

MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN THE WAR ON DRUGS: TOWARD A GENDER-INTEGRATED ECCLESIAL RESPONSE

JESSICA JOY CANDELARIO

The cycle of violence in society manifests masculinities that are shaped by poverty, cultural practices, and social relations. Analyzing the stories of victims of extrajudicial killings in the war on drugs in the Philippines through the lens of masculinity theories, the paper challenges social and ecclesial practices responding to men and to suffering. Second, it also seeks to reimagine hope as a pastoral response to social injustice and violence by understanding the historical Jesus as an ideal masculine figure and examples of ideal masculinity in the war on drugs. Third, it will also strengthen the kapwa framework as a methodology, especially in the study of suffering and violence by proposing a more integrative and relational gender perspective in ecclesial life and pastoral care.

Keywords: Masculinities, War on Drugs, extrajudicial killings, hegemonic masculine, Malakas and Maganda, Synodality

INTRODUCTION

Rodrigo Roa Duterte's leadership as Philippine president from 2016 to 2022 was marked by his all-out campaign against drug personalities. Themed as *Oplan Tokhang* (knock and plead) and *Double Barrel* (high-value targets and street drug peddlers), the war on drugs aimed for a drug free Philippines.¹ However, this

1. Amnesty International, "If you are poor, you are killed: Extrajudicial Executions in the Philippines' War on Drugs, ASA 35/5517/2017 <https://media.amnesty.org.uk/documents/ASA3555172017ENGLISH.PDF>. See also Davinci Maru, et. Al, "War on drugs: No EO signed by Duterte, a chaos of numbers," *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism*, accessed

campaign was punctuated by violent death and street executions of suspected drug addicts. Human Rights Watch estimates a total of 12,000 deaths in the war on drugs, of which 2,555 are attributed to the Philippine National police, the official agency that carried out the deaths.² As of this writing, Duterte is being tried by the International Criminal Court for these atrocities.³ The victims and perpetrators of these mass executions were men from the national leadership to the urban poor communities, where many of these killings took place.⁴

As an ongoing story of oppression and injustice, an analysis from the lens of masculinity is crucial. Gender as a “constructed category” involves systems of culture and power relations that legitimize power dominance, violence, and systemic marginalization. History confirms that where there were hegemonic masculinities dominating society, there was likewise a “repeated emphasis on a threatened or unstable masculinity or a masculinity in crisis.”⁵ Such a contradiction brings out clearly how “inferior manliness” is an “ideological tool” in the maintenance of hegemonic masculinities.⁶

This practical theological reflection aims to understand the story of the war on drugs by focusing on the victims and perpetrators through the lens of masculinity theories. Turning to

September 19, 2016, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/816776/war-on-drugs-no-eo-signed-by-duterte-a-chaos-of-numbers>.

2. Human Rights Watch, “Philippines’ War on Drugs,” <https://www.hrw.org/tag/philippines-war-on-drugs>

3. International Criminal Court, “Duterte Case,” <https://www.icc-cpi.int/philippines/duterte>

4. The data from this paper is taken from the author’s dissertation entitled, “*Kapwa* as Participation: Towards Remembering the Filipino Passion,” May 26, 2020, St. Thomas University, Florida. It is an abridged version of a chapter entitled *Pakikipagkapwa-ibang Tao: The Men of Good Friday*.

5. Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, (New York: Oxford, 2008), 10.

6. Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, 11.

Jesus, who was an ideal masculine in his time, it will also seek to explore stories of men in the war on drugs who fought for justice by uplifting those marginalized. Lastly, it will critique the masculinity-absent lens in pastoral paradigms and interventions to facilitate a more synodal, gender integrated perspective for pastoral care.

MASCULINITIES AND THE WAR ON DRUGS

Gender studies emerged out of feminist theories that argue for the cultural construction of gender.⁷ While gender can be determined by one's biological category or by the roles expected in society, theorists suggest a third approach, and that is to consider gender as a "social structure of gender relations."⁸ This makes gender dynamic, fluid, relational, and situational. As a "public action and performative act," it cannot be defined solely as an individual choice because as gender is performed, its contact with reality constantly reshapes and reinterprets it.

7. Feminist theorists have argued against the biological construction of sex and sexuality that follows the views of phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty who distinguished between biological constitution and historical embodiment. It was Judith Butler who first proposed that gender is performance and is constituted accordingly. See Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay on Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 521-522.

