

A Glimpse on the Anatomy of the Tribulations and Successes of the Chinese-Filipino in Lanao del Norte

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to provide a glimpse on the lives of the Chinese Filipinos or simply “*Tsinoy*s” in the province of Lanao del Norte as they face various challenges in their “new community” since leaving their homeland. Their role and contributions in the province has been considerably of significance especially when it comes to economic development. Despite being just a minority in their “new community”, the methods, attitudes and skills these Chinese Filipinos have in conducting commercial trading activities contributed to their economic dominance. By exploring the lives of selected Chinese Filipino families in the province, this paper gives an insight on how they were able to adjust and adapt to their “new community”. The researchers conducted personal interviews along with the data and documents gathered to substantiate the qualitative approach to this paper. However, the study conducted focuses only in the province of Lanao del Norte. A small group of “overseas Chinese” started to settle and engage themselves with the locals of the province in the late 1850s. And being the minority, they experienced challenges such as social exclusion from the community, political deprivation from the colonial government, cultural refusal to assimilate with the locals and the implementation of policies and law that attempts to curb their economic control. Furthermore, this paper only presents the tribulations and successes of the Chinese Filipinos in the province of Lanao del Norte and does not reflect the general conditions of the Chinese Filipinos in other places in the Philippines.

Keywords: Chinese Filipino, Tubod, Iligan City, Philippines, Tsinoy, frugality, merchants,

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Introduction

The economic development of the Philippines cannot be completely discussed without mentioning the Chinese in its context. They played a significant role in changing the commercial trading activities in the country from being a small time street vendors in rural areas to become owners of corporations in large urbanized places. Moreover, most conglomerates and corporations of today are owned and managed by the Chinese. In spite of their economic dominance in the community, the Chinese were still classified as a minority group, comprising just around 1.3%¹ of the total population. However, their rate of success in the world of entrepreneurship together with their refusal to assimilate to the culture of the locals, have been contributory to the development of some anti-Chinese attitudes and policies.

The Chinese have been labeled and depicted by the Spaniards as disloyal, coward, quiet, selfish and cunning. The socio-cultural resistance displayed by the Chinese towards the Spanish society provided suspicion from the colonial government to question their loyalty. Policies were drafted and implemented to either force the Chinese to assimilate or to segregate them from the society. As a result of such policies, the Chinese were viewed as cowards and became quiet because of the fear that they would become the targets by the colonial government to be expelled and deported from the country. And finally, their talents and skills in “*doing business*” have given them the image as cunning and selfish. This is because of the emergence of a class distinction, wherein it portrays the natives as poor and rural, while the Chinese as rich and urban (Weightman, 1967). Hostilities and discriminations against the Chinese and even to the Chinese Filipinos were prevalent especially to larger urbanized places in the country such as Manila, Iloilo, Cebu and Davao. But despite such attitudes and feelings against them, it didn’t prevent the Chinese from establishing their footholds in their “*new community*”.

The Setting

The province of Lanao del Norte is located in Northern Mindanao, along the northwest and southwest coast of the Mindanao Island. It has a total land area of 3,824.79 square kilometers, which comprises almost 19% of Region 10. The province is bounded by Iligan Bay on the North, the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Bukidnon to the East, Illana Bay and the Celebes Sea to the South and Southwest, and the province of Zamboanga del Sur and Pangil Bay to the West. Lanao del Norte serves as the bridge that connects Western Mindanao to the Central and Eastern Mindanao.

¹ From the 2005 census conducted in the Philippines, out of 87, 857, 470 from the total population, there are only 1,146,250 Chinese in the country



Figure 1. Location of Lanao del Norte. © Google maps

Methodology

This paper employs the qualitative method to provide a closer look into the lives and experiences of the Chinese Filipinos in the province of Lanao del Norte. The information about the tribulations and successes are shared and narrated by the Chinese Filipinos themselves along with some of the locals in the area. Observation to the community was made since the researchers are from the province. Personal Interviews were conducted to both the locals and the Chinese Filipinos to incorporate their oral history and gives more substance to the data collected.

Literature Survey.

Supporting data and information were also carefully reviewed from books, academic journals, thesis, and from the internet search engines. For this survey, a list of key terms was made and examined the located sources that are related to the study.

