	June 13	Iriga City, Camarines Sur	Foundation anniversary	St. Anthony of Padua
Pinyasan Festival	June	Daet, Camarines Norte	Queen Formosa pineapple, Daet's prime agricultural product	St. John the Baptist
Pulang Angui Festival	June	Polanggui, Albay	Pulang Angui legend	Sts. Peter and Paul
Rodeo Masbate	April	Masbate	Rodeo culture	
Santo Cristo Festival	May	Dap-Dap, Legazpi, Albay	Santo Cristo	Santo Cristo
Sosogon-Pili Festival	December	Sorsogon City, Sorsogon	Foundation anniversary	
Sunflower Festival	January	Ligao, Albay	Sunflowers	
Tabak Festival	June 16-24	Tabaco City, Albay	Foundation anniversary and cutlery industry	

Tig-Aw Festival	August	Tigaon, Camarines Sur	Etymology of the municipality derived from the abundance of a shrub called tigaw; foundation anniversary; St. Claire of Assisi	St. Claire of Assisi
Tinagba Festival	February 11	Iriga City, Camarines Sur	Thanksgiving for the harvest	Our Lady of Lourdes
Unod Festival	September	Castilla, Sorsogon	Thanksgiving for the harvest	Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

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