8. Though there were men's studies in the early 70s that sought liberation of men, it was Raewyn Connell who developed masculinity studies from his empirical research on social relations of teenagers in the educational setting, where they discovered the existence of multiple forms of masculinities and femininities. Connell pursued his theory on gender as a social structure through further research in the 80s. His initial work has led to many empirical studies on men in different settings and backgrounds. The collaborative and interdisciplinary work of masculinity studies has also informed many social and political policies. Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), xi-xiii. Also see Michael Kimmel, Jeff Earn, and Raewyn Connell, "Introduction," In *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, eds. Michael Kimmel, Jeff Earn, and Raewyn Connell (London: SAGE, 2005), 1-12.

Masculinities, therefore, are not genetically programmed nor are they fixed by social structure before social interaction because, with various resources and strategies, masculinities exist as people act and interact.⁹ Masculinities can be individual or collective, and there are multiple forms of masculinities and hierarchies.¹⁰ Various forms of masculinities - hegemonic, subordinated, complicit, and marginalized emerge in the war on drugs.¹¹

Hegemonic Masculinities: From Top to Bottom

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a configuration of gender practices that shape patriarchy. The term hegemony was first referred to as the position of dominance in which a cultural group claims primacy over other groups in society.¹² Shaped and built by those who benefit from it, the position of dominance becomes an ideal that people in society strive to achieve. Hegemonic masculinity, however, can also be

a set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over

9. Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 8.

10. Ibid., 10-14.

11. Connell developed these forms of masculinities from his studies on men and masculinities. The typology is highly utilized in many settings to understand masculinities. Some of these studies are mentioned in this chapter.

12. Though the term hegemony has been alluded to by Marxist philosophers like Vladimir Lenin, it was Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist philosopher, who further developed the theory of cultural hegemony. See Antonio Gramsci, "Intellectuals and Hegemony," in *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, ed. Charles Lambert (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 259-261.

women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy.¹³

Though hegemonic masculinities may vary in every setting, they are generally identified by the ideal and image held by both the culture and institutional power and are considered by the collectivity as the norm.¹⁴ Such dynamics allow hegemonic masculinities to change and erode over time. Hegemonic masculinities exist at a local (families, organizations, and immediate communities), regional (cultural or nation-state), and global (world politics and transnational business and media) level.¹⁵ Through hegemonic masculine symbolism and the interplay of specific local masculine practices on a regional level, an existing masculine reality dominates societal discourse and relations.¹⁶

In the war on drugs, the Duterte leadership reinforced hegemonic masculinities as it created the narrative of a dangerous other expressed through the speech-act against drug addicts and drug pushers, misogynistic statements, and an offensive stance against the Catholic Church. Using the image of the body to humiliate and inflict violence, Duterte has disparaged the marginalized male as a criminal and has succeeded in creating a hegemonic masculine image of being a father-protector of all.¹⁷

Hegemonic masculinity is then cascaded down and exhibited by male officials in government structures, the police

13. Morrell R., Jewkes R., Lindegger G., "Hegemonic Masculinity/ies in South Africa: Culture, Power and Gender Politics," *Men and Masculinities* 15 (2012), 11-30. doi: 10.1177/1097184X12438001.

14. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), 77.

15. Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005), 849, doi:10.1177/0891243205278639

16. Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 849.

17. Danilo Andres Reyes, "The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte's War on Drugs," 112.

force, drug enforcement personnel, legislative and administrative personnel, as well as cultural and entertainment figures who enact the national leadership's policy. An interview with a local official reflects this hegemonic masculinity as he justifies the deaths, "it was their choice because they have been warned that it will be bloody. If you are a *pasaway* [nuisance] and you try to play with this president, you are doomed."¹⁸

In a community afflicted by everyday violence, hegemonic masculinity appears visible through gangs and their leaders who control the neighborhood. In the community, residents have memories of unending gang wars that killed many of its young men. Masculine practices manifested in everyday life shape this hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates a cycle of violence typically experienced by boys and men in urban poor environments. Hegemonic practices are manifested by the control of an area as evidenced by *purok* leaders who are disciples of certain gangs and who are complicit in the proliferation of the drug trade and other criminalities in the area.¹⁹

Subordinated and Complicit Masculinities

Subordinated masculinities are linked to femininity, which hegemonic masculinity refers to as its opposite, like homosexual masculinity, or also those who are "portrayed as effeminate" or feminized by their life choices and preferences.²⁰ In the context of the war on drugs, other personalities in the community may

18. Interview, Ryan, Caloocan City, May 12, 2019.

19. *Purok* refers to the cluster groupings of several neighborhoods within a *barangay*. Each *purok* has an appointed official with his members. They instill peace and order in the neighborhood as well as handle simple neighborhood or family disputes that do not need to be taken up in the *barangay* level. Jensen and Happal, "Policing Bagong Silang," 5-8.