Data Collection.

In addition, archival method of research is also applied, utilizing the information and data extracted from the documents gathered from various government offices, the National Library in the Philippines, University libraries and from the community themselves.

The Overseas Chinese in the Philippines

The earliest contact between the Filipinos and the Chinese cannot be definitely determined, although there have been several studies and researches conducted that the regular trade between the two dates back as early as the 10th century. This claim was supported in the *Song Shi*² and *Chau Ju-Kua's Chu Fan Chi*³. The trade contact

² History of the Song Dynasty which was published around 1343-1374)

³ Chau Ju-Kua was appointed as Commissioner on Foreign Trade in the 12th century and wrote in his account *Chu Fan Chi* the first detailed description on the trade contact between China and the Philippines.

between the two communities can also be affirmed to the geographical distance between Philippines and Taiwan. The two are not only just Asian neighbors but are the closest of neighbors with only 52.8 kilometers of waters that separates them (Hsiao, 1998).

Although there have been contacts between the Chinese and the Filipinos early in the 10th century, it was during the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines in the late 16th century that provide lucrative economic opportunity for many male Chinese. It stimulated the migration of Chinese in the country in larger numbers than ever before (Wickberg, 1962). Since the Spaniards were focused in the maritime commercial trading with Mexico, it gave the Chinese the opportunity to engage in retail trade and later were able to dominate the commercial activities in the country. As a result, the Spaniards became dependent on them and considers them economically important (Wickberg, 1962). However, despite such importance to the Spaniards, the increasing number of the Chinese in the country became potential threats to the colonial authority.

A separate community was created by the Spanish authority to segregate those Chinese who refuse to be converted to Christianity and resisted assimilation to the majority society. These Chinese were then resettled in a *Pari'an*⁴ outside from the main community but were still kept under the watchful eye of the Spaniards. By 1754, the concern towards the increasing number of Chinese prompted the Spanish authorities for the expulsion and deportation of non-Christianized Chinese in the country. Thus, the fear of deportation forced a number of Chinese to allow themselves to be converted and assimilated to the majority society. However, the living condition of the Chinese began to have a liberated atmosphere during the American rule in the Philippines. It was described that the Chinese benefited most during the American rule despite the fact that the Chinese were not given the same equal rights with both the Filipinos and the Americans when it comes to the utilization of natural resources. Still, the Chinese managed to become influential to the economic life of the country since the Americans imposed less restrictions during their regime (Tan, 1993:28).

The Birth of Chinese Filipino or “*Tsinoy*”

Economic opportunities have greatly attracted the Chinese despite the implementation of policies and laws against them. Assisted by a kin-based migration network, the Chinese in the Philippines used any means to the immigration policy to allow their friends, relatives and families to enter the country. As a result, the number of Chinese in the Philippines have greatly increased between the years 1899-1939⁵ as shown in the chart below.

⁴ An exclusive area where non-Catholic Chinese were confined. It was during the rule of the Spanish Governor-General Gomez Perez Dasmariñas that the *Pari'an* in Manila was established in 1582. The Spanish authorities wants to keep these Chinese away from the locals to prevent a possible collaboration that might challenge their rule.

⁵ The 1899 was a semiofficial figure on the estimated population of the Chinese in the Philippines as the Schurman Commission has relied on the testimony of a Chinese Capitan Don Carlos Palanca Tan Quien Sien; 1903 was the first comprehensive census conducted using the criteria of country of birth; in 1904, the archipelago-wide registration of Chinese residents; the 1918 census used the criterion of citizenship; the 1921 was from the Wood-Forbes Commission Report; 1933 was from the unpublished report of the Philippine Bureau of Health; in 1935, from the Chinese Economic Bulletin; and the 1939 was from the registry of the Chinese consulate in Manila.

