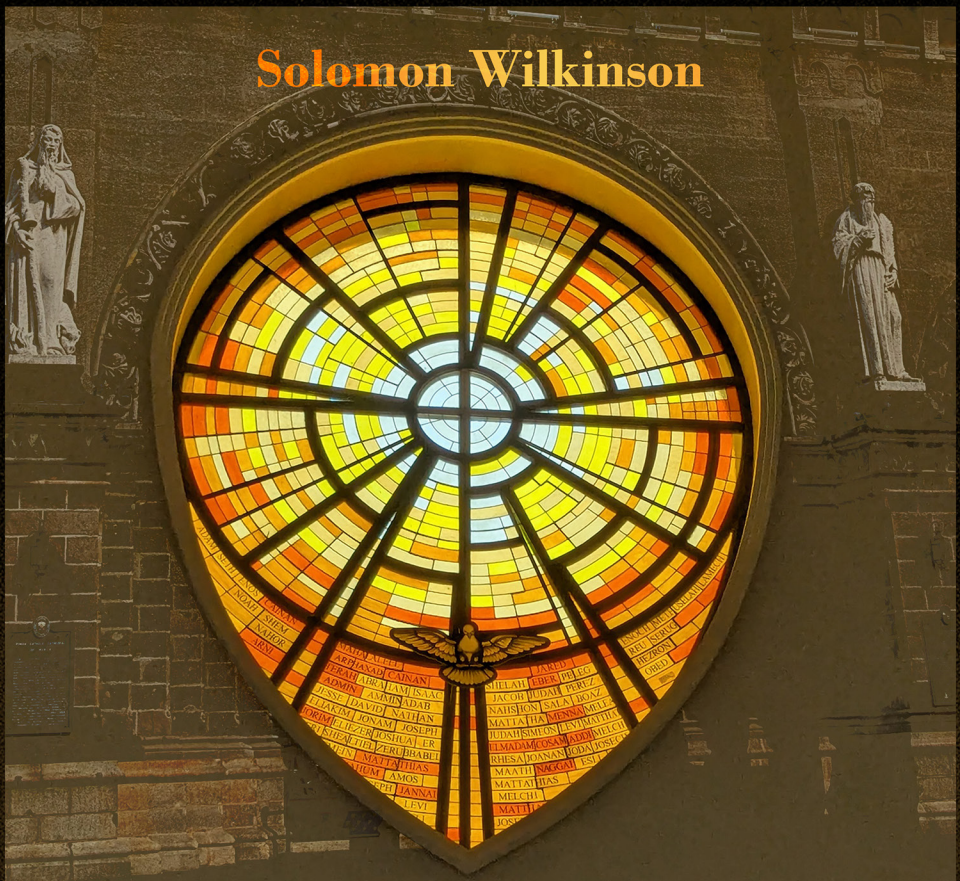
Solomon Wilkinson



Sacred Centres

Sacred Space as a Framework of Filipino Identity



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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how sacred architecture in the Philippines contributes to the formation of cultural identity. It focuses on Catholic churches in both urban and rural environments through how they structure social life, memory and belief. The study traces three key periods; the Spanish colonialism, American civic modernism, and contemporary metropolitan development. This is to show how churches have remained a central structure while in an ever-changing spatial and political environment. Drawing on theorists such as Rossi (1982), Lefebvre (1991), and Tuan (1977), as well as Filipino architectural historians; Lico (2008), De Viana (2001), and Jose (1991), this research finds that urban churches act more as visual and spatial landmarks. While rural churches engage in belonging through participation and community collaboration. Overall, this dissertation argues that sacred architecture in the Philippines functions not only as a religious institution but as a cultural and spatial anchor, which links historical continuity with contemporary identity.

INTRODUCTION

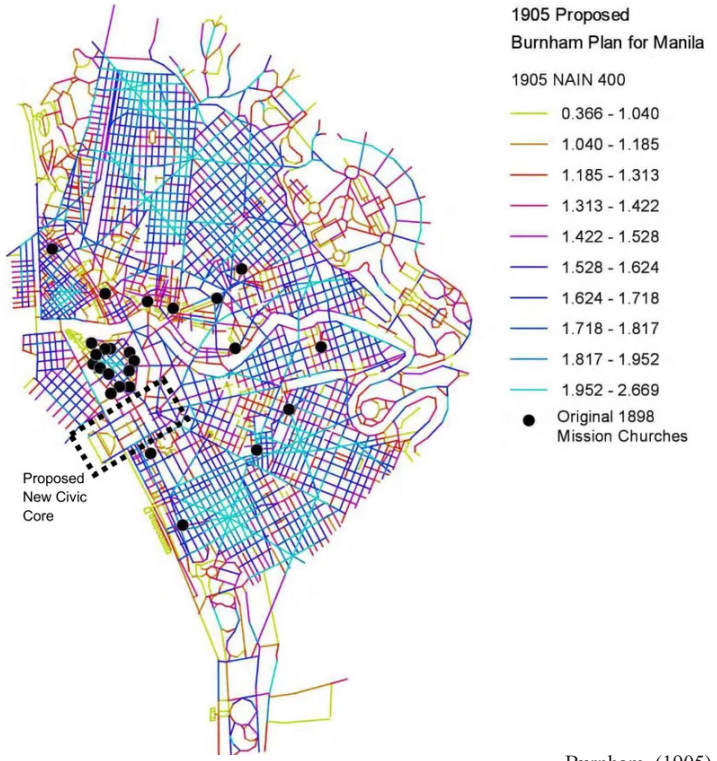
This dissertation will explore how religious architecture in the Philippines has recorded the relationship between identity, community, and spatial order – the way in which power, belief, and society are manifested through built form – over time. Churches inhabit a physically privileged position within Filipino spaces as they operate as both spatial anchors and social organisers across urban and rural contexts. These churches are architecturally intentional spaces whose spatial and symbolic qualities organise cultural and social life. This dissertation examines how sacred spaces operate differently across urban and rural conditions, and how these differences reveal deeper tensions and continuities within Filipino identity.

The central line of inquiry asks how Filipino Catholic architecture express identity through spatial order, and how do urban and rural contexts produce different architectural and social expressions of faith?

In rural and marginalised contexts in particular, churches have also functioned as sites of resilience during periods of poverty, political repression, and armed conflict, offering continuity and collective support beyond their institutional role. To address this, the dissertation traces how spatial order has been historically imposed and adapted from the Spanish colonial period (16th century) through American occupation and into contemporary postcolonial urbanisation. The Philippines is developed within a colonial spatial framework functioned not merely as urban templates but as instruments of social control, using planning, infrastructure, and

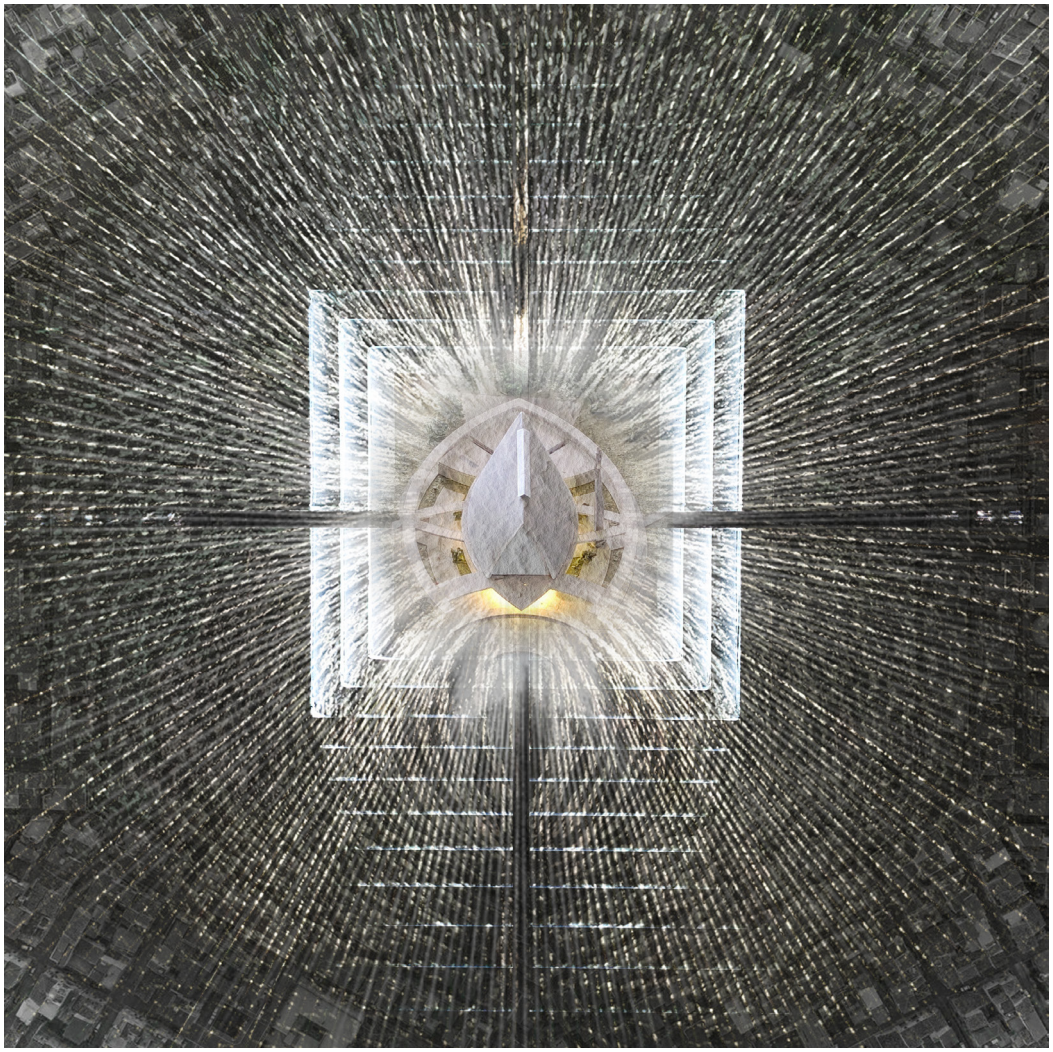
1.1

1905 Proposed Burnham Plan for Manila, NAIN radius 400 - showing 1898 Spanish Manila's original mission churches, integrated into Burnham's proposed broader spatial network.



1.1 Burnham. (1905)

spatial hierarchy to reshape everyday life. Under the Spanish Laws of the Indies (1573), settlements followed a plaza complex layout in which the church anchored civic life. Its position materialised both religious authority and political control. Later, Daniel Burnham's 1905 Plan for Manila reimagined the capital through the principles of the City Beautiful Movement (1890s-1920s), which laid out a new spatial ideology which was grounded in geometry and monumentality. These systems reinforced uneven relationships between the centre and the outskirts of the city, where being close to the church and plaza meant having more authority and power. This demonstrates that spatial form actively influences social connections rather than reflecting them, a point reiterated by



Visual 1
How the church acts as a central and key part of daily life, shaping public spaces and influencing how communities use and navigate their environment.

1.2

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) argument that space is always shaped by dominant power structures and everyday practices.

In the urban area of Manila, these spatial environments continue to appear in complex ways. These urban churches often serve as monumental landmarks; they have an enduring presence that shape both the city's physical layout and the shared consciousness of its people. This reflects Aldo Rossi's (1982) proposition that certain buildings become enduring "urban artefacts" where form preserves memory, even as cities transform around them. Yet the contemporary metropolis introduces new pressures: density, vertical growth, commercialisation, and spectacle. Manila's contemporary condition cannot be understood without acknowledging its historical role as a colonial trading port and later as a strategic node in global economic networks. As Tyner (2008) observes, "Manila itself did not emerge as a major manufacturing center. Rather, the city served as an entrepôt, with the exchange in Manila of Mexican silver for Chinese silks and porcelains…" (Tyner, 2008, p.11). This early positioning as an entrepôt established the city as a site of circulation and exchange, a logic that has persisted into the present through financialised urban development, service economies, and global labour mobility. From the Manila–Acapulco galleon trade to its current position within transnational finance and labour flows, the city's spatial form reflects layers of economic extraction, infrastructural pressure, and social stratification. Rem Koolhaas' (1978) analysis of the "culture of congestion" in the book *Delirious New York* helps interpret the condition of cities like Manila, where sacred spaces must negotiate the surrounding intensities of capitalist development. Churches such as the Manila Cathedral, and the works of the architect Dominic Galicia demonstrate how sacred architecture continues to assert presence and identity within this highly charged urban environment.