20. Susanna Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men: Ideal Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*, 7.

experience domination by the hegemonic masculine. It was interestingly significant how only females would accede to participate in the focus group interviews conducted in the community. Whenever the researcher would ask the female participants about the men, they would not hesitate to say that men would rather not talk about the issue, as it puts them in a situation where they need to make a stand. The killings have continued because many witnesses are afraid to speak up. Even families of victims prefer to leave the trauma behind, even if they know it is not possible. On the wake of the victim, the family members expressed their conviction that they were innocent. But they prefer not to fight for justice, saying that they will anyway forget about it as a family²¹ and that they do not have the luxury of time to file a complaint.²²

Complicit masculinities refer to those who are “benefitting from the patriarchal dividend” without having to take the “frontline troops of patriarchy.”²³ Hegemonic masculinities are not that many, but they are propelled to power by complicit masculinities. In this case, these are fathers, sons, brothers, who would either be cheerleaders of the hegemonic masculine or would be quietly doing their daily chores. They are good fathers and husbands but will not lift a finger to make a stand. For them, it is all right that these killings happen. The *purok* leader (neighborhood leader) and *tanod* (neighborhood guards) who carry out arrests and house raids in the war on drugs are generally happy and satisfied with the drug campaign because it has brought about peace and order in the community.²⁴ For example, a male victim was shot by an unknown assailant in front of their *purok* leader who refused to

21. Interview, Pacita, Caloocan City, January 3, 2020.

22. Interview, Bong, Caloocan City, January 3, 2020.

23. Connell, *Masculinities*, 81.

24. Purok leaders- Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, April 12, 2019.

testify to the killing.²⁵ Complicity in the war on drugs is also manifested by church officials, pastoral workers, and others who tolerate the mass killings by their silence, by their refusal to provide help to victims, by their defense of the campaign.

Marginalized Masculinities

Marginalized masculinities are shaped compared to the dominant group. An example of this is black American men who are marginalized masculinities in North America and remain marginalized even if some of them are applauded and recognized for their achievements. As a class, they stay marginalized in American society. In the war on drugs, the image of the marginalized Filipino male is one who lives in urban poor communities and is collectively categorized as the drug addicts and drug pushers, who are “not human...and deserve to die.”²⁶

OF BOYS AND MEN: STORIES ON THE WAR ON DRUGS

Though gender studies have emerged out of the “gender hierarchy and structural inequality paradigms,” masculinity theorists suggest more context-based and process-oriented approaches to better determine ways to move towards gender equality.²⁷ While issues of patriarchy and power cannot be downplayed, the emancipation of men and women cannot be solved if societies still carry the structural gender systems.

25. Interview, Rose, Caloocan City, March 13, 2019.

26. President Rodrigo Duterte mentions this in different ways in many of his presidential speeches and public remarks.

27. Oystein Gullvag Holster, “Social Theories for Researching Men and Masculinities: Direct Gender Hierarchy and Structural Inequality,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael Kimmel, Jeff Earn, and Raewynn Connell (London: SAGE, 2005), 15-33.

Interviews with ten families of victims provide stories of Filipino males as victims. Most of the victims of extrajudicial killings, about 95 percent of them were male adults, have low-paying jobs, have not completed high school education, and have limited access to employment or other forms of livelihood.²⁸ The majority of the victims are construction workers or tricycle drivers who are “low-level drug suspects” whose involvement in the trade comes with the need to survive.²⁹ Construction workers are usually hired on a project basis, and in some cases, in urban poor communities, they are contracted by people who receive a commission for every project they get. The reported shortage of construction workers in the country, because those who are skilled prefer to be employed overseas, may indicate the lack of skills of those who are hired on a seasonal basis, and do not have a fixed source of income.³⁰ When they are hired, they are sometimes required to stay at the job site and work for 12 straight hours. This takes them away from the family, in which case they cannot fully carry out their responsibilities as fathers and husbands.