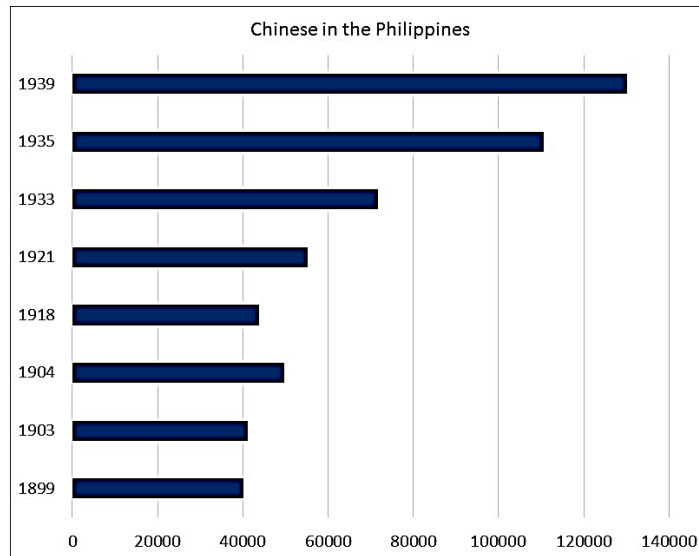


Figure 2. Number of Chinese in the Philippines from 1899-1939. © Wong, 1999

In the Post-War period from 1946 to 1975, the Philippine government does not have a consistent policy on the 600,000 Chinese that were accounted in 1972. The Chinese in the Philippines were the most legally undigested group in all Southeast Asia (Tan, 1993: 29). The “*Filipinization*”⁶ and the emergence of Filipino Nationalism have contributed to the formulation of anti-Chinese policies which resulted in the acquisition of Philippine citizenship by the Chinese in the following legal venues: 1) the Congress under the American regime passed the Philippine Act in July 1902⁷, 2) Philippine-born offspring of Chinese fathers and Filipina mothers⁸, and 3) the naturalization of the overseas Chinese through the Letter of Instruction No 270⁹ (Wong, 1990).

⁶ The concept of giving the rights of running the government to the Filipinos during the American regime.

⁷ Stating in Section 4 that all inhabitants of the Philippines who were Spanish subjects on the 11th day of April 1899 shall be deemed and held citizens of the Philippine Island

⁸ Whose parents were not legally married, as based from the Philippine Supreme Court ruling that the nationality of the child should follow that of the mother

⁹ Naturalization of deserving aliens by decree under the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos which was signed on April 11, 1975,

REGISTERED ALIENS BY NATIONALITY 1970-1975												
	1970		1971		1972		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nationality	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	1973		1974		1975	
Chinese	94,963	86.2	96,090	85.9	98,305	86.8	119,062	86.1	105,453	86.1	90,401	83.0
American	9,554	8.7	9,951	8.9	9,377	8.3	11,537	8.3	9,947	8.1	11,601	10.7
Spanish	1,114	1.0	904	0.8	779	0.7	1,062	0.8	780	0.6	757	0.7
Indian	1,392	1.3	1,333	1.2	1,364	1.2	1,625	1.2	1,469	1.2	1,482	1.4
British	499	0.4	595	0.5	528	0.5	956	0.7	843	0.7	975	0.9
German	462	0.4	487	0.4	462	0.4	548	0.4	441	0.4	417	0.4
Belgian	274	0.2	289	0.3	307	0.3	307	0.2	277	0.2	243	0.2
Mixed												
Nationalities	1,939	1.8	2,135	1.9	2,094	1.8	3,169	2.3	3,191	2.6	2,932	2.7
Stateless	29	—	27	—	26	—	46	—	34	—	52	—
TOTAL	110,226	100	111,811	100	113,243	100	138,311	100	122,435	100	108,860	100

Figure 3. List of Nationalities who became naturalized Philippine citizens. © Wong, 1999

Chinese Filipinos in Lanao del Norte

It was around in the late 1800s that Chinese Filipinos began to settle in the province of Lanao del Norte. The City Registrar's Office in Iligan states in their record that the first group of Chinese arrived in 1885. The residential and travel restrictions towards the Chinese were not that strict, resulting to the formation of Chinese communities in several places of the country. In Lanao del Norte, the migration of the Chinese can be attributed to the following: 1) to seek better opportunities and lucrative locations for commercial trading, 2) to search for a better atmosphere away from the unjust prejudices they experienced, and 3) some of them were part of the "*deportados*" (Ngo, 2010).