Identity in this dissertation is understood not as a fixed cultural essence but as a spatial and social practice, continually produced

through everyday rituals, movements, and occupations of space; "An investment in the pregivenness of identities… is likely to miss the forest of symbols for the trees of referentiality…" (Ganguly, 2001, p.30). Here Ganguly (2001) rejects the view of identity as an inherited or essential category, arguing instead that identity must be understood through its symbolic, relational and context-dependent formations. By emphasising the absence of "pregivenness," she positions identity as emergent rather than static, always mediated by social practice, discourse and spatial ordering rather than cultural purity or biological descent. Although many rural churches still reflect the spatial logic of colonial planning, they often provide meaning through participation, rituals, and everyday life rather than monumentality. Through Yi-Fu Tuan's *Space and Place* (1977), the distinction between "*space*" as openness and "*place*" as lived experience becomes essential in understanding how communities in areas such as South Cotabato transform simple structures into profound cultural anchors. This position aligns with Peeren's (2010) view that collective identities are not inherited wholesale, but emerge through representation, contingent social practices, and shared symbolic forms. In this sense, churches, whether vernacular or community-built, demonstrate how sacredness is produced through collective labour and environmental adaptation rather than architectural spectacle.

By comparing the conditions in urban and rural areas, this dissertation shows that Filipino churches do not fit into a simple urban-rural divide but instead fall along a continuous spectrum. In both contexts, they remain central to the notion of identity, just though through different means. In cities it is shown through permanence and visibility whereas in provinces, it's through intimacy and participation. Drawing on Gerard Lico's (2008) historical analysis, this study frames the Filipino church as a cultural artefact shaped by colonial imposition but continually reinterpreted through local agency.

Ultimately, the dissertation proposes that the Filipino church operates as a living relic and a structure where memory, belief, power, and community converge. "Every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework." (Halbwachs, 1950, p.7). Across a variety of scales and settings, sacred architecture continues to organise Filipino social life as it facilitates between historical spatial orders and contemporary identities.

CHAPTER 1

Urban Sacred Spaces: Power and Representation

Urban sacred architecture in the Philippines has long been shaped by systems of authority, colonial planning and modern aspirations. In major urban centres such as Manila, Catholic churches operate not merely as religious buildings but as institutional artefacts such as objects that stabilise memory and hierarchy within the city. This chapter examines how the spatial order of Filipino urbanism, beginning with Spanish colonial planning and later American reorganisation, has produced sacred spaces that express power, identity, and continuity. Drawing on theorists such as Rossi (1982), Lefebvre (1991), Koolhaas (1978), and Filipino scholars including Lico (2008), De Viana (2001), Jose (1991), Galende (1996), Hila (1992), and Javellana (1997), this section demonstrates how urban churches occupy a dual role as both monuments of authority and evolving symbols of modern Filipino identity.

The spatial logic of Filipino cities originated with the Spanish Laws of the Indies (1573), which imposed a strict planning template: a central plaza, framed by the church, cabildo (municipal hall), and key civic spaces. As Lico (2008, p. 109) explains, the plaza complex was "an indispensable factor in the in the organisation of… the Philippines", positioning the church as the visual and ideological anchor of urban life. This was a deliberate act of governance "Churches marked the landscape with an unmistakable Catholic presence, shaping the rhythms of colonial life" (Jose, 1991, p.16). Ganguly's framework allows us to interpret colonial planning as not merely spatial but identity-forming, embedding racialised hierarchies and cultural subordination into the lived environment. The church's placement was not incidental but served to inscribe

2.1

San Agustin Chruch in Intramuros, Manila, Philippines.

It is the first religious structure built by the Spanish on the island of Luzon. The current stone church, completed in 1607, is the third structure on the site, following two wooden churches destroyed by fire in 1574 and 1583.

2.2

Binondo Church and convent, Manila, Philippines, 1899



2.1 Author. (2025)

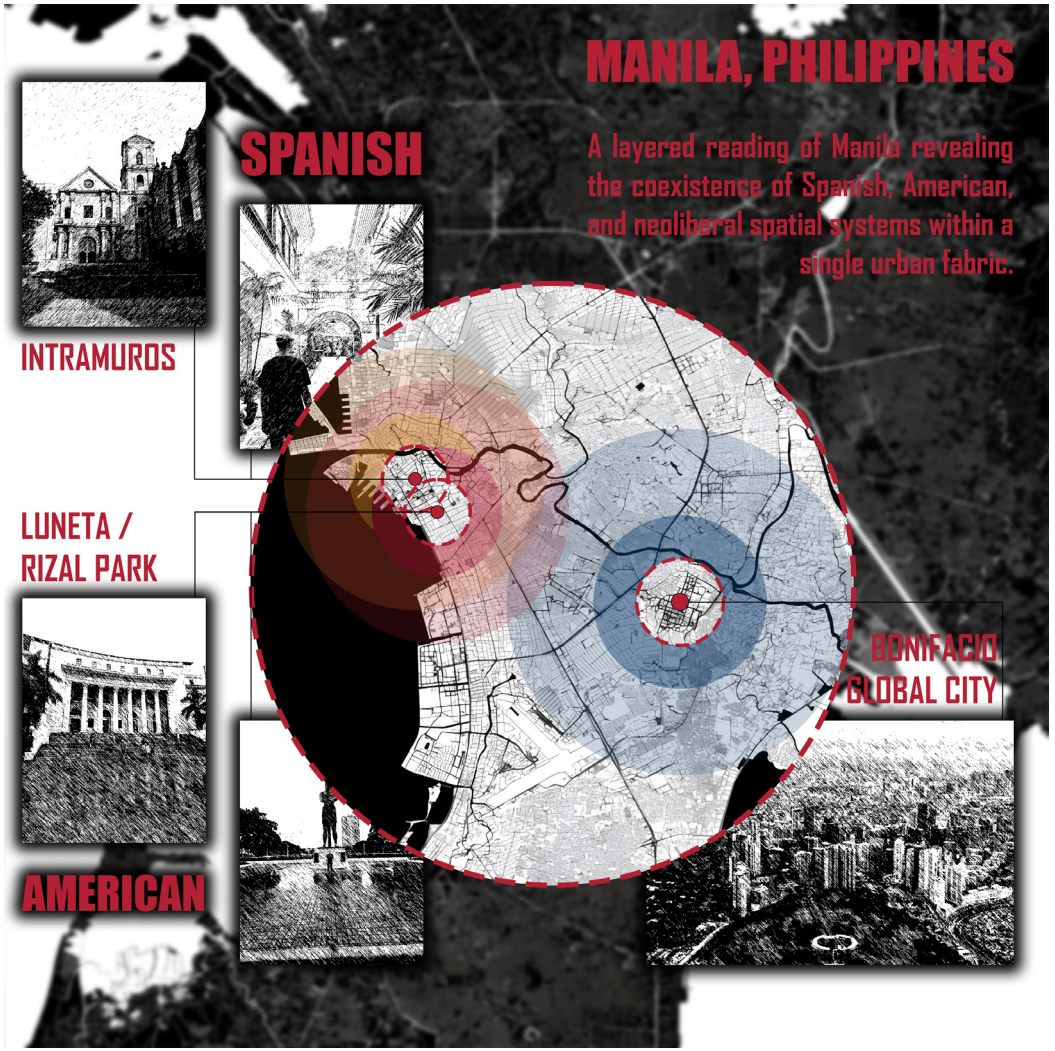


2.2 Tewell. (2014)

Christian authority into the very layout of settlements.

Aldo Rossi's (1982) concept of the urban artefact helps illuminate this logic. Rossi argues that monuments function as "fixed points in the urban dynamic… stronger than economic laws" (Rossi, 1982, p. 100). Spanish colonial planners created such fixed points intentionally. Buildings in Manila such as the San Agustin Church (Intramuros) and the Binondo Church (Binondo) served as architectural anchors whose longevity, even through its dilapidation over its history, has influenced how residents understood their city. They were designed not only for worship but to establish spatial hierarchy which was a way of organising society through built form. This connection between authority and spatial centrality is reinforced by Jose (1991, p. 16), who notes in *Simbahan* that early colonial churches "marked the landscape with an unmistakable Catholic presence, shaping the rhythms of colonial life." In this sense, churches were ideological instruments. They consolidated religious power while facilitating the colonial restructuring of Filipino society.

Historical accounts of Manila's early districts further support this interpretation. De Viana (2001) emphasises that Binondo's development "reflected the intertwined influence of commerce, evangelisation, and governance" (p. 42). Located just across the



Visual 2
A layered reading of Manila, which reveals the coexistence of Spanish, American, and neoliberal spatial systems within a single urban fabric.

2.3

2.4

Makati Photo: Pasig River In Guadalupe, Makati City.

The Pasig River served as an important means of transport; it was Manila's lifeline and center of economic activity.



2.4 totoyba2. (2019)

Pasig River from Intramuros, the district depended heavily on its Chinese merchant community, yet the church remained its central landmark. This placement signalled Spanish control and the infusion of Christian ideology into commercial life. As a result, the sacred urban space became a focal point where economic activity, racial hierarchy, and religious authority converged.

Spanish colonial urbanism positioned the church as both spiritual and territorial infrastructure within the plaza complex. Lico (2008) notes that this system embedded authority in everyday space, while Galende (1996) describes durable masonry as central to evangelisation. Many mission churches also incorporated defensive features, with Javellana (1997) describing "fortified plans" in contested areas. Valera-Turalba (2005) similarly observes that evangelisation introduced "building constructions of enduring durable characteristics" that reshaped settlement patterns. Through these processes, the church became inseparable from the production of colonial space.

This configuration aligns with Lefebvre's (1991) insight that social space is shaped by structures of authority and is "the outcome of past actions" (p. 73). The Spanish imposed a spatial order in

which religious hierarchy structured daily life which embedded Catholicism into the very fabric of urban settlement. Through this spatial order, churches functioned simultaneously as spiritual centres and symbols of colonial control.

Urban sacred space underwent a second transformation under American rule. Daniel Burnham's Plan for Manila (1905) sought to impose City Beautiful principles onto the city's existing fabric. Burnham envisioned Manila as an orderly, rational, modern capital defined by wide boulevards, monumental vistas, and civic grandeur. Yet, as De Viana (2001, p. 88) observes, Burnham "reconfigured Manila without erasing its colonial spatial memory." In other words, the American plan did not destroy the plaza complex model, it reframed it.

American rule reconfigured Manila through civic planning and infrastructural reform, exemplified by the Burnham Plan's emphasis on legibility and circulation. Yet this modernisation produced uncertainty regarding architectural identity; Bautista (2000) describes the post-war period as an "identity crisis," as modernist aesthetics clashed with local expectations. Within this condition, churches retained cultural continuity, linking colonial, American and modern spatial orders.

Under Burnham, sacred architecture was repositioned within a civic landscape shaped by American ideals of progress and discipline. However, the church retained symbolic weight. Rossi's (1982) notion of the city as "a locus of collective memory" (1982, p. 10) is evident here: even as Manila was modernised, churches remained crucial nodes of identity. Galende (1996, p. 74) supports this continuity, describing Augustinian churches as "guardians of place" whose reconstruction and restoration preserved urban memory despite political change. Tyner's (2008) work helps reframes the American period as the beginning of Manila's integration into cosmopolitan and transnational circuits, not just aesthetic modernisation. At the same time, urban churches became

aligned with the American project of modernisation. Javellana (1991, p. 58) notes that Jesuit architecture of the period sought to "inspire wonder and convey the power of the faith," suggesting that sacred architecture continued to perform institutional work even within new colonial conditions. The introduction of neoclassical government buildings by American architects intensified the visual hierarchy of Manila, and the church remained part of that compositional order and was no longer the only monument, but it was still a central one.

Through Lefebvre's (1991) framework, this period can be understood as an example of how space is continually shaped by successive authorities. Lefebvre (1991) emphasises that social space "is the outcome of past actions" (1991, p. 73), meaning that each new layer of planning incorporates and reworks what already exists. The Spanish introduced a religious spatial order, embedding authority in the plaza complex, while the Americans later imposed a civic-modern order on top of it. Sacred architecture persisted across these transitions because, as Lefebvre (1991) explains, space "permits fresh actions… while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others" (p. 73): churches continued to structure behaviour, ritual, and social life even as colonial priorities changed. Their endurance shows how architecture forms part of the spatial strategy of governance, maintaining continuity even when political power shifts.

Thus, the American period added a new spatial layer (modern, civic, and aesthetic) onto an already religiously structured urban order. The resulting Manila was not a replacement of one system by another but a palimpsest of overlapping spatial intentions: Spanish Catholic centrality intertwined with American civic modernity.

Contemporary Manila is defined by density, verticality, and rapid commercialisation. These are the conditions that Rem Koolhaas (1978) famously describes as the "culture of congestion" (p. 10), while Hamnett and Forbes (2011) note in Asian cities "intense



Author. (2025) 2.5



Author. (2025) 2.6

2.5

Overhead electrical wiring creating visual clutter in the streetscape

2.6

Density of apartment/condo buildings in Metro Manila, Philippines.

commercial pressure" and "rising spatial inequality" (Hamnett & Forbes, 2011). These pressures complicate urban legibility, yet churches continue to assert presence within this landscape. This framework translates effectively to Manila, where malls, highways, and high-rises form a spectacle-driven landscape in which the church must negotiate visibility and relevance. His argument that modern cities produce spectacle as a spatial condition helps explain the urban environment in which Manila's churches now operate.