Tricycle drivers are employed by owners on an hourly basis each day (usually about 8-12 hours). In some areas, drivers take graveyard shifts (midnight onwards) too. It is in these situations that the temptation is high to take drugs to keep up with the long shifts. At the same time, they are also tempted to be involved in small-time peddling to help them sustain their use of the drugs. Three of the

28. PhilRights: Claim and Defend, “The War on the Poor: Extrajudicial Killings and their Effects on Urban Poor Families and Communities,” *PhilRights*, accessed March 9, 2020. <https://www.philrights.org/the-war-on-the-poor-extrajudicial-killings-and-their-effects-on-urban-poor-families-and-communities/>

29. The Drug Archive, “Who are the casualties?” accessed August 2, 2019, <https://drugarchive.ph/post/26-the-drug-killings-who-what-where-when-how-master>.

30. Analou de Vera, “Shortage of Construction Workers Traced to Low Pay, Poor Access to Certification,” *Manila Bulletin*, February 15, 2019, <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/02/15/shortage-of-construction-workers-traced-to-low-pay-poor-access-to-certification/>.

victims studied did not have any source of income except through their association with the drug trade. Below is a composite picture of the victims as narrated by family members and close friends.³¹

The Filipino Male and Masculinities

The stories of the Filipino male victims reflect family and community practices that shape masculinities and clarify ecclesial participation with those who suffer. While it is crucial to understand the clash of masculinities in the phenomenon of extrajudicial killings, gender relations between men and women from the family to society are also significant in the spiral of signification of Filipino male victims. It may help to consider features such as power relations, production relations, and cathexis or sexual desire, in the development of masculinities.³²

While power relations (*lakas sa lakas*) generally refer to the overall subordination of women and the dominance of men or patriarchy, power relations are also reflected among masculinities. Power relations are the most potent factor in the staging of a crisis. The tension in power relations begins in the family and is felt at different levels, which if unresolved results in greater impact on the society.³³ Power relations come from role expectations in society. The mothers, as the “*ilaw ng tahanan*” (light of the home), and the fathers as the *haligi ng tahanan* (foundation or pillar of the home), manifest the power that each one carries and which each one is expected to fulfill. When these expectations are not met, it results in a breach creating crisis. In many urban poor communities, domestic violence against women by their male partners remains

31. Data taken from the seven composite pictures of victims of extrajudicial killings are utilized in the analysis.

32. Connell, *Masculinities*, 8.

33. *Ibid.*, 85.

high.³⁴ On the other hand, even if the father is the head of the family, it is women who hold power, since the mother is perceived by children to be the decision-maker, the strongest link, and inspiration in their homes and not their fathers.³⁵

Production relations (*lakas sa paggawa*) which refer to the “allocation of tasks” as well as its “economic consequence” also compounds the crisis.³⁶ Women, compared to men, have more opportunities to find sources of livelihood while at the same time carrying out their responsibilities in the home. In contrast, there are very limited job opportunities for the urban poor Filipino male. In urban poor communities, women are given responsibilities in church and community affairs, which do not only provide them with sources of income but also with social capital. Men who do not wield power at the workplace consequently manifest their dominance at home by a show of “machismo and sexual prowess” or among their peers through “acts of collective bravado, with fighting, with public rowdiness, and drinking.”³⁷

Cathexis or sexual desire (*lakas ng puso*, “power of the heart”) is the “emotional energy attached to an object.”³⁸ The lack of employment opportunities, significant social position or responsibilities, or emotional support from family members compels men to find other companions to engage in activities with

34. Laune-Serquina-Ramiro, Bernadette J. Madrid, and Ma. Lourdes Amarillo, “Domestic Violence in Urban Filipino Families,” *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies* 10, Issue 2 (2016): 97-119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2004.11665971>. Also see Racidon Bernarte and others, “Violence Against Women in the Philippines,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 6, no. 1 (February 2018), 1-2.

35. Amayllis Tiglaio-Torres, “Gender Imagery in Philippine Psychology: A Critique of the Literature,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 21, 24-38 (1988): 61.

36. Connell, *Masculinities*, 8.

37. John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Philadelphia: Open University, 2002), 20.

38. Connell, *The Social Organization of Masculinity*, 8.

and to find motivation. Membership in gangs provides for this lack, which in most cases also reinforces addiction, crime, and violence.

These factors are significant in the stories of male victims of extrajudicial killings. Closer attention to their stories in the settings of the family, neighborhood, and peer groups or gangs highlight social practices that contribute to creating an *ibang tao* (an outsider), out of our Filipino urban male.