Since most of the locals were into the labor sectors such as farming, fishing, constructions and government workers, the Chinese were able to engage in the commercial trade as merchants and middlemen without facing such competitions. The Chinese began to have their own retail store or simply called "*sari-sari store*"¹⁰ while others became laborers or vendors. In the 1918 census conducted by the Philippine Commission in Iligan, there were only sixty-five (65) Chinese (55 males and 10 females) out of the total population of 4,635, comprising only 0.1%. These Chinese were confined in a *Pari'an* near the Spanish fort named Fort Victoria but were given freedom to merge with the locals. However, despite such freedom, the Chinese were not permitted to move in and out of the area until 1917 when the fort was destroyed by a great flood (Ngo, 2010).

Tribulations and Successes in the Province

A social distance emerged between the migrants and the locals because of the differences in language, customs, traditions and culture. The locals seem to developed distrust towards the Chinese Filipinos and on the other hand, the Chinese Filipinos has anxiety towards the locals (Omohundro, 1975). Such trials faced by the Chinese

¹⁰ Popular term used in the Philippines referring to small retail stores with assorted merchandises.

Filipinos in the province are categorized as: Social Exclusion, Economic Dominance and Educational Challenges.

Social Exclusion

Despite becoming a Philippine citizen by virtue of naturalization, still, the locals in the province displays an apparent suspicion and distrust towards the Chinese Filipino. These suspicions and distrusts manifested by the locals towards the Chinese Filipinos points to the following issues: the question of their loyalty, the possibility being used as tools for the spread of communism and their choice of isolation to the majority society (Langbid, 2014).

Such issues emerge from the perception of the locals that these Chinese were a dangerous group. Although the Chinese were often viewed as less than dirt as an individual, however, as a collective group, they were perceived as a precursor of communism (Weightman, 1967). For the locals, the reservations towards the Chinese Filipino can be summed up by this statement:

“These Chinese should not be trusted for they are cunning and are not truly a Filipino. Why would they bring their culture in the province and refuse to adapt to our culture? Is it because their loyalty and allegiances remains with China? They are probably here to spread Communist ideas.”¹¹

The refusal of the Chinese to assimilate to the Filipino society was one of the reason why they were deliberately segregated from the majority society. This action towards the Chinese left a lasting effect that made the Chinese to isolate themselves from the Filipino society by choice (Weightman, 1967). This can be observed to the practices, language, customs and traditions they have which basically were foreign in the Philippines. With such observations, the locals in the province justifies their impression towards the loyalty of these Chinese Filipinos:

“Coming to our province, they should have adapted the customs and practices as a form of respect.. Instead, they brought with them their culture and even established their own cemetery and school. This just shows their strong connection with China than the Philippines.”¹²

Furthermore, in the mid-20th century, the Chinese Filipinos were almost excluded from various socio-cultural activities in the province. This was the result of the *Nationalization* and *Filipinization* by the Philippine government to develop that Filipino Nationalism (Langbid, 2014). For this attempt, policies and laws were passed by the government to restrict and curtail the involvement of “*aliens*” and to encourage the Filipinos to take control of the society. These policies prohibits the Chinese Filipinos to own a land and were strongly encouraged to assimilate to the Filipino society (Ngo, 2010). As a response, some of the Chinese Filipinos have taken local women as their “*common law wife*” who will then purchase a land under her name. Such move often led to the impression that local women were just used to legally

¹¹ Personal interview with a 67 year old local businessman who requested to keep his identity unknown.

¹² Personal interview to a 77 year old local housewife who grew up in the province.

acquire land property. On the other hand, it was the only way for the Chinese Filipinos to start their business by acquiring lands legally. Moreover, the Chinese Filipinos were also the targets of “corrupt” officials who tries to extort money by using deportation and expulsion as threats (Ngo, 2010).

“There were officials who extorts money every time a Chinese renews his Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR). If they refuse, these officials will then submit a deportation report against the Chinese. Because of fear, most of the Chinese had to comply with the demands from the officials. Others no longer renewed their ACR and had to change his name to a Filipino name.”¹³

The restrictions from the laws imposed by the Philippine government and the actions of “corrupt” officials towards the Chinese Filipino have provided realization that the only way their community could survive and further develop was to unite. Thus, they created an elaborate network of social and economic relationships based on lineage, hometown, surname, commerce, trade and cultural and political associations. Such associations have boosted and maintained a sense of communal identity and cohesiveness in an environment that is sometimes hostile to them (Wong, 1999).