In cities such as Makati and Quezon City, as well as districts like Ortigas, and Global City, churches exist within a landscape dominated by high-rise business towers and large shopping malls. For example, the Greenbelt Chapel in Makati sits at the centre of a retail complex, however, its circular, open-air form stands in contrast to the surrounding malls and offices, as a result, it still draws many of worshippers daily. In this setting, sacred space functions as a counterpoint to commercial display, even as it becomes engrossed in these spaces. Koolhaas' statement that "architecture is Manhattan's new religion" (1978, p. 21) resonates strongly here: the Manila chapel becomes a spiritual sanctuary

precisely because of the intensity of the space around it.

Other urban churches perform similar roles. The Manila Cathedral repeatedly reconstructed (eight times since its initial construction in 1581) due to wars and natural disasters, now operates as a national symbol and a heritage marker. "The regime could command obedience, but it could not command belief." (O'Brien, 1987, p.37). Its ability to retain authority within such a competitive visual environment demonstrates what Rossi (1982) describes as the enduring power of urban artefacts.

Contemporary architects such as Dominic Galicia reinterpret sacred architecture within these pressures. Galicia's Magallanes Church (Makati, 2007) and Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Evo City, Kawit, 2025) deploy minimalist forms, filtered natural light, creating a sense of tranquillity, which responses to what is described as the "visual noise" of the Filipino metropolis. His work aligns with Tuan's (1977) insight that place provides security amid the openness (and sometimes chaos) of space. These sacred places in modern Manila serve as safe spaces, landmarks, and cultural statements that show the city's layered history while also keeping things the same as the city changes quickly. They operate at the intersection of tradition and transformation, continually restating the significance of faith within a rapidly evolving landscape.

The conditions of congestion in Manila is a prime example of how density, noise, visual saturation, and constant movement create an environment in which sacred architecture must takes on new roles. Koolhaas's (1978) concept of the "culture of congestion," originally describing Manhattan, is increasingly relevant to Southeast Asian megacities where rapid development outpaces traditional planning. Manila's congestion results not only from a high population density, but also from the coexistence of formal and informal systems. Within this complexity, the church serves as both a refuge for the body and a point of spatial clarity, giving order to an overwhelming surrounding. Koolhaas (1978)



Visual 3
A brief timeline of the Manila Cathedral, which was first constructed in 1581. Since then its been rebuild eight times over through war, natural disasters, and aging. Due to the constant rebuilds, this church has undergone a variety of architectural changes.

2.7

argues that congestion becomes a cultural logic through which cities organise mobility and desire. Greenbelt Chapel reflects this dynamic: positioned within a retail-driven environment, its open, circular form interrupts the district's verticality while simultaneously participating in its visual spectacle. This dual role demonstrates architecture's ability to "survive by embracing the logic of spectacle" (Koolhaas, 1978, p. 17).

Ultimately, the "culture of congestion" intensifies rather than diminishes the role of sacred architecture. The more overwhelming Manila becomes, the more meaningful its churches stand out as anchors of identity that link historical spatial orders with contemporary urban conditions.

This intensification is most evident in how sacred spaces structure movement within the congested city. Even when surrounded by privatised estates or fragmented road networks, churches create what Lefebvre (1991) calls "rhythms" of social life, these are patterns of gathering and encounter that give the city temporal coherence (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 205). In Manila, these rhythms often stabilise districts otherwise defined by commercial turnover or infrastructural strain. The daily Masses at Greenbelt, the hourly flows around Quiapo, and the weekly novenas at Baclaran each generate spatial regularity within environments marked by constant flux. These patterns reinforce the church not only as a fixed point in Rossi's (1982) sense, but as an active organiser of metropolitan movement and behaviour.



Author. (2025) 2.8

2.8

Front view of a 1:50 scale model of a proposal of a new church in Lucao, Dagupan, Pangasinan.



Author. (2025) 2.9

2.9

Side view of a 1:50 scale model of a church.

This continuous curved form allows the church to 'stand out' as a symbolic anchor, aligning with the theme of sacred architecture asserting identity within saturated environments.

CHAPTER 2

Rural Sacred Spaces: Faith and Colective Belonging

Rural sacred spaces in the Philippines present a different relationship between architecture, community, and identity compared to their urban counterparts. Urban churches often reflect structured planning and organised ambition, where they would benefit from formal design processes. In contrast, rural churches typically arise through communal effort, local craftsmanship and materials. In these settings, sacred architecture is not a monument of power but a vessel of shared belonging. Tuan's (1977) differentiation between space and place is fundamental as the space transforms into place when it is infused with experiential significance and memory. Rural churches operate precisely this way, where attachment is formed through everyday rhythms and repeated gatherings rather than through a grand architectural design. Their spatial order arises organically from local needs, rather than from the formal impositions that shaped colonial cities.

The distinction between rural sacred spaces and their urban counterparts is further reinforced by the way time operates within these environments. In rural contexts, the church is not experienced as a destination separated from everyday life, but as part of a continuous spatial rhythm. This continuity reflects Lefebvre's (1991) assertion that lived space is produced through repetition and habit rather than formal design. This temporal embeddedness strengthens the emotional bond between community and church. Halbwachs (1950) notes that "we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings" (1950, p.7). Tuan's (1977) concept of "topophilia" becomes particularly relevant here, as attachment is not formed



Author. (2025) 3.1



Author. (2025) 3.2

3.1

Bahay Kubo near Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

3.2

"six-lane" traffic cutting through a province, Tupi, South Cotabato.

It is recognised as the "Fruit, Vegetable, and Flower Basket of South Cotabato" due to its rich agricultural output.

through visual dominance or monumentality but through intimacy and familiarity. These spaces are remembered not only as sites of worship, but also as settings for life transitions (baptisms, weddings, and funerals). Each event reinforces the church as a place where personal memory intersects with shared identity, which deepens its cultural significance beyond the architectural form.

Vernacular traditions strongly shape rural sacred buildings. Hila, Perez, and Dacanay (1992) describe vernacular construction as grounded in "local materials, local skills, and local ways of life" (p. 12), a definition that directly applies to rural chapels built from timber, woven bamboo, and lightweight plant materials. This supports the idea that rural sacred space's express identity through labour, climate adaptation, and community participation rather than monumentality. These buildings reflect what the authors call an "adaptive intelligence" (p. 41), demonstrating the community's understanding of airflow, humidity, and climatic patterns. Such structures are not static: they are repaired after storms, expanded as congregations grow, and adapted to seasonal needs. This incremental growth embodies Lefebvre's (1991) notion of lived

space, which he defines as a spatiality shaped through "symbols and images linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life" (1991, p. 39). In rural churches, these symbols take form through craft traditions, donated materials, and the visible imprint of local labour.

Materiality also plays a key role in how rural churches interact within their environment. In the south of the Philippines, more specifically, South Cotabato, the T'boli community incorporate timber framing and semi-open structures to allow breezes to pass through, reflecting vernacular strategies for comfort in humid conditions. In Bohol, coral-stone chapels, documented by Akpedonu and Saloma (2010), use masonry that moderates heat and offers protection against coastal winds. These material choices cultivate a sacred atmosphere through sensory engagement as the bond grows from the memories and experiences people associate with particular landscapes. Materiality shapes the transformation of space into place. Rural churches often use timber, bamboo or coral stone, responding to climate and local craft. Reyes and Ong note Filipino dwellings value "indigenous materials, cross-ventilation, and the free flow of air and light" (Reyes & Ong, 2012), qualities echoed in vernacular churches where permeability produces comfort without monumentality.

Equally significant is the communal labour that underpins rural sacred architecture. Many provincial churches are built through *bayanihan*, a reciprocal system of shared work in which families contribute time, skills, or materials. Hila (1992) argue that such structures "carry the identity of a people" (p. 51) because their construction is inseparable from the social relationships that sustain them. Akpedonu and Saloma (2010) similarly note that traditional Boholano structures embody "collective agency expressed through shared building knowledge" (p. 22). In rural churches, labour becomes devotion: the same community that gathers for prayer gathers again for roofing, carpentry, and maintenance. This cyclical relationship between ritual and construction reinforces



Google Earth. (2025) 3.3

3.3

This Church, Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ), coming off a straight main road, surrounded by dense nature in Tupi, South Cotabato

Lefebvre's (1991) argument that social space is "the outcome of past actions" (1991, p. 73), continually reproduced and reaffirmed through everyday practices.

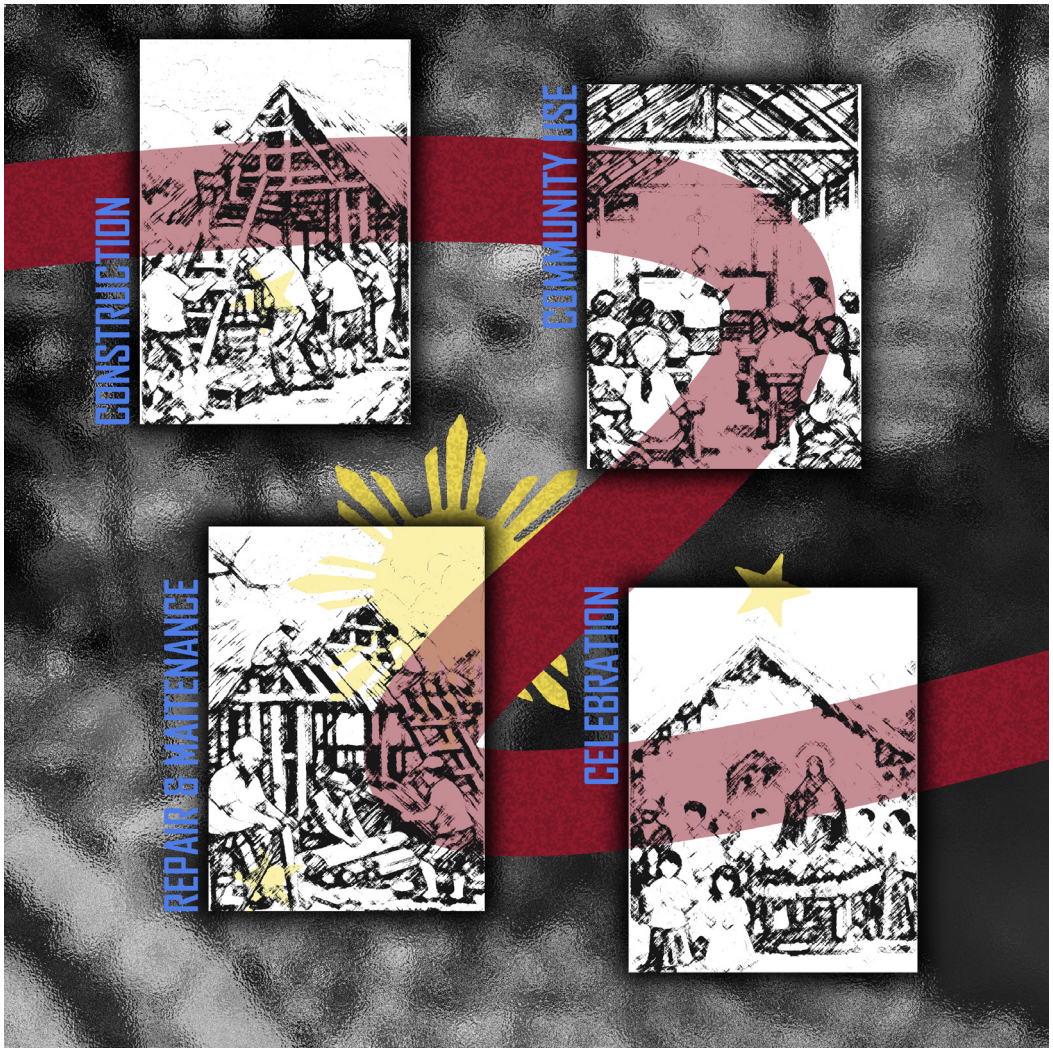
The flexibility of rural sacred architecture further distinguishes it from urban religious spaces. Many provincial churches function as multipurpose structures, accommodating schooling and shelter during extreme weather. This adaptability reflects what Lefebvre (1991) describes as a representational space: a space shaped by use, symbolism, and lived experience rather than abstract planning. In this sense, rural churches resist rigid categorisation. Sacredness is not confined to the interior but diffuses into the surrounding landscape, reinforcing the idea that faith is practiced collectively and spatially, rather than confined to a ritual space alone.

This openness also influences how authority is expressed within rural sacred spaces. Whereas urban churches historically materialised colonial power through scale and alignment within plaza complexes, rural churches tend to express authority relationally rather than hierarchically. Clergy are often closely integrated into community life, and decision-making regarding

maintenance or expansion is frequently negotiated collectively. This aligns with Lico's (2008) argument that Filipino architecture has continually been reinterpreted through local agency, even when derived from colonial forms. In rural contexts, the church becomes less a symbol of imposed order and more a framework for social cohesion, shaped by mutual dependence between architecture and community.