Ka-Pamilya: Family Relations

Victims tend to come from large families. They are either sons who have many siblings, or fathers who have between 5-11 children. Since the father in Filipino culture is expected to be the provider or breadwinner, poverty and unemployment may shape the fatherhood role differently.³⁹ In this case, parenting responsibilities, especially of providing for the family's needs, are shared by both parents. In some cases, however, older siblings take over this role as breadwinners. Since the Filipino family structure, similar to Southeast Asian countries, is a "bilaterally extended kinship system that highly values reciprocity," mothers, children, and extended family become the *tagasalo* (the one who assumes the role) to provide for the family or respond to other needs.⁴⁰

The Father Role. As fathers, most of them were not emotionally involved with their children. The wives expressed that their husbands were not always present, either because they had to work or because they preferred to be with their friends. The social construction of gender that assigns men in the public sphere and women to the domestic sphere makes fathers unable to develop

39. David Morgan, "Class and Masculinity," in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005), 6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452233833.n10>.

40. Maria Caridad H. Tarroja, "Revisiting the Definition and Concept of Filipino Family: A Psychological Perspective," *Philippine Journal of Psychology/ Psychological Association of the Philippines* 43, 2 (2010): 179-180.

emotional connections with their families.⁴¹ In-home visits conducted with pregnant women and malnourished children in the community show how fathers were typically absent from dialogue with the pastoral worker. When the pastoral worker arrived, the fathers, who were present, intentionally left the house while the dialogue was going on. On the other hand, conversations between the pastoral worker and the women covered other issues and concerns in the home like finances and employment, housing, neighborhood safety, and the schedule of visitation at the center, all of which were responsibilities of husband and wife.⁴²

A fourfold typology of the Filipino father role mentions four classifications of a father in the Filipino household, namely – the procreator father, the dilettante father, the determinative father, and the generative father. The procreator father is one who is most concerned about his “immortality and the continuity of his lineage” but looks at his primary role as “provider,” as most important.⁴³ The dilettante father has positive relationships with his children and yet is not present and does not take part in raising his children. This is typical of the construction workers who will be out for weeks or months for faraway projects but when back, enjoy being with their children at their convenience. A child for a dilettante parent is seen as a companion and a long-time friend. The determinative father is high in activity but does not develop positive relationships with his children. Since fatherhood is a responsibility he must bear, the determinative father makes sure that he has goals for his children which they should comply with. As a “molder” of people, the determinative father tends to control

41. Michele Adams and Scott Coltrane, “Boys and Men in Families: The Domestic Production of Gender, Power, and Privilege,” In *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005): 6, <http://dx.doi.org/10/4135/9781452233833.n10>.

42. Fieldwork notes, Caloocan City, March 10, 2019.

43. Allen Tan, “Four Meanings of Fatherhood,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* Vol. 22, (1989): 179-180.

their movements thinking that they are not capable to fulfill their tasks without his help.⁴⁴ In his view, he has accomplished his mission when he sees that his children have fulfilled the goals he has set for them. The fourth and last type is a generative father who is both high in family interaction and ty and affective dimensions. The generative father typically views parenthood as a major life transition and crisis.⁴⁵ For him, undertaking the task of fatherhood is a source of personal growth and self-fulfillment.

Fathers in the lower-income strata of society tend to fall under the procreator and dilettante type because of the limited role that they play in their children's growing up years.⁴⁶ These types of father image may also be reflected in the kind of relationship they have towards God and the church in general. Looking at God as a provider and a being they run to during times of need can be seen in the way many of the interviewees describe the church as *tagabigay ng biyaya* (provider of blessings).⁴⁷ However, during the darkest time of their lives when their sons and husbands were killed, no one among those interviewed came to the church to ask for help.⁴⁸ When they were asked, many of them mentioned that they didn't know the church can help in such a case. Another said it was too embarrassing to talk to the church authorities about what happened.

Co-Dependence. The quality of relationships between and among family members is a crucial factor in understanding their situation. Signs of codependence, manifested by behaviors such as "denial, control, difficulty in trusting, low self-esteem, weak

44. Ibid., 182.

45. Ibid., 180.

46. Tan, "Four Meanings of Fatherhood," 185.

47. Interview, Yolanda, Caloocan City, April 4, 2019.

48. All ten families interviewed did not approach the church for help. Of the estimated 30,000 plus deaths, only a very small percentage have sought the help of authorities. Many would prefer to distance themselves and/or be silent about what happened.