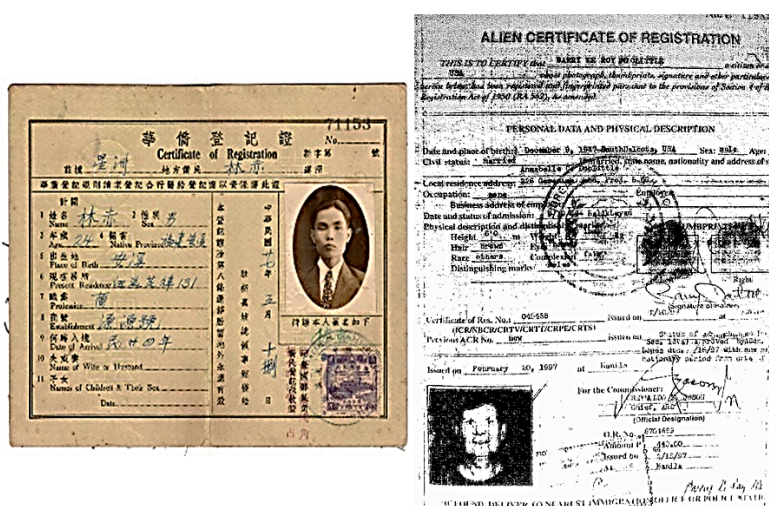


Figure 4. Sample Alien Certificate of Registration. © Google Images

In 1930, the Lanao Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce¹⁴ was founded and became the biggest and most important defense association of the Chinese Filipinos in the province (Legaspi and Vergara, 1996). The association later spearheaded the establishment of the Chinese Language School and the Chinese Cemetery in the province to preserve the Chinese culture and practices for their children.

¹³ Personal Interview with Mr. Roger Suminggit, whose father was a pure Chinese.

¹⁴ Founded by Mr Sy Seng Tiok, who became its first president, as a merchant association for the Chinese businessmen.



Figure 5. The Lanao Filipino – Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Inc Office in Iligan City. © Ngo, 2010

Economic Dominance

The economic position the Chinese Filipino have in the province greatly contributes to some hostilities from the locals. From rice milling business to retail stores, the Chinese Filipinos have been dominant when it comes to entrepreneurship. Their “*way of doing business*” combines with their being frugal, makes them a successful businessmen than the locals. Their frugality have been the reason why they were described by the locals as “*Tihik*” or “*Kuripot*”, which is a local term for being very thrifty (Langbid, 2014). However, their “way of doing business” seems to have an impression from the locals.

“These Chinese would usually resort to have an under the table transaction in order to allow them to continue with their business despite of clearly violating some rules when it comes to conducting trade.”¹⁵

When the Philippine government amended its policy to nationalized retail trade through the passage of the Retail Trade Nationalization Law and the Rice and Corn Trade Nationalization Law¹⁶, the Chinese were hit the hardest (Tan, 1993). This is because retail trading was their main income generating activities. The severity of the restrictions towards the Chinese have resulted to the practice of bribery to allow them to continue with their business. Such actions have been cited by the locals as proofs that the Chinese were dishonest when it comes to business (Weightman, 1967).

“The strict restrictions that have been imposed to us (the Chinese) in doing business greatly affected our family. My parents had to do something in order for us to have something to eat, otherwise, we won’t have anything to eat. Our family were just simply doing what we had to do to survive.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Personal Interview with a 54 year old local businessman who owns a hardware store.

¹⁶ These laws were attempts by the Philippine Government to curtail and exclude all foreigners from the business, allowing only companies owned by Filipinos to operate.

¹⁷ Personal Interview with Mr Santiago Ong, an upholstery owner, whose parents were both Chinese

For the Chinese in Lanao del Norte, such laws did not prevent them from engaging in trade with the locals. A number of Chinese transferred the ownership of the business to the members of their family who were naturalized. For others, they had no other option but to close their business resorting to alternative ways to earn money.