The spatial order of rural sacred spaces emerges from this communal foundation. Unlike the formal plaza complex that organises colonial towns, rural villages often develop around the church not because of imposed hierarchy but because of functional and emotional centrality. The church may sit beside the barangay hall, near rice fields, or adjacent to a communal marketplace, yet its position becomes central through repeated use. Jose (1991) notes that rural mission churches, though modest compared to urban cathedrals, possessed "profound significance as places of refuge and continuity" (p. 84). Here, centrality is a lived condition rather than the result of planning laws. This accessibility is integral to how rural communities experience their sacred spaces. Rather than being built by urban development (as in Manila or Makati), rural churches are embedded in open landscapes where people of all ages move through fields, pathways, and rivers just to get to this sacred space. The rural church becomes a centre of purpose, not because of architectural form but because it mediates between belief and community life.

Faith is also practiced in relation to the environment where environmental vulnerability further reinforces this relationship as rural churches are frequently exposed to typhoons, earthquakes, and floodings. These are conditions that necessitate continual repair and rebuilding, rather than diminishing their significance, this fragility strengthens communal bonds. Each reconstruction embeds new layers of memory and labour into the structure, echoing Rossi's claim that the endurance of an artefact lies not in its physical permanence but in its role within collective memory



Visual 4
The four panels demonstrate the chapel's role as an evolving sacred space shaped by use and collective care. From building and repair to worship and festivity, the image conveys how architecture becomes sacred through repeated communal investment, reinforcing cultural continuity and identity across time.

2.7

(Rossi, 1982). In this way, rural churches operate as evolving records of resilience, where material change does not erase identity but reinforces it.

Heritage scholars emphasise that rural sacred architecture maintains a continuity of identity that predates formal colonial planning. Galende (1996) describes early missionary churches outside major cities as possessing "pastoral intimacy" (p. 121), anchoring communities through familiarity rather than symbolic domination. Even when damaged by conflict or natural disasters, the rural church is often rebuilt by the community itself, layering generations of memory into their structures. These restorations echo Rossi's (1982) statement that urban artefacts retain significance not through permanence but through their role in collective memory. While Rossi (1982) wrote about cities, his concept also extends to rural churches as they also function as artefacts of memory, shaped by the community's continuous investment.

Contrasting with the urban "culture of congestion," rural sacred spaces offer clarity through simplicity. This clarity does not imply isolation or stagnation, rather, it reflects a different spatial logic, one oriented toward continuity rather than monumentality. As urban churches must constantly regain their relevance within dense, commercialised settings, rural churches sustain their relevance through repetition and general participation. Peeren (2010) and Ashcroft (2013) argue that postcolonial identity is articulated not through the erasure of colonial forms but through their re-signification, a process evident in how rural churches absorb Catholic symbolism into local ritual. This identity is not asserted through visibility but through presence, reinforcing the argument that sacred architecture in the Philippines operates along a spectrum rather than a binary divide.

Ultimately, rural sacred spaces demonstrate that Filipino Catholic identity is not solely shaped by monumental form or historical authority. Instead, it is continually produced through

everyday practices, environmental engagement, and communal responsibility. These churches embody a lived spirituality rooted in place, offering an alternative model of sacred architecture that prioritises belonging over representation. By grounding faith within the rhythms of rural life, they reveal how sacred space can remain central to identity without relying on formal power or architectural grandeur.

CHAPTER 3

Continuities and Contrasts

The historical development of Filipino sacred architecture is best understood not as a sequence of ruptures but as a layered accumulation of spatial intentions. Spanish planning systems did not simply place the church at the plaza centre for symbolic reasons, but to organise temporal and social rhythms. As Jose notes, churches "marked the landscape with an unmistakable Catholic presence, shaping the rhythms of colonial life" (Jose, 1991, p.16). Here Jose is indicating a dual function: visual dominance (marking the landscape) and behavioural regulation (shaping rhythms). This supports the argument that ecclesiastical buildings operated as infrastructures of governance, structuring how indigenous and mestizo communities moved, gathered, and understood authority within emerging settlements. This presence did not disappear with American intervention; rather, it was reorganised through civic monumentalism and modern planning ideals. Yet this reconfiguration did not dismantle the symbolic centrality of the church. Instead, these successive systems overlapped, producing a hybrid spatial condition in which sacred architecture persisted as a stabilising reference point. Instead of representing a frozen colonial legacy, Filipino churches have absorbed and adapted to changing social realities, allowing new forms of meaning to emerge while retaining their historical role. This continuity through transformation highlights the church as a resilient spatial structure capable of mediating between inherited order and evolving identity.

Within this layered condition, the Filipino church can be understood as a "living relic": an architectural form that carries



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4.1

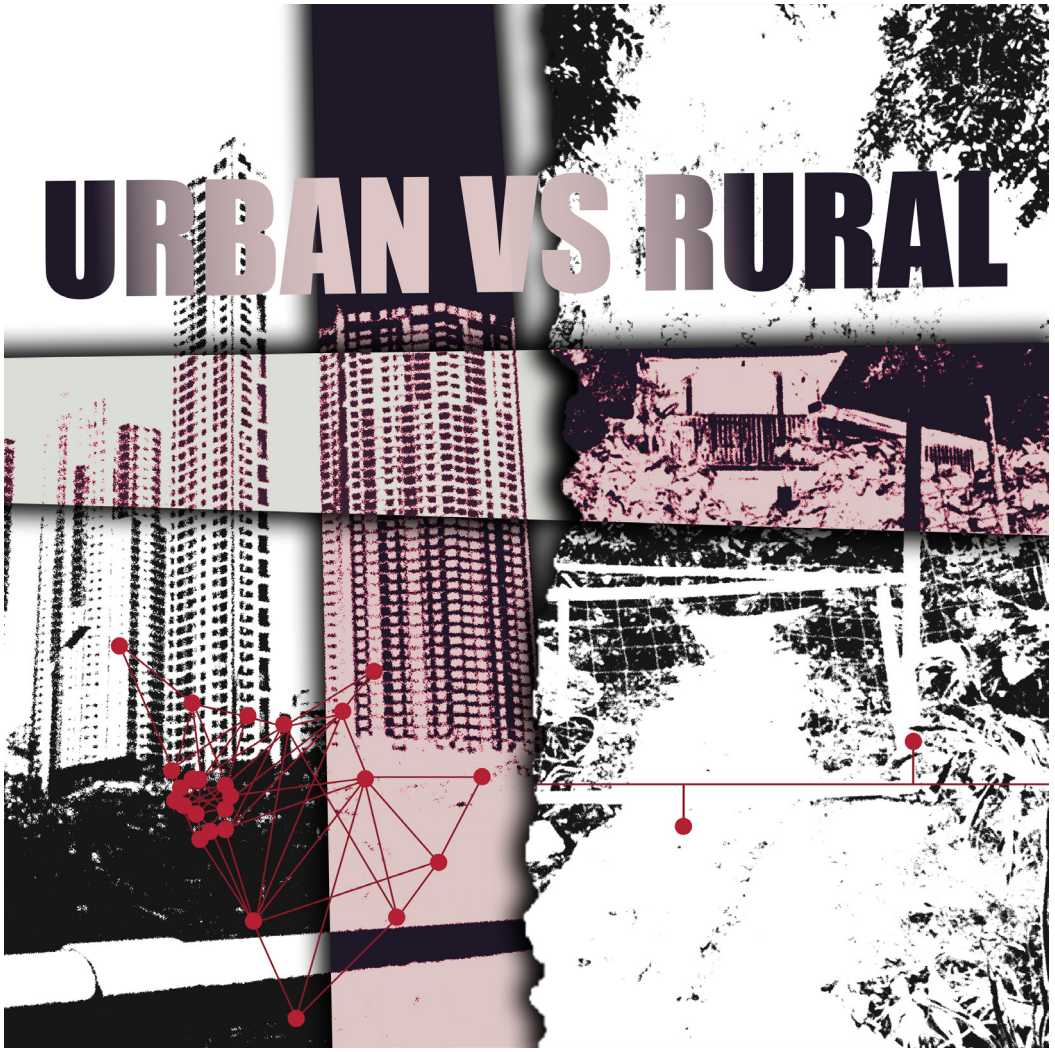
Aerial of Intramuros showing green space and its heritage boundary

historical memory while remaining actively embedded in contemporary life. Unlike monuments that function primarily as commemorative objects, churches persist through use, ritual, and collective care. Rossi's assertion that "the city is the locus of the collective memory" (Rossi, 1982, p.130) is not merely descriptive; it reframes architecture as a mnemonic technology. Applying this to Manila reveals how churches act as memory anchors across political cycles – Spanish rule, American civil governance, post-war reconstruction, and neoliberal redevelopment. Rather than being static artefacts, churches carry the temporal densities of each period, enabling communities to locate themselves historically within the built environment. This formulation extends naturally to the Philippine ecclesiastical context, where sacred structures become repositories not only of urban memory but of community experience. In this sense, architecture stabilises meaning across generations without freezing it in place. Churches embody permanence not through stasis, but through adaptability. Whether reconstructed after destruction, modified to suit modern needs, or reinterpreted through new architectural languages, they continue to anchor social life. As living relics, churches bridge past and present, allowing Filipino identity to be continually rearticulated through spatial experience rather than preserved as a fixed

historical narrative.

A key distinction between urban and rural sacred spaces lies in how permanence and participation are expressed through architecture. This aligns with Rossi's notion of permanence, where urban artefacts endure as fixed reference points within a constantly changing city. Urban churches maintain authority by remaining visually and symbolically dominant despite shifts in political power, economic systems, and urban form. In contrast, rural churches derive continuity less from architectural permanence and more from collective participation. Their construction, maintenance, and ritual use are often directly embedded in community life, allowing meaning to emerge through lived experience rather than formal representation. Tuan's (1977) distinction that "place is security, space is freedom" (Tuan, 1977, p.3) clarifies why rural churches function differently from urban cathedrals. In rural settings, the church becomes place woven into ritual, kinship and seasonal calendars, offering social safety and belonging. In urban contexts, space is dominated with movement and congestion, where the church serves as a momentary pause within a field of flows. Tuan's (1977) framing helps show that sacred architecture derives significance not from monumentality, but from the lived conversion of space into place through use. While rural churches may be materially modest or altered over time, their social significance is continually reinforced through communal practice.

Despite these differences, urban and rural sacred spaces share a fundamental spatial logic: the church is consistently occupied as the symbolic centre of Filipino settlements. Whether positioned within a colonial plaza, an American-planned boulevard, or a rural village clearing, the church structures movement, gathering, and social orientation. Over time, this logic has been reinterpreted rather than rejected. In cities, centrality is negotiated within dense urban environments, while in rural contexts it is reinforced through proximity and daily use. Yet in both cases, the church



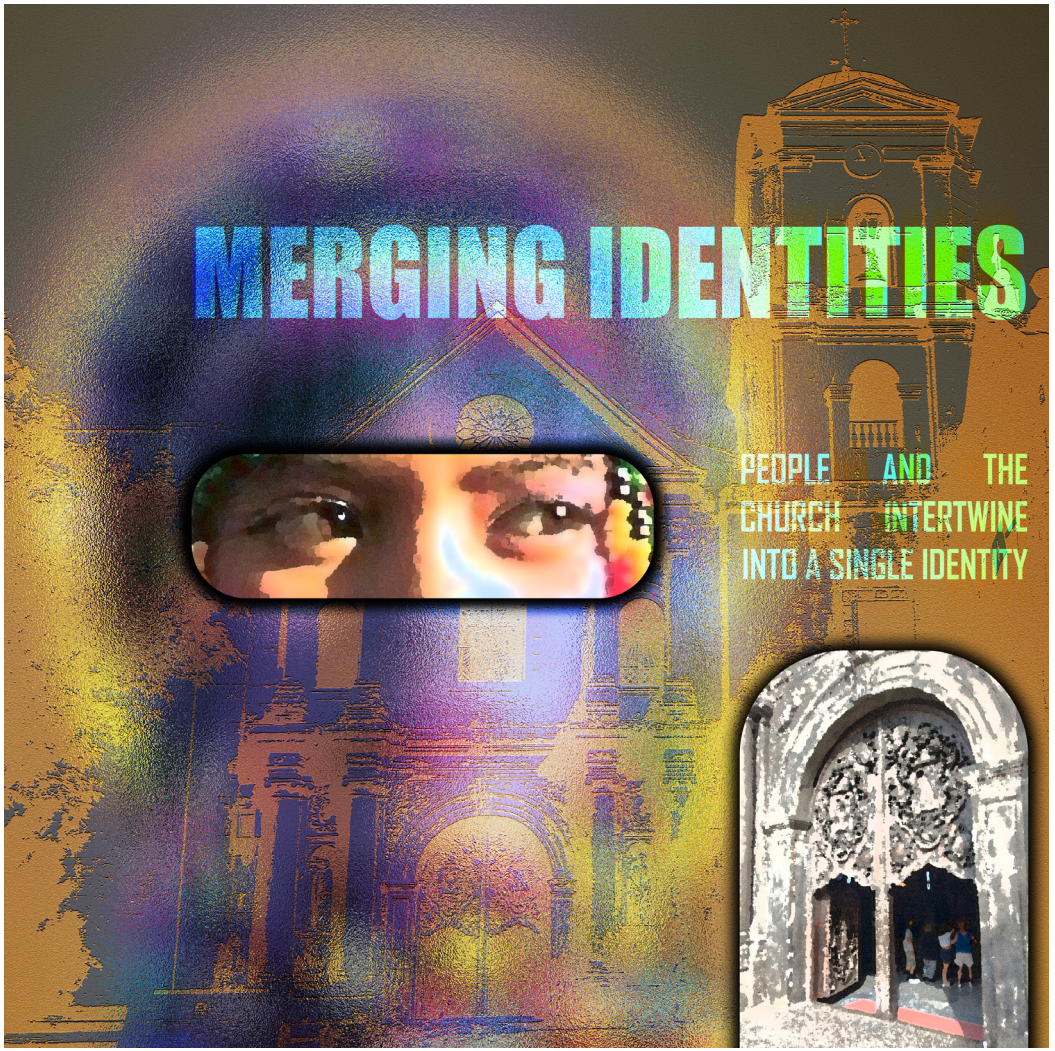
Visual 5
This visual shows the contrast in general life between the urban and rural environment. In the urban space, movement is dense and fast-paced, while in the rural space, routines are slower, communal, and closely tied to landscape and shared practices.