boundaries, and over-responsibility,” are evident in the stories.⁴⁹ A mother of one of the victims, who was aware that her son used drugs to be able to work for long hours, shared that she was constantly reminding him to stop, but because her son was supporting the family, she felt powerless to persuade him to seek help.⁵⁰ Another mother justified her son’s habit by blaming her husband, who did not give his children the love and support they needed from him. She admitted to providing him with an allowance for his vices and allowed him to do as he wished.⁵¹

Extrafamilial relations also manifest this codependent behavior which proves to be harmful leading boys and men in an endless cycle of victimization. Another victim’s mother turned over her son to the police because of addiction and refused to pay the bail amounting to 3000php, but his son’s friends bailed him out.⁵²

While the term codependence was first used in relationships of people in substance abuse, psychologists also use the term codependency in people who have experienced poverty, trauma, and abuse.⁵³ Codependency is also evidenced in pastoral relationships between pastoral workers and community members, as well as among those who minister. Reliance on one lay leader to decide on pastoral concerns without consulting a representative body, fear of confronting those in need of pastoral correction, and allowing ministry activities to continue despite mismanagement and lack of direction also reflect codependence and create ripple effects in pastoral practice and ecclesial life.⁵⁴

49. Susan Uhle, “Codependence: Contextual Variables in the Language of Social Pathology,” *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 15, no. 3 (1994).

50. Interview, Marilen, Caloocan City, March 29, 2019.

51. Interview, Benilda, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

52. Interview, Hilda, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

53. Harvey Irwin, “Codependence, Narcissism, and Childhood Trauma,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 51, no. 5 (September 1995): 658-665.

54. These behaviors were observed by the author in many ecclesial experiences as well as in the communities where she did her immersion. Co-dependent behaviors may be symptomatic of personal realities faced by ministers

Ka-Barkada: Gangs and Risk-Taking Behavior

There are also single men among the victims who were members of a neighborhood gang, fraternity, or any group of men. Two victims were killed in the company of friends since they were associated with a group of men who are on the drug watch list. Some of them were involved in notorious risk-taking behaviors with their gangs and were known in the neighborhood to steal and engage in other petty crimes.

Barkada System. The socio-cultural influence of the *barkada* system on male and masculine roles in Philippine society is worth exploring. *Barkada*, which comes from the Spanish word for boat, *barko*, means “passage in a boat,” or “boat-load.”⁵⁵ Interestingly, it shares the same root word with *barangay*, the smallest political unit that governs the community. Male *barkada*, as a form of “homosociality and masculine solidarity,” has a powerful impact in shaping men’s attitudes towards women, violence, and vices, and their presence compensates for the lack of family training for men.⁵⁶ Personal experience shows how women are more prepared with life skills in the family.⁵⁷ Aside from seeing the prominent matriarchal role in family responsibilities and decision-making processes, women are expected to help with the various household chores. On the other hand, families do not

that are not addressed as well as ecclesial structures and processes that have no spaces for communal discernment and dialogue. See Marlene Klunzinger and Michael Moore, “Codependency and Pastoral Care: A Report from the Trenches,” *Restoration Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (7-1-1996):163.

55. Jean-Paul Dumont, “The Visayan Male *Barkada*: Manly Behavior and Male Identity on a Philippine Island,” *Philippine Studies* 41, no. 4 (1993): 404.

56. Leonora Angeles, “The Filipino Male as *Macho-Machunurin*: Bringing Men and Masculinities in Gender and Development in The Philippines,” *Kasarinlan Journal of Third World Issues* 16, no. 1(2001): 13.

57. In many Filipino families, daughters are trained early in life to handle responsibilities in the home, which include cleaning the house, cooking, and even decision-making.

expect much from boys. While they are free to play and carry out their endeavors, men are given more access to the bigger world because they are presumed to be able to protect themselves more than women. Gangs grow out of urban poor communities in which the presence of the police force may be very limited, and government services are not provided adequately.⁵⁸ While gangs respond to the need for belonging and promotion of one's status in the community, it also gives young men a life purpose.⁵⁹ Gangs orient men to street life, which is "governed by rules of masculinity."⁶⁰ Self-identity and understanding of one's gendered social roles are shaped by such context.⁶¹ Adolescent boys in urban poor communities, while securing their safety and coping with the fear of real or imagined threats, develop hypermasculine behavior to hide or deny their fear of being victimized.⁶² A Brazilian expression captures membership in a gang as *puoco como um rei, ou muito como um ze* (a little like a king or a lot like a nobody), as it is the only choice left for someone with very limited social and economic opportunities.⁶³ The time spent hanging out with the gang is an important aspect of their life together, characterized by practically doing nothing but including storytelling of events,

58. Olivier Bangerter, "Territorial Gangs and their Consequence for Humanitarian Players," *International Review of the Red Cross* 92 no. 878 (June 2010): 392.