“My father decides to sell hotcakes and pancit (cooked noodles) along the streets of Iligan just to earn some money. Others were into shoe shining, scrap collectors, and farmers. While some of his friends even became household helpers and street vendors in other municipalities to make ends meet.”¹⁸

The letter of Instruction No. 270 under President Ferdinand Marcos rejuvenated the Chinese (now Chinese Filipinos) as they became naturalized citizen of the Philippines (Langbid, 2014). The commerce and trade in the province soon became their playground again as they were now able to renewed the business they operated. Retail stores, hardware, restaurants, rice mills, bakeries were almost controlled by the Chinese Filipinos. This economic dominance of the Chinese Filipinos when it comes to commerce and trade, came into clash with the rising Filipino middle class, who in turn, regards the Chinese Filipinos as business rivals and an obstacle (Weightman, 1967). To some locals, they accused the Chinese Filipinos of cheating when it comes to business. Although the locals admits that the presence of the Chinese Filipinos have been very significant, there were still some speculations and suspicions against them.

“From the time the Chinese opened their store, I noticed that they were selling their goods at a cheaper price than the average price value in the market. Sometimes they even had this buy one take one offer, and still gained profit from it.”¹⁹

The Chinese “way of doing business” requires one to have patience and the perseverance in dealing with customers. Most of the time, their business is a family-operated type wherein every member of the family were expected to help. Such attitudes and practice contributes to the higher rate of success of the Chinese Filipinos in business. Despite being ridiculed or verbally abused by the locals, the stores of the Chinese Filipinos were still patronized by the locals compared to other stores.

“My parents taught me everything when it comes to business transactions, especially in dealing with people. Our business is operated by the whole family to inject to our mind the value of how hard it is to earn at an early age. My father always remind me with the idea that no matter how small our profit in a day will be, as long as it is continuous, it is much better than earning bigger profit but seldom.”²⁰

¹⁸ Personal Interview with Prof. Rodolfo Yu, a retired professor from MSU-IIT

¹⁹ Personal Interview with a 63 year old Filipino businessman who owns a retail store

²⁰ Personal Interview with a 55 year old Chinese Filipino businessman who manages a grocery store

Educational Challenges

The aspiration of the overseas Chinese to educate their children and to rear them as true-blooded Chinese paved way for the conceptualization of establishing a Chinese school in the country. However, establishing a private Chinese education was prohibited during the Spanish rule. The Anglo-Chinese School, which was first Chinese school in the Philippines, was only established in 1898 (Sussman, 1976).

With some anti-Chinese attitudes and feelings in the province, it was never easy for the Chinese to establish a Chinese Language School in the area. The suspicions from the locals have made it difficult for them, especially to their children, who were sometimes targets of ridicule from the society. The popular term “*Intsik wakang, baboy tikangkang*”²¹ was commonly used to mock and ridicule the Chinese.

*“During our younger years, my brother and I were sometimes the targets of jokes from our neighbor. They call us “Intsik waking”, and in that time, we don’t even know what that means. We didn’t mind them since they were our playmates. But sometimes other kids also tried to call us such names.”*²²

In 1938, the Chinese in Lanao del Norte had concentrated their efforts for the establishment of a Chinese school. This move was then spearheaded by the association with the support of the Chinese community in the province. Since there were only a few Chinese at that time, the school started with only a little more than ten students and operates in the same building with the association. Before the outbreak of the war, the Chinese educational system was patterned with China’s educational system. However, in 1951, when the school was re-opened, it adopted Taiwan’s educational system.



Figure 6. Lanao Community School in 1951. © LCHS, 2010

²¹ Literally means “Bow-legged Chinese, overturned pig”, the pig represents a piggy bank that states the Chinese is already poor since his piggy bank is overturned.

²² Personal Interview with a 46 year old Chinese businessman.

In 1947, the Chinese were given favorable news regarding the operation of schools. The Treaty of Amity between the Philippine Government and the Koumintang²³ gave the two countries the liberty to establish schools for the education of their children. During this period, majority of the Chinese Schools were registered, financed and controlled by the Taiwan Government with the assistance of local Chinese businessmen (Sussman, 1976). This eventually lessen the perception of the locals connecting them to Communism but still there were those who distrust them.