4.2

remains the primary point of reference against which communal life is organised. This shared spatial structure demonstrates how sacred architecture functions as the connective tissue between diverse environments, sustaining a consistent sense of identity across geographic and social differences.

The endurance of the church as a central spatial figure is ultimately sustained through practice rather than form alone. Henri Lefebvre's (1991) concept of the production of space offers a framework for understanding how sacred spaces are continually reproduced through social action, ritual, and everyday use. Lefebvre's (1991) claim that "(social) space is a (social) product" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26) shifts the focus away from buildings as objects and toward the practices that reproduce them as meaningful. Filipino churches persist not simply due to material endurance, but because practices within the church continually signify them as sacred. This reveals sacred spaces as an ongoing social process, aligning rural and urban cases under a shared logic of lived production rather than typological difference. In cities, sacred space is often experienced as a moment of pause within congestion, while in rural settings it functions as an extension of daily social life. Through ongoing use, the church remains as a meaningful space that is continuously shaped by the communities that inhabit them.

Contemporary sacred architecture in the Philippines demonstrates how the church continues to operate as a hybrid spatial place, negotiating between inherited forms and present-day conditions. The work of architects such as Dominic Galicia illustrates this negotiation clearly. While materially contemporary, Galicia's churches retain the traditional spatial centrality of Filipino religious architecture, demonstrating how sacred space can adapt without abandoning its cultural role. His churches, including the Magallanes Church in Makati and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Cavite, reject a clear monumentality in favour of restrained form, filtered light, and material tactility. Rather than asserting dominance through scale or ornament, these buildings create



Visual 6
A depiction of how the identity of the people and the church fold into one another through lived experience, showing sacred space as a site where memory, belief, and social life converge into a shared form of identity.

4.3

moments of stillness within highly charged urban environments. This approach reflects a shift from representational power towards experiential sacredness, where meaning is generated through atmosphere rather than symbolism alone.

Parallel to these architectural reinterpretations are community-led restoration and adaptation efforts, particularly in rural and provincial contexts. Across the Philippines, historic churches have been damaged by earthquakes, typhoons, or conflicts, yet have been rebuilt not solely as heritage objects but as active social spaces. These projects often involve local labour, reinforcing the church's role as a shared responsibility rather than an imposed institution. According to Hila, vernacular structures are shaped by "local materials, local skills, and local ways of life" (Hila, 1992, p.12). This moves the discussion beyond stylistic classification and toward identity formation through labour and climate. In rural churches, community carpentry, *bayanihan*-based construction, and climate-appropriate materials embed sacred spaces within everyday practices. The church therefore embodies a cultural story, narrating who builds, who gathers, and who maintains it. Such processes reactivate what Rossi (1982) describes as collective memory, not through preservation alone but through participation. For example, the rebuilding of churches after the 2013 Bohol earthquake exemplifies this dynamic, where restoration became an act of communal resilience as much as architectural conservation. In these cases, heritage is not frozen in time, it is re-lived and reinterpreted through collective effort. With this, the church remains central not because of its historical value alone, but also because it continues to mediate social bonds and shared identity.

Across urban and rural contexts, Filipino identity emerges not as a fixed symbol embedded in architecture, but as a spatial practice enacted through repetition, memory, and use. The church mediates this identity by accommodating both permanence and participation. Urban churches stabilise collective memory through form and visibility, while rural churches embed meaning through

familiarity and shared experience. Rather than representing opposing conditions, these modes operate along the same cultural logic. Identity is produced through inhabitation: attending mass, gathering in plazas, maintaining buildings, and navigating sacred thresholds. Rossi's (1982) concept of permanence, Tuan's (1977) emphasis on lived experience, and Lefebvre's (1991) theory of spatial production converge here. Together, they reveal that Filipino sacred architecture is neither purely historical nor wholly contemporary. The church persists because it adapts by promoting its centrality, while also allowing its meaning to be reshaped by those who inhabit it.

This synthesis demonstrates that the church remains the most enduring spatial constant within Filipino spaces despite the constant shifts in political power, urban form, and social structure. From colonial imposition to modern reinterpretation, sacred architecture has retained its central role by absorbing change rather than resisting it. Differences between urban monumentality and rural participation do not fragment this identity; instead, they reveal multiple expressions of the same spatial logic. The church functions as a cultural anchor precisely because it accommodates both continuity and transformation. As a living relic, it carries memory forward while remaining open to reinterpretation. This understanding prepares the ground for the dissertation's conclusion, which will restate the argument that Filipino identity is not merely represented through sacred architecture, but continuously produced through spatial, social, and experiential moments.

CONCLUSION

Sacred architecture in the Philippines cannot be comprehended solely through its traditional attributes, nor as a fixed legacy of colonial history. As theorists such as Rossi (1982), Lefebvre (1991), and Tuan (1977) have said, architecture is a physical object, a location where people remember things, a way of living, and a real place. When these frameworks are brought into discussion, the Filipino church emerges as an active cultural force. It is this interpretive position, that sacred architecture persists as both framework and living practice, which underpins the core argument of this study.

Chapter One demonstrated that sacred architecture was deliberately positioned within the fabric of the colonial city, where churches served to stabilise spatial order and encode power relations. Through the Spanish Laws of the Indies (1573) and subsequent American civic planning, church architecture operated as a spatial framework that organised urban life, producing legibility and hierarchy. This framing aligns with Rossi's (1982) proposition that architectural artefacts endure through typological continuity, anchoring collective memory within the urban field. In the Filipino context, this continuity was never merely stylistic; it constituted a socio-spatial logic through which colonial authority and later American civic modernity were materialised and made intelligible.

Chapter Two shifted focus toward the lived, communal and provincial contexts in which sacred architecture operates as practice. Here, Halbwachs' (1950) collective memory and Tuan's (1982) place concepts reveal how rural sacred spaces derive meaning

not through monumental expression, but through repetition, participation and embeddedness. Churches in these settings are shaped by community labour, environmental adaptation and ritual performance. The significance of the sacred thus emerges from everyday rhythms and social attachment, confirming Lefebvre's (1991) claim that space is continuously reproduced rather than simply occupied. Taken together, these conditions demonstrate that sacred architecture in the Philippines cannot be reduced to a monument or an urban artefact; it is also a social instrument.

Finally, Chapter Three brought all these ideas together to explain how sacred architecture works in different cultural and physical settings. Whether asserting permanence within dense urban environments or facilitating communal cohesion in rural settings, churches mediate identity by bridging past and present with cultural authority. Contemporary works, including those by Duterte's preservation programmes or by architects such as Dominic Galicia, demonstrate that sacred architecture continues to adapt without losing its cultural supremacy. This adaptability indicates resilience, not decline.

Based on these insights, sacred architecture in the Philippines continues to serve as both a framework and a living practice – the integration of faith and identity. It is framework in the way in which it organises settlement, memory and symbolic order; it is living practice in the way in which it is continually reinterpreted through rituals and community. This duality explains its endurance across colonial regimes, economic transitions and cultural change. The Filipino church therefore remains not merely a building, but a spatial and cultural method through which identity is produced, negotiated and sustained across generations.

Conclusion

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PROFORMAS

De Viana, L. (2001). *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture, 1594–1898: A Socio - Historical Perspective*. Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.

What is the central concern in this text / practice?
De Viana's work primarily focusses on how trade, migration, and colonial interaction shaped Binondo, Manila's Chinese enclave, as a unique architectural and sociological environment. The book emphasises on how Spanish colonial elements were combined with indigenous and Chinese cultures to create the hybridised building known as Binondo. De Viana's main argument is that, especially during Spanish colonial control, architecture in this area represented identity conflicts amongst communities in addition to reflecting religious or utilitarian concerns.

How was this central concern explored / practice?
De Viana approaches the subject through a sociohistorical lens, drawing on historical maps and surviving architectural examples. She situates Binondo's development within the context of colonial Manila's economic life which shows how trade networks, racial segregation, and missionary activity shaped the existing environment. This text references both architectural history and social history, connecting the physical form of churches and houses to the lived experiences of the Chinese-Filipino (mestizo de sangley) community. This demonstrates how architecture functioned as a mediator between groups, rather than a static colonial hassle.

What was the context of this concern / practice?
The concern is contextualised within 16th - 19th century Manila, when Binondo was established as a settlement for Chinese migrants under Spanish rule. Its architecture reflects both the dominance of Catholic missionary institutions and the adaptive strategies of Chinese residents negotiating restrictions while maintaining their cultural presence. Churches such as Binondo Church (1596, which was rebuilt after earthquakes) stands as an example of colonial structures modified by local craftsmanship and a stylistic mixture. The broader context includes Spanish mercantilism, the galleon trade, and Manila's role as a global trading port.

Relevant Quotes:
- "Binondo was the meeting point of cultures, and its architecture reveals the hybrid forms born of negotiation" (De Viana, 2001).

- "The Dominican presence ensured that religious structures dominated the landscape, but their details bore marks of Chinese influence" (De Viana, 2001).

• "Commerce and faith combined in Binondo, making its architecture a reflection of both economic power and missionary zeal" (De Viana, 2001)

Usefulness to Dissertation
This text is highly relevant because it shows how urban religious architecture in Manila embodies hybrid identities, shaped by class, culture, and colonialism. De Viana's analysis of Binondo provides historical grounding for my urban case study chapter, particularly in framing how colonial and local traditions produced layered architectural meanings. It strengthens my argument that identity in Filipino architecture is contested and hybrid, not fixed, and that this hybridity continues into the present day in projects such as those by Dominic Galicia.

Galende, P. (1996). *Angels in Stone: The Augustinian Churches in the Philippines*. Manila: G. A. Formoso.

What is the central concern in this text / practice?
The central concern of Galende's book is to document and analyse the architectural legacy of the Augustinian order in the Philippines, from the 16th century and onwards. The text argues that Augustinian churches were not only places of worship but also symbols of colonial authority and resilience. Galende positions these structures as enduring "angels in stone," embodying both spirituality and political power. The book highlights how this architecture shaped settlement patterns, town life, and cultural identity in the Philippines under Spanish rule.

How was this central concern explored / practice?
Galende explores this concern through a combination of historical research and architectural analysis. He surveys dozens of Augustinian churches across the islands, analysing their construction techniques, stylistic features, and symbolic meanings. The text situates these structures within the broader socio - political context of colonisation and evangelisation, referencing historical sources and ecclesiastical records. While not overtly theoretical, Galende's narrative draws from art history and ecclesiastical scholarship, connecting Augustinian architecture to themes of power, endurance, and adaptation to local conditions (climate, earthquakes, indigenous labour).

What was the context of this concern / practice?
The context is the Spanish colonial period (1565-1898), when the Augustinians were among the earliest and most influential missionary orders in the Philippines. Their churches were often the first stone structures in towns, strategically located at the centre of plazas following the Leyes de Indias. They were designed to withstand earthquakes and typhoons, often featuring massive buttresses, thick walls, and fortress-like forms. These buildings thus served dual purposes: sacred spaces for conversion and political instruments of

colonial control. Their continued presence today makes them cultural and architectural landmarks, embodying both heritage and contested identity.

Relevant Quotes:
• "The Augustinian churches stood as both fortress of faith and bastion of empire" (Galende, 1996).

• "More than symbols of devotion, they embodied the authority of Spain in stone" (Galende, 1996).

• "The resilience of these buildings against time and calamity reflects the enduring power of colonial ambition" (Galende, 1996).