59. Bangerter, "Territorial Gangs and their Consequence for Humanitarian Players," 392.

60. Geoffrey Hunt and Karen Joe Laidler, "Alcohol and Violence in the Lives of Gang Members," *The Journal of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism* 25, no. 1 (February 2001): 66-71.

61. Margaret Beale Spencer and others, "Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context: A Theory-Driven Analysis of Urban Adolescent Males' Coping Responses," *Research in Human Development* 1,4 (2004): 229-ff.

62. Spencer and others, "Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context," 237.

63. Bangerter, "Territorial Gangs and their Consequence for Humanitarian Players," 392.

keeping the police outside their radar, and engaging in petty crimes.⁶⁴

Residents of the community are aware of the hangout places of gangs in their neighborhood. They are usually homes of one of their gangmates, where they gather at certain times during the day (or night). Neighbors note men would be seen arriving individually and inconspicuously at the gathering place where parties, drinking, or drug sessions are held.⁶⁵ Drinking together is a “social lubricant or social glue,” and thus maintains “cohesion and social solidarity” but also affirms “masculinity and male togetherness.”⁶⁶ Drugs, like alcohol, also provide them a means of livelihood, something which is difficult for them to acquire, given their status. With gangmates, they are protected by carrying out the drug trade.

Risk-Taking Behavior. Most of the victims studied exhibited risk-taking behaviors beyond substance abuse. Although not all families admit to their family members’ involvement in the actual sale of drugs, many have hinted at their knowledge of it. Two of the respondents were both involved in petty thefts in the neighborhood and in neighborhood fights that resulted in frequent arrests and altercations with the local police force. One was kidnapped and brutally handled by his captors for drug-related conflicts, but days after his release, he continued to sell drugs. One who was arrested because he was included in the drug watch list also chose to remain in his house despite people’s warnings. Such risk-taking behaviors suggest defiance against danger and threats to their lives.

64. Hunt and Laidler, “Alcohol and Violence in the Lives of Gang Members,” 68.

65. BEC Focus Group Interview, Caloocan City, March 29, 2019.

66. Hunt and Laidler, “Alcohol and Violence in the Lives of Gang Members,” 70.

Hypermasculinity, or an “overemphasis and exaggerated adherence to the traditional male gender roles,” is bound to develop among men, especially those involved in gangs.⁶⁷ The hypermasculine male is not only iconized in the entertainment and advertising industry, but in real-life encounters between kidnappers, criminals, police, and urban hitmen; these factors shape the “hypermasculine-violent culture,” witnessed in heinous and violent crimes.⁶⁸ The connection between gang membership, crimes, and fights suggests how the social structures shaping masculinities also impact the challenges they face in society and the forms of violence they are capable of embodying.⁶⁹

The hypermasculine males are violent and aggressive against the enemy or the “other,” dominate and abuse women, and exhibit a “benevolent paternalism.”⁷⁰ Looking deeper into their stories, one can surmise how hypermasculinity is a “coping response to fear,” especially for boys still seeking to know themselves and men who are incapable of carrying out their economic roles as fathers.⁷¹ Before extrajudicial killings became a norm through the government's war on drugs program, violence in urban poor neighborhoods was typically staged by gangs and neighborhood fraternities. When there is a threat of them being victimized, enlistment in a gang and exhibiting hypermasculine

67. Alex Zernechel and April Perry, “The Final Battle: Constructs of Hegemonic Masculinity and Hypermasculinity, *College Student Affairs Leadership* 4 Issue 1 Art 6 (2017):3, http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/csai/Vol.4/iss1/6?utm_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fcsai%2FVol.4%2Fiss1%2F6&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

68. Angeles, “The Filipino Male as *Macho-Machunurin*,” 14.

69. James Messerschmidt, “Men, Masculinities, and Crime,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005): 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452233833.n12>.

70. Maria Tanyag, “Duterte, Hypermasculinity and the Key to Populism,” *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, March 6, 2018, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/duterte-governing-hypermasculinity-philippines/>.

71. Spencer and others, “Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context,” 236.

tendencies help them to survive. Poverty and a culture of violence propel the emergence of territorial gangs, and with the expansion of urban dwellings, their membership tends to expand and continue through generations.⁷²

Kapitbahayan at Karahasan: Experience of Lived Violence

Most of the stories shared about the victims show experiences of violence either at home or in the neighborhood. Although the city where these victims were located is ranked the 8th city with the lowest crime rate, it is the third-largest city in the country in terms of population.⁷³ While crime rates are proportionately related to population size, stories of violence are not fully accounted for in urban city dwellings.