“Chinese education was introduced to spread the idea of Communism. By using the Chinese language as the medium of instruction in school, it is clear that they do not want other people to understand what they were discussing. Chinese have strong connections with China, and that’s the reason why they wanted to bring the Chinese education and culture here in the province.”²⁴

With the attempt of the Philippine Government for the Nationalization on all aspects of the country, the Chinese school was not exempted. In 1972, the Philippine government amended its policy concerning schools which Filipinized all private schools in the country. The policy would Filipinize the administration, supervision, instruction (that includes textbook control) and service staff of all schools run by foreign nationals. This was just the start because by January 1973, when the new constitution was ratified, it states in Article XV, section 8 (7):

“Educational institutions other than those established by religious orders, mission boards and charitable organizations shall be solely owned by citizens of the Philippines, or corporations or associations’ sixty per centum of the capital of which is owned by such citizen.”

The Lanao Chinese School (renamed Lanao Community School) had to impose new regulations. Despite being considered a Chinese language school, the medium of instruction was restricted to English and Tagalog. Chinese language studies were limited to around 12 – 15 periods only per week. Even the choice of textbooks had to be approved by the Department of Education (Quimbo, 1987). However, for the Chinese, regardless of the new regulations imposed, still had to encourage their children to carry on with their Chinese education by means of tutorials and private lessons (Ngo, 2010).

“The need for the next generation to continue to use and value the language and culture of the Chinese is still very important. My parents would always tell me to always be proud of our culture and by that, I also need to impart to my children the value of the Chinese language and culture for them to also understand their grandparents. Although at this time, it may be

²³ Was then the official government in mainland China after the Second World War

²⁴ Personal Interview with a 54 year old local businessman who owns a hardware store.

difficult, but still, I am encouraging my children to speak in Chinese especially inside the house.”²⁵

For the non-Chinese locals in the province, the establishment of the Chinese School will only eventually result in the separation of Filipino and Chinese youth (Sussman, 1967). This concept also holds true in the province since the locals perceived the Chinese school as an exclusive institution for the Chinese. And also, the propagation of the Chinese language will just create this Chinese identity that separates itself from the community.

Concluding Notes

As Chester Hunt (1956) stated that this behavior was the result of the three hundred years of Spanish rule and a half century of American regime that creates a Filipino attitude which is oriented away from the culture of which it is in territorial proximity and towards the standards of the West. Forced to leave their homes because of dire conditions, the Chinese Filipinos seek greener pastures in the Philippines for economic opportunity and stability. Although they had no intentions at first of making the country as their permanent home, regulations and restrictions have prompted some of them to obtain Philippine citizenship to avoid deportation and expulsion from the government. The geographical proximity of the country to South China attracts many immigrants, especially to places where economic opportunities are abundant. This led to the increasing influx of the Chinese in the Philippines who then were seeking economic opportunities to various places in the country.

The policies and the attitudes of the community towards the Chinese Filipinos clearly varies on the society they are in. The Chinese Filipinos in large urban places experience a harsher anti-Chinese attitudes compared to those who are in small urban areas such as in Lanao del Norte. The years of colonization under the Spaniards, Americans and even a short era of the Japanese have contributed to the emergence of a Sino phobic attitude. Despite becoming a Philippine citizen, the Chinese Filipino in Lanao del Norte still experience distrust from the locals by bringing and practicing their culture into their new society. Also, the entrepreneur skills and their “*way of doing business*” have been the reasons why they became the targets by the locals. Policies and laws were passed to curtail their involvement in the business activity. In spite of being blamed or used as scapegoats by the society, the Chinese Filipinos still remains dominant when it comes to the economic control in the country. And lastly, their objective of teaching their children with the language and education from their homeland was also restricted but it does not prevent them from introducing a Chinese education in the country. Despite such attitudes and feelings against the Chinese Filipinos in Lanao del Norte, they were able to overcome such challenges and remains a vital member of the society until at present.

²⁵ Personal Interview with a 61 year old Chinese businessman who is a member of the association

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