Usefulness to Dissertation
This text is crucial for my dissertation because it situates religious architecture at the heart of colonial identity-making. Galende demonstrates how Augustinian churches shaped both physical landscapes and cultural consciousness, making them key precedents for understanding the urban - rural divide. His emphasis on architecture as both sacred and political reinforces my argument that Filipino religious buildings cannot be read purely as spiritual spaces; they are layered symbols of power, resilience, and adaptation. This strengthens my comparative study of colonial precedents and contemporary interpretations of sacred identity.

Hila, M.C.A., Perez, R.D., & Dacanay, J.E. (1992). *Balai Vernacular: Images of the Filipino's Private Space*. Manila: UST Press.

What is the central concern in this text / practice?
The book's central concern is the vernacular Filipino house (balai) as an expression of cultural identity, environmental adaptation, and everyday life. It highlights how domestic architecture embodies values of community, resilience, and resourcefulness, contrasting sharply with imported or colonial forms. By documenting regional variations of the balai, the authors stress its importance as both an architectural typology and a cultural symbol that reflects Filipino ways of living.

How was this central concern explored / practice?
The authors explore this concern through a combination of architectural documentation, photography, and ethnographic observation. They examine materials (bamboo, nipa, wood), spatial organisation (open plans, raised floors, communal areas), and cultural symbolism (thresholds, shared spaces, ritual practices). The approach is historical and anthropological, situating the balai within broader themes of identity, tradition, and adaptation to climate. Although not framed explicitly through architectural theory, the work resonates with

vernacular studies and critical regionalism, showing how design can emerge organically from place and culture rather than imposed models.

What was the context of this concern / practice?
The concern is contextualised within rural and provincial Philippines, where the balai has long been the dominant housing typology. Built largely by communities using locally sourced materials, these houses are designed for tropical climates and seismic realities. The text positions the balai as both practical and symbolic: practical in its sustainable and adaptive qualities, symbolic in its representation of Filipino identity outside colonial or globalised forms. The context includes the postcolonial search for a "national architecture," where the balai is often invoked as an authentic reference point.

Relevant Quotes:
- "The balai is a private space deeply tied to environment and culture" (Hila et al., 1992).

- "Every element of the house is a dialogue between necessity and tradition" (Hila et al., 1992).

- "It is in the vernacular home that the Filipino identity most clearly resides" (Hila et al., 1992).

Usefulness to Dissertation
This text is vital for the rural dimension of my dissertation. By framing the balai as a site where identity, culture, and environment converge, it offers a useful comparative lens for analysing rural religious buildings. While churches and houses differ in typology, they share vernacular strategies of climate adaptation, community function, and cultural symbolism. This helps me argue that rural sacred architecture, like the balai, expresses Filipino identity through functionality, local materials, and communal values rather than through imported aesthetics.

Javellana, R. (1991). *Wood & Stone for God's Greater Glory: Jesuit Art & Architecture in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

What is the central concern in this text / practice?
The central concern of Javellana's book is the artistic and architectural legacy of the Jesuits in the Philippines from the late 16th century onwards. He emphasises that Jesuit architecture was not only about religious symbolism but also about functional adaptation to the Philippine environment, geography, and society. Jesuit buildings are presented as cultural artefacts that reflect a negotiation between European ecclesiastical ideals and local materials, labour, and conditions.

How was this central concern explored / practice?
Javellana explores this concern through detailed archival research, architectural description, and art historical analysis. He documents both surviving and lost Jesuit structures, including churches, colleges, and mission houses. The text demonstrates how Jesuit architecture drew on European Baroque principles but adapted them to Philippine realities, incorporating sturdier construction against earthquakes and cyclones, and often using local artisans and materials. By blending aesthetics and pragmatism, the Jesuits developed a style that both conveyed spiritual grandeur and responded to the local context.

What was the context of this concern / practice?
The context lies in the Spanish colonial period (1565–1768, and then 1859 onwards after Jesuit restoration), when Jesuits became known for their missions in remote or frontier areas. Their buildings served dual purposes: centres of worship and education as well as instruments of conversion and social control. In the Philippines, their structures had to contend with frequent natural disasters, limited resources, and the integration of local craftsmanship. This gave rise to a distinct hybrid form of sacred architecture, balancing European aspirations with Filipino adaptations.

Relevant Quotes:
- "Jesuit architecture in the Philippines sought to be both functional and symbolic" (Javellana, 1991).

- "The use of local materials and craftsmen meant that no two Jesuit churches were identical" (Javellana, 1991).

- "Every structure was an act of negotiation between European vision and Philippine reality" (Javellana, 1991).

Usefulness to Dissertation
This book is highly useful because it shows how religious architecture in the Philippines has long been defined by adaptation and hybridity, not just colonial imposition. The Jesuit case illustrates how architecture could embody both universality (Catholic Baroque ideals) and locality (materials, climate, culture). For my dissertation, this supports arguments about how Filipino identity in architecture emerges from tension and negotiation - a theme that links colonial Jesuit churches with modern projects by architects such as Dominic Galicia and with the functional churches of rural provinces.

Jose, R.T. (1991). *Simbahan: Church Art in Colonial Philippines, 1565-1898*. Manila: Bookmark.

What is the central concern in this text / practice?
The central concern of Trota Jose's work is to examine the art and architecture of colonial Philippine churches as the primary expression of Spanish religious and political authority from 1565 to 1898. The book argues that churches were the most visible and enduring markers of colonisation, serving simultaneously as centres of conversion, artistic innovation, and social control. Jose situates church art and architecture as a synthesis of European Catholic ideals and local adaptations, highlighting their role in shaping Filipino religious and cultural identity.

How was this central concern explored / practice?
Jose investigates this concern through a historical - artistic approach, combining archival documents, church records, stylistic analysis, and site visits. He traces how different religious orders (Augustinians, Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans) introduced European Baroque and Gothic elements but worked with local craftsmen, materials, and motifs. The study highlights the emergence of "Philippine Baroque" - a unique adaptation shaped by earthquakes, tropical conditions, and indigenous input. The methodology bridges art history, ecclesiastical studies, and social history, revealing the layers of meaning embedded in church structures.

What was the context of this concern / practice?
The context is the Spanish colonial period, when the Catholic Church was central to governance, conversion, and cultural life. Churches were typically built on plazas, forming the core of town layouts under the Leyes de Indias. Beyond being houses of worship, they embodied colonial strategies of control - physically dominating settlements while integrating local craftsmanship. This duality of imposition and adaptation shaped church design across provinces, making them key symbols of both colonisation and cultural negotiation.

Relevant Quotes:
- "The church was the most visible symbol of conquest and conversion" (Jose, 1991).

- "Philippine Baroque was not merely imported; it was adapted to local conditions and sensibilities" (Jose, 1991).

- "Through their churches, the friars inscribed both faith and authority into the landscape" (Jose, 1991).

Usefulness to Dissertation
Jose's text is essential because it positions colonial churches as the core architectural legacy that continues to influence Filipino identity. His concept of "Philippine Baroque" provides a precedent for understanding hybridity in sacred spaces, where European models were reshaped by local conditions and culture. This supports my dissertation's comparative framework: contrasting the historic role of churches as symbols of conquest with their present role as sites of identity negotiation in both urban modern projects and rural vernacular expressions.

Lico, G. (2008). *Arkitekturang Filipino: A History of Architecture and Urbanism in the Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.

What is the central concern in this text / practice?
Lico's book provides a comprehensive history of Philippine architecture and the built environment, from precolonial times to the modern period. Its central concern is how Filipino architecture reflects the country's layered identity, shaped by colonial impositions, vernacular traditions, and nationalist movements. Lico frames architecture as a cultural text, arguing that Philippine architecture is never fixed but instead a product of continuous contestation and negotiation across history.

How was this central concern explored / practice?
Lico explores this concern through a chronological and thematic survey, engaging with history, cultural theory, and architectural criticism. He references a wide range of sources, including colonial records, nationalist writings, and modern architectural discourse, to situate buildings within broader ideological and cultural struggles. By linking architecture to politics, class, and identity, Lico demonstrates how the Philippine built environment embodies power relations as much as stylistic or functional concerns. His narrative aligns with postcolonial theory and resonates with concepts like hybridity (Bhabha) and critical regionalism (Frampton).

What was the context of this concern / practice?
The text spans multiple contexts: precolonial indigenous structures, Spanish and American colonial periods, and post-independence architecture. It situates each era's architecture within its cultural, political, and social framework - highlighting the shifts from indigenous traditions to colonial impositions, and later to nationalist and modernist aspirations. In particular, the book underscores how identity in Philippine architecture is fragmented yet resilient, continually reinterpreted in response to historical pressures and global influences.

Relevant Quotes:
- "Philippine architecture is a palimpsest of colonial impositions and vernacular survivals" (Lico, 2008).

- "The question of a Filipino architecture is never settled - it is continually contested, layered, and reimagined" (Lico, 2008).

- "Architecture in the Philippines is a cultural text, inscribed with the struggles of power, identity, and nationhood" (Lico, 2008).

Usefulness to Dissertation
This text is the theoretical backbone of my dissertation. Lico provides the framework for understanding Philippine architecture as a layered negotiation of identity across history, which directly informs my urban-rural comparative study. His emphasis on hybridity, contestation, and reimagination supports my central argument: that Filipino sacred architecture cannot be understood as purely colonial or purely vernacular, but as a living dialogue between past and present, global and local, elite and communal. This makes Lico's work the essential lens through which all my case studies are interpreted.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (2013) *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group.

Central Concern
The central concern of this text is to establish foundational terminology and conceptual categories for understanding postcolonial cultural production, identity, discourse, and power after European colonialism. The authors develop a semantic and theoretical vocabulary around ideas such as hybridity, diaspora, hegemony, ambivalence, and otherness. These concepts help articulate how formerly colonised societies continue to negotiate cultural meaning, representation and subjectivity in relation to enduring colonial structures. Rather than focusing solely on political independence, the text argues that culture, language and identity remain entangled with colonial histories. This reveals postcolonial identity as provisional, contested and hybrid, rather than pure or essentialist.

How is this explored?
The authors use a synthetic and interdisciplinary method grounded in literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, anthropology and political philosophy. They draw on theorists such as Homi Bhabha (hybridity, mimicry), Gayatri Spivak (subalternity, strategic essentialism), Frantz Fanon (colonial psychology), Edward Said (Orientalism), and Stuart Hall (diaspora and identity). Through these frameworks they examine how language, representation and knowledge production remain sites of power long after formal colonial withdrawal. The book does not advance a single case study but instead builds a comparative theoretical lexicon through historical examples from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Australia.

Context of Concern
The book sits within late-20th century postcolonial theory, emerging after decolonisation movements in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Its publication context reflects Western academia beginning to institutionalise "postcolonial studies" within literature, cultural studies and social sciences. Throughout the late 1970s–1990s, diasporic migrations, globalisation and media flows complicated earlier nationalist accounts of culture. This book responds to that shift by theorising identity within transnational circuits rather than isolated nation-states. It is also shaped by continued dominance of English as a global academic language, which becomes both a medium of critique and a reminder of colonial legacies.

Usefulness to Dissertation
This text is crucial for defining my dissertation's theoretical framing of postcolonial identity, particularly in its rejection of purity and emphasis on hybridity, representation and cultural translation. It provides the conceptual language needed to analyse how Filipino identity is constructed through urban space, Catholic heritage, and colonial infrastructures. It also situates identity beyond nationalism, enabling a more complex reading of Manila as a global, diasporic, postcolonial city.

Bautista, B.C. (2000) *Philippine Architecture: 1948–1978*

Central Concern
Bautista examines the evolution of Philippine architecture in the postwar and postcolonial moment, particularly between 1948–1978. The central concern is how Filipino architects adopted, resisted, hybridised, and indigenised modern architectural forms within the context of rapid urbanisation, American influence, industrialisation and shifting cultural identity. Rather than treating architecture as purely formal, Bautista argues it expresses social values, modern aspirations and identity crises of a newly independent nation. The book questions whether a distinctly "Filipino" architecture exists, and if so, whether it derives from historical vernacular forms, imported modernist styles, or some hybrid in between.

How is this explored?
Bautista employs architectural criticism, historical survey and typological comparison. He references global modernist figures such as Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Frank Lloyd Wright, alongside indigenous and vernacular precedents. The argument is developed through built case studies such as the Loyola Chapel and various urban structures along EDSA, revealing how planning, circulation and material choices mediate social behaviours. The author also draws on regionalist discourse, distinguishing between international modernism and "tropical" or "indigenous" architecture.

Context of Concern
The timeframe (1948–1978) corresponds to the post-WWII reconstruction of Manila, the establishment of the Philippine Republic, Cold War geopolitics, American hegemony, and eventually the Marcos regime's modernisation projects. Urban growth along EDSA, the introduction of climate-responsive techniques, and the emergence of corporate modernism shaped the built environment. This was also a period of cultural self-invention, in which national identity was debated through museums, heritage, language and urban form.

Relevant Quotes:
- "The building design quietly blends with the surroundings using a well-studied play of lines and planes, solids and voids." (Bautista 2000, p.90)
- "The finish is raw concrete with traces of the form lumber maintained to give texture to the monochromatic structure." (Bautista 2000, p.91)
- "If we view architecture by regional consideration… then it could be said that we do have a Philippine architecture." (Bautista 2000, p.94)

Usefulness to Dissertation
Bautista helps articulate postcolonial architectural identity in Manila, showing how modern forms were naturalised, resisted or hybridised in the tropics. This is crucial for my dissertation's claim that built environments mediate identity, memory, and cultural translation beyond colonial heritage sites.

De Viana, L.D.C. (2001) *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture*, 1594–1898

Central Concern
The central concern of this text is the architectural, social and cultural development of Binondo from the late 16th to late 19th century. De Viana examines how Binondo became a major site of Chinese migration, mestizo identity formation, Catholic evangelisation and colonial commerce. The key argument is that Binondo's built environment materialised hybrid identities through houses, churches, bridges, plazas and streets. Architecture is treated not only as structural artefact but as evidence of cultural exchange between Spanish clergy, Chinese merchants and local populations. Thus, the text reveals how a colonial suburb evolved into a significant economic, ethnic and religious enclave, and how architecture mediated assimilation, power and community.

How is this explored?
De Viana draws from archival records, missionary letters, urban maps, and heritage surveys. She situates built forms within broader sociopolitical processes such as the Galleon Trade, Sino-Spanish conflicts, evangelisation and mestizaje. Churches and icons are discussed as instruments of religious conversion and community formation; civic infrastructure (e.g. the Puente Grande) is analysed as connective tissue linking Binondo to Manila's colonial core. Festivals such as La Naval are interpreted as spatial performances that inscribed Catholic memory into the urban environment. The method is socio-historical rather than purely architectural, allowing the text to connect building typologies to identity and economy.

Context of Concern
The timeframe (1594–1898) spans the Spanish colonial period, Chinese migration waves, and late 19th-century proto-nationalism. Manila was a global port city linked to Mexico, China and Europe via the Galleon Trade. Binondo, located across the Pasig River from Intramuros, was designated for Christianised Chinese (Sangleys) under Spanish policy. This created a unique urban milieu where trade, Catholic ritual and mestizo identity coexisted. The cultural context includes evangelisation by Dominican clergy, periodic anti-Chinese uprisings, mestizo class formation, and Catholic festivals that organised time and space. Thus, the architectural evolution of Binondo reflects geopolitics, religion and racial ordering.

Relevant Quotes:
- "The religious, social and cultural assimilation of the Chinese into Binondo society took place from the late 16th to the 17th centuries." (De Viana 2001, p.23)
- "The suburbs of Manila were linked… through the construction of the Puente Grande in 1632." (De Viana 2001, p.23)
- "Of all the feasts in the arrabales of Manila, that of the La Naval de Binondo was the most striking." (De Viana 2001, p.40)

Usefulness to Dissertation
De Viana provides historical grounding for understanding Manila as a hybrid colonial city where architecture mediated identity, religion and commerce. It directly supports dissertation sections on collective memory, religious space, mestizo identity and urban colonialism.

Ganguly, K. (2001) *States of Exception: Everyday Life and Postcolonial Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Central Concern
The central concern of Ganguly's text is to theorise postcolonial identity through everyday life, rather than through abstract nationalism or elite discourse. Ganguly argues that identity after colonialism is formed through ordinary practices, bodily habits, cultural memory, language, domestic life and socio-economic conditions. She challenges the notion of the postcolonial as a purely celebratory or emancipatory condition, instead examining how structural inequalities, globalisation and state violence continue to shape lived experience.

How is this explored?
Ganguly draws from literary theory, anthropology, cultural studies and political philosophy. Through readings of autobiographical narratives, fiction, ethnographic material and historical documentation, she examines how ordinary lives reveal larger geopolitical conditions. The book employs close textual analysis and critical theory rather than empirical fieldwork, using the concept of the "state of exception" as a bridge between micropolitics (everyday life) and macropolitics (nation-state, global order).

Context of Concern
Published in the early 2000s, the book responds to a moment when postcolonial studies was grappling with globalisation, diaspora and neoliberal restructuring. After the initial wave of anti-colonial scholarship in the mid–late 20th century, attention shifted toward how empire had been internalised into everyday forms of power. Ganguly writes against purely celebratory multicultural narratives, instead emphasising inequality, subalternity and exclusion within supposedly postcolonial societies. The historical context includes the aftermath of WWII decolonisation, Cold War geopolitics, mass migration and neoliberal economic reforms.

Usefulness to Dissertation
Ganguly is valuable for establishing a theoretical framework of postcolonial identity based on everyday life rather than heroic nationalism. This supports my dissertation's claim that identity is formed through spatial experience, memory, domesticity and religious practice in Manila. Her critique of purity and emphasis on hybridity aligns with architectural and urban identity studies in a postcolonial setting.

Halbwachs, M. (1992) *On Collective Memory*. Edited and translated by L.A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Central Concern
Halbwachs' central concern is to theorise memory not as an individual psychological faculty but as a collective phenomenon produced and sustained by social groups. He argues that individuals remember within the frameworks provided by family, religious communities, institutions, urban environments and material objects. Therefore, memory is structured, selective and socially conditioned. It is not a neutral record of the past. Halbwachs challenges the idea of autonomous individual recollection, instead proposing that memories are shaped by membership, social norms and spatial settings. The key concept here is the "collective memory", which provides symbolic continuity and shared identity within communities.

How is this explored?
Halbwachs uses a sociological method that combines philosophical argument, historical example and sociological observation. He analyses how memory is mediated by religious traditions, architectural forms, urban layouts, calendars, and commemorative practices. Halbwachs often contrasts collective memory with history: history belongs to the written archive and the state, whereas memory lives within groups and is sustained by tradition, ritual and space. He also examines how religious pilgrimages, monuments and sacred geographies reinforce collective identity by linking memory to physical environments.

Context of Concern
Halbwachs wrote in the early 20th century within the French sociological tradition alongside Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. This was a period when sociology was defining itself in relation to psychology and philosophy. His work precedes the traumatic memory discourse of the post-WWII era but becomes foundational for later studies of trauma, heritage, cultural memory, urban memory, and identity politics. The 1992 English publication emerges within a renewed interest in collective memory studies, partly driven by debates around heritage, nationalism, historic preservation and urban identity in late-20th century humanities. Halbwachs thus provides a conceptual foundation for understanding why cities preserve monuments, why communities ritualise memory, and how social groups embed identity in place.

Usefulness to Dissertation
Halbwachs is essential for my dissertation's collective memory chapter, providing the sociological basis for understanding how architecture, religious practice and urban space become containers of memory. His spatial emphasis helps explain how historic churches, plazas and domestic forms in Manila reinforce collective identity and postcolonial memory.

Hamnett, S. and Forbes, D. (eds.) (2011) *Planning Asian Cities: Risks and Resilience*. London: Routledge.

Central Concern
The central concern of this edited volume is to analyse the planning and development trajectories of Asian cities in the context of globalisation, risk, environmental vulnerability, and uneven modernisation. The editors argue that Asian urbanisation cannot be understood through Western planning models, as Asian cities operate within distinct socio-political, cultural and environmental conditions. Contributors examine issues such as informal settlements, climate risk, neoliberal planning reforms, governance, economic restructuring, and demographic change.

How is this explored?
The book uses comparative case studies across East, Southeast and South Asia. Chapters are written by urban planners, geographers and policy specialists and combine statistical data, policy analysis, urban theory and environmental planning. Through this interdisciplinary framework, the volume explores how Asian cities negotiate risk, resilience and informality, how state planning interacts with market forces, and how globalisation shapes urban form and socio-economic hierarchy.

Context of Concern
The volume emerges during the early 21st century when Asian urbanisation was accelerating dramatically and global capital was re-orienting toward the Asia-Pacific region. The concept of the "Asian Century" framed Asia as a new center of global economic growth, while at the same time, cities in the region faced severe socio-environmental challenges including climate change, flooding, earthquakes, and uncontrolled development. Neoliberal reforms and decentralisation reshaped governance, while informal settlements absorbed much of the rural-to-urban migration.

Usefulness to Dissertation
This text strengthens the dissertation's urban and regional planning dimension by situating Manila within wider Asian urbanisation patterns. It contextualises the Philippines' development within globalisation, resilience planning and infrastructural risk, helping frame Manila not only as a postcolonial city but as part of a broader regional system grappling with environmental, economic and social pressures.

Koolhaas, R. (1978) *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Central Concern
Koolhaas' central concern is to interpret Manhattan as a product of a unique cultural and architectural logic, which he terms "Manhattanism." Rejecting conventional readings of planning as rational or orderly, Koolhaas argues that New York's vertical density, speculative capitalism and grid geometry generated a radical form of architectural modernity before modernism. The skyscraper becomes the key instrument of this transformation, allowing multiple programmes, lifestyles, economies and fantasies to coexist within a single volume. Koolhaas frames Manhattan not simply as a city, but as a cultural laboratory in which technological ambition, real estate capitalism and social experimentation intersected.

How is this explored?
Koolhaas uses a hybrid method combining architectural history, cultural theory, archival material, speculative narrative and visual documentation. He analyses case studies such as Coney Island, Rockefeller Center, the Downtown Athletic Club and the skyscraper typology more broadly. These examples are paired with drawings, maps, diagrams and historical images to reveal the cultural logic underlying Manhattan's urban form. Rather than chronological history, Koolhaas employs a surrealist and literary style, blending empirical research with myth-making. This methodology deliberately disrupts traditional architectural historiography by foregrounding desire, spectacle and capital as drivers of form.

Context of Concern
Published in 1978, the book emerges during a period of architectural postmodernism and historiographical revisionism. The 1970s were marked by urban crisis in New York (economic decline, bankruptcy), yet also saw renewed interest in the metropolis within architectural theory. At the same time, postmodern architects were critiquing modernism's rationalism and functionalism, turning toward history, vernacular, and urban form. Koolhaas positions himself against both modernist functionalism and postmodern nostalgia, instead proposing a critical reading of the city as an engine of cultural invention. The work also reflects the broader intellectual climate shaped by Situationism, surrealism, and media theory. Koolhaas, operating between Europe and the US, translates Manhattan into a theoretical model for understanding global urbanisation at a moment when cities were beginning to experience restructuring under neoliberal policy and late capitalism.

Usefulness to Dissertation
Koolhaas provides a method for reading the city as a cultural and economic system, not just a physical container. This helps my dissertation frame Manila not only as a colonial artefact but as a modernizing and globalizing urban condition, shaped by speculative development, imported planning logics and identity formation. Koolhaas also models a way of treating architecture as a product of social forces, resonating with postcolonial critiques.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Central Concern
Lefebvre's central concern is to reconceptualise space not as an empty geometric container but as a social product. He argues that space is produced through political, economic, cultural and ideological processes. This challenges traditional Cartesian notions of homogeneous space and instead highlights the role of power, capital and representation. His key contribution is a triadic model of space: spatial practice (perceived space), representations of space (conceived space), and representational spaces (lived space). Through this framework, Lefebvre shows how everyday experience, planning, built form, and symbolic meaning intersect. The book's central question asks how modern capitalist societies organise and control space, and how lived spatial experience becomes shaped by abstraction and commodification.

How is this explored?
Lefebvre draws on Marxism, urban sociology, geography, semiotics and phenomenology. He analyses urban planning, architecture, capitalism, the state, and perception through both conceptual discussion and historical examples. He critiques modern urban planning for producing abstract, regulated spaces that suppress lived experience. He also examines how strategies of power operate spatially through zoning, circulation, and representation. Rather than empirical case studies, Lefebvre provides a theoretical apparatus for analysing how space becomes instrumentalised in capitalist modernity. His model has become foundational for contemporary urban theory, influencing geography, anthropology, architecture and critical spatial studies.

Context of Concern
Written initially in 1974 and translated to English in 1991, The Production of Space emerges during a period when Western cities were undergoing restructuring, suburbanisation and bureaucratic planning. It also sits within post-1968 intellectual shifts in France, where Marxist and structuralist thinkers were critiquing modernity, everyday life and capitalism. The book predates the rise of neoliberal globalisation but anticipates it by showing how space becomes instrumentalised by state and market forces.

Relevant Quotes:
- "(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among products." (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 73)

- "Representations of space… is the dominant space in any society." (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39)
- "It is the outcome of past actions and permits fresh actions to occur." (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 73)

Usefulness to Dissertation
Lefebvre offers the theoretical basis for understanding space as a political and cultural construct. This directly supports my dissertation's analysis of Manila's colonial grid, religious plazas and postcolonial modernisation as produced spaces. His triadic model helps connect planning, collective memory, identity and everyday life under both colonial and postcolonial conditions.

Rossi, A. (1982) *The Architecture of the City*. Translated by D. Ghirardo and J. Ockman. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Central Concern
Rossi's central concern is to define the city as a collective artefact, shaped by historical continuity, memory and typology. Opposing modernist functionalism, Rossi argues that cities cannot be reduced to technical or economic systems; instead, they must be understood as products of culture and collective experience. A key concept is urban memory, manifest in monuments, urban form and enduring typologies that outlast functional change. Rossi seeks to establish architecture as an autonomous discipline with its own internal logic, where typology acts as a tool for understanding transformations within the city.

How is this explored?
Rossi employs comparative urban history, morphology and typology. He analyses European cities, monuments and housing types, demonstrating how form persists even when functions and political regimes change. Rossi draws from classical theory, Enlightenment scholarship and early modern urbanism to argue that the city's formal structure is both memory and identity.

Context of Concern
Published in 1966 (Italian) and translated in 1982, the book appears during a shift away from modernist urbanism and toward postmodern historical consciousness. Postwar reconstruction, modernist tabula rasa planning and functionalist housing estates generated disillusionment in Europe. Rossi's interest in memory and typology reflects a broader architectural debate on how to reconcile modern needs with historical continuity.

Relevant Quotes:
- "The city is the locus of the collective memory." (Rossi, 1982, p. 130)

- "Monuments are the permanent element, the fixed point in the urban dynamic." (Rossi, 1982, p. 29)

- "Urban artefacts possess their own life; they surpass their original function to become carriers of meaning." (Rossi, 1982, p. 29)

Usefulness to Dissertation
Rossi directly supports sections on collective memory, typology and heritage, providing a theoretical basis for understanding how churches, civic buildings and domestic forms act as memory structures within the city. This complements Halbwachs' sociological memory and helps frame Manila as a layered urban palimpsest influenced by colonial, religious and modern forces.

Tönnies, F. (2001) *Community and Civil Society*. Edited by J. Harris. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Central Concern
Tönnies' central concern is to theorise the transformation of social relations under modernity through the distinction between Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (civil society). For Tönnies, Gemeinschaft represents social bonds founded on kinship, face-to-face interaction, shared norms and collective identity, typically associated with rural, familial or traditional settings. In contrast, Gesellschaft signifies social relations mediated by contract, individualism, instrumental rationality and urban economic life. This binary serves to explain the sociological shift from traditional to modern societies. Although often treated as opposites, Tönnies' framework illustrates how both forms coexist and overlap. His conceptual model offers a sociological account of how identity, belonging and social cohesion are transformed as societies urbanise, industrialise and globalise. It remains influential for understanding the effects of modern spatial arrangements on social life.

How is this explored?
Tönnies uses a sociological and philosophical method grounded in 19th-century German social theory. He systematically defines and contrasts Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft through categories such as family, neighbourhood, market, city, moral order and governance. His analysis draws upon historical cases, anthropological observations and normative reasoning. Tönnies proposes that modernisation leads to the dominance of Gesellschaft forms, yet he acknowledges survivals of Gemeinschaft through associations, religious life and cultural traditions. His work is not empirical in the contemporary sense but conceptual, offering a typological model rather than statistical analysis. Subsequent sociologists such as Weber, Simmel and Durkheim built upon or critiqued these distinctions, particularly regarding urbanisation and modern identity formation.

Context of Concern
Tönnies originally published this work in 1887, during rapid industrialisation, urban migration and capitalist expansion in Europe. Cities were reshaping family structures, political systems and social relations, prompting sociologists to theorise modernity. Within this context, Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft functioned as analytical tools to explain the cultural consequences of modernisation. The 2001 English edition reflects renewed interest in how globalisation, neoliberalism and technology restructure social bonds. This modern context is significant because contemporary conditions often revive Gemeinschaft desires (belonging, identity, place) within Gesellschaft structures (market, bureaucracy, digitisation). For postcolonial and urban studies, Tönnies provides a lens for analysing how colonialism and capitalism reorganised Filipino society from small-scale communal life to modern bureaucratic and urban systems.

Relevant Quotes:
- "In Community, individuals develop their identities within the wider, co-existing whole." (Tönnies, 2001, p. xvii)

- "Community is old as the human race, society is relatively recent." (Tönnies, 2001, p. xiii)

- "Religion – once the heartbeat of daily life – became deistic, doctrinal and

dead." (Tönnies, 2001, p. xvii)

Usefulness to Dissertation
Tönnies provides a theoretical vocabulary to describe shifts in community, identity and belonging within Manila's colonial and postcolonial transformations. His model is helpful for framing how religious parishes, plazas and neighbourhoods function as Gemeinschaft enclaves within broader urban Gesellschaft structures. This supports arguments on collective identity, parish life and urban modernisation.

Tuan, Y.-F. (1977) *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Central Concern
Tuan's central concern is to understand how human beings experience space and place through perception, movement, memory and cultural meaning. He argues that space becomes place when it is endowed with value, attachment and experience. The book offers a phenomenological account of how landscapes, cities and environments become meaningful through lived practice. Tuan distinguishes between abstract spatiality (freedom, potential, movement) and place (security, familiarity, identity).

How is this explored?
Tuan draws from phenomenology, environmental psychology, geography, anthropology and cognitive science. His method is descriptive, using everyday examples such as homes, streets, childhood environments, religious spaces and national landscapes. He examines sensory perception, memory, movement, body experience and cultural symbolism. Rather than quantitative analysis, Tuan emphasises qualitative lived experience. He connects personal experience to broader cultural patterns, showing how different societies attach meaning to landscapes, sacred sites and dwellings. By foregrounding lived experience, Tuan establishes the intellectual foundation for humanistic geography and environmental phenomenology, later influencing architecture and heritage studies through urban design.

Context of Concern
Published in the late 1970s, Tuan's work emerged during the humanistic turn in geography. This period reacted against quantitative and positivist spatial science by foregrounding meaning, embodiment and culture. Postwar suburbanisation, mobility, and migration reshaped spatial experience, while environmental psychology developed as a field concerned with perception and behaviour. Tuan's ideas later influenced place-making theory, architectural phenomenology (e.g. Pallasmaa, Norberg-Schulz) and cultural geography. In postcolonial contexts, his distinction between space and place becomes significant in understanding how colonised populations re-inscribe identity and memory into built environments that were originally imposed or foreign.

Relevant Quotes:
- "Man… organizes space so that it conforms with and caters to his biological needs and social relations." (Tuan, 1977, p. 34)

- "Whatever is superior or excellent is elevated, associated with a sense of physical height." (Tuan, 1977, p. 38)

- "People everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the 'middle place,' or the center of the world." (Tuan, 1977, p. 38)

Usefulness to Dissertation
Tuan offers a theoretical basis for understanding place attachment, memory and identity, supporting sections of the dissertation concerned with religious buildings, domesticity and urban belonging. His distinction between space (potential) and place (experienced meaning) helps analyse how Filipino communities produce meaning through churches, plazas, homes and streets, especially in postcolonial conditions.

Tyner, J.A. (2009) *The Philippines: Mobilities, Identities, Globalization*. London: Routledge.

Central Concern
Tyner's central concern is to situate the Philippines within global networks of migration, mobility, labour and identity formation. He examines how Filipino identities are shaped through colonial history, diaspora, state policy, transnational labour markets, and global capitalism. Rather than treating the Philippines as a bounded national space, Tyner frames it as a node within global circulations of people, remittances, cultural practices and geopolitical relations. Identity is therefore not static but produced through movement, displacement and interaction across borders.

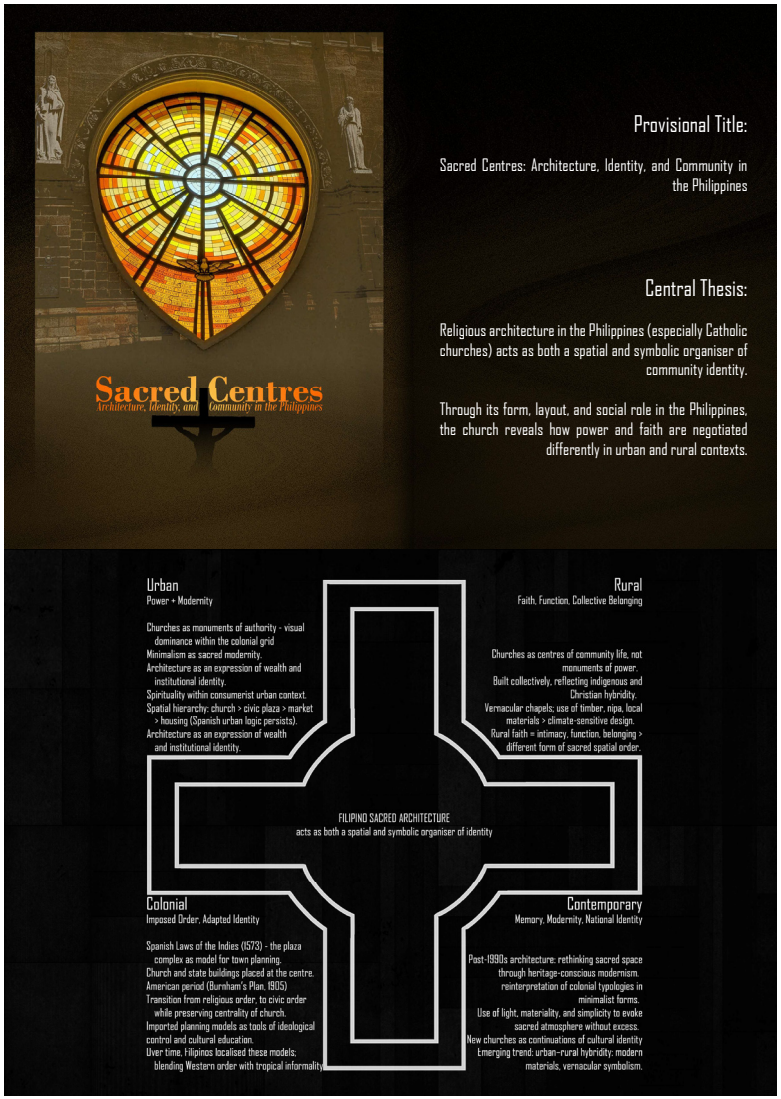
How is this explored?
Tyner employs interdisciplinary methods combining geography, history, political economy and cultural studies. He draws on empirical data (migration statistics, labour policy), historical documentation (Spanish and American colonial archives) and contemporary analysis of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), nationalism and diaspora. The book connects colonial-modern transitions to current patterns of mobility and state-managed labour exportation. By emphasising flows rather than fixed territories, Tyner reorients Philippine studies toward mobility systems.

Context of Concern
Published in 2009, the book reflects a moment in which Southeast Asia had become central to global migration circuits and labour markets. After the 1970s oil boom, the Philippines

institutionalised state-managed labour exportation, producing a large diaspora across the Middle East, East Asia and North America. At the same time, neoliberal restructuring and globalisation intensified mobility and cultural hybridity.

Usefulness to Dissertation

Tyner helps contextualise Manila and the Philippines within globalisation and postcolonial mobility, showing how identity is shaped by historical colonialism and contemporary movement. This supports dissertation discussions on urban modernity, diasporic identity and hybridisation, linking local architectural and religious practices to global economic and cultural flows.



Problem + Context

The Philippines has a fragmented architectural identity, shaped by colonial urban models (Spanish plaza complex, American City Beautiful planning).
Churches remain centres of civic and spiritual life, yet their meanings diverge between urban affluence and rural community.
There is limited academic attention on how these spatial orders express or challenge Filipino identity today.

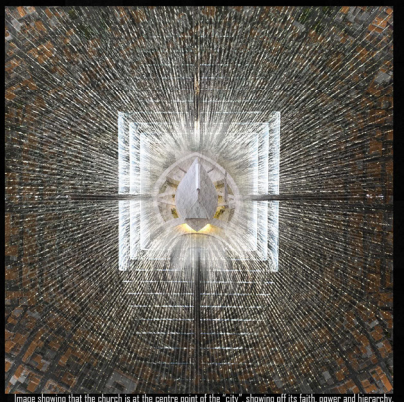


Image showing that the church is at the centre point of the "city", showing off its faith, power and hierarchy.

Position + Critique

Claim: Filipino sacred architecture embodies identity through spatial order, functioning as both a colonial legacy and a living cultural artefact.
Method: This claim is tested through historical analysis, architectural case studies, and participant insights from Filipino architects and community members.

Counter-Argument

Some people may argue that Filipino religious architecture lacks genuine originality, remaining a derivative of Western forms imposed through colonial power and global modernism. They might also say that any "Filipino identity" in church design is superficial / limited to materials or ornamentation, not in spatial logic or ideology.

Precedents supporting this critique:
The persistence of the plaza complex model across Philippine cities.
Burnham's 1905 Plan for Manila.

Response:
While these critiques are valid, this dissertation argues that Filipino architects and communities have re-authored these spaces, adapting imported models to local climate, ritual, and collective identity. The result is not imitation, but translation.



1905 Proposed Burnham Plan for Manila, NAIN radius 400 - showing 1898 Spanish Manila's original churches