A Cycle of Violence. Domestic violence and experiences of abuse shared by the victims are seldom reported. The daughter of one victim shared how her parents were also fighting and how her father would always physically hurt her mother.⁷⁴ One victim suffered beatings from his father. His mother suggested that those beatings pushed him to be involved in drugs and gangs. Such stories are not uncommon in the community.⁷⁵

Abuse also takes the form of marital infidelity and neglect of family responsibilities. In the Seven Last Words prayer service, these stories of abuse were shared by daughters, wives, and mothers. Most of the victims were fathers and husbands who had been the

72. Angela Higginson and others, "Youth Gang Membership and Violence in low- and middle-income countries: A Systematic Review," *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation* (September 2016): 63-65.

73. City of Caloocan. caloocancity.gov.ph/programs-and-projects/news/463-calooacan-city-top-8-with-lowest-crime-rate-in-the-philippines. See Biggest Cities in the Philippines <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-cities-in-the-philippines.html>

74. Interview, Yolanda, Caloocan City, April 4, 2019.

75. Interview, Benilda, Caloocan City, March 15, 2019.

source of pain and suffering in the home. Such stories resonate with other members of the community.⁷⁶⁷⁷

The experience of violence begins with the family. Studies reveal how the early experience of violence results in embodying violence as adults.⁷⁸ More than 90 percent of the incidence of violence in Filipino homes is instigated by men.⁷⁹ Many men, unfortunately, grow up witnessing their fathers abusing their mothers and siblings. Conflicts arising from marital problems – unemployment, infidelity, jealousy, and nagging- often lead men to exercise their power over women.⁸⁰ About 83 percent of men in urban poor homes have experienced violence before the age of 18, and this “shapes their sense of ‘manhood’ and increases the chances that they too will turn to violence as part of being a man.”⁸¹

The communities where male victims live have witnessed violence. Although many urban poor dwellings have progressed through the years, there are still places that are “no-go zones,” where “chronic violence transforms social networks and relationships,” that impact economic opportunities as well as effective community relations.⁸² Violence and crime rates increase as the poverty rate

76. Fieldwork notes, Caloocan City, March 17, 2019.

77. Interview, Gloria, Caloocan City, March 17, 2019.

78. International Research Development Center, “Gender and Violence in Cities,” October 19, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/gender-and-violence-cities>.

79. Only about 10% of reported cases of violence are instigated by women, while more than 90% by men. Racidon Bernarte and others, “Violence against Women in the Philippines,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 6, no.1 (February 2018):121.

80. Ibid., 121.

81. International Research Development Center, “Gender and Violence in Cities.”

82. The World Bank, *Violence in the City: Understanding and Supporting Community Responses to Urban Violence*, (Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2010), 15-16, https://www.unicef.org/protection/Violence_in_the_City.pdf.

increases (3.4% annually).⁸³ A grandmother shares how the cycle of violence has affected her son and grandson. When her sons were little, her husband would threaten their sons with a knife when he was drunk. They also had a neighbor who poked a real gun at her son, pressing the trigger as if to kill him only to find out that the gun was bullet less. This violence is passed on now to his son's children.⁸⁴

Violence implies a breach as the cycle of violence among males may indicate the failure to meet role expectations and to resort to other means to regain their status in family and society.

Forming of Masculinities

The web of stories connected with the Filipino male victims confirms the factors that develop different forms of masculinities. The diagram in the succeeding page suggests how power relations (*lakas sa lakas*), production relations (*lakas sa paggawa*), as well as sexual desire or *cathexis* (*lakas ng puso*) indicated through social practices, support and hinder the development of the Filipino male from the smallest unit of the family to the different roles and relationships that they have.

The concentric circles of the environment where men belong, from the family to the society, indicate how they are

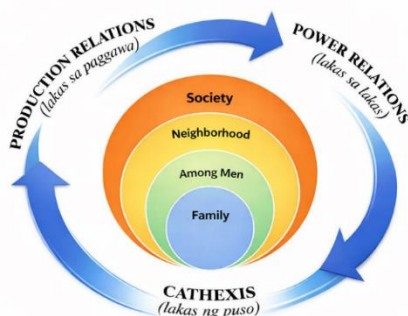


Figure 1: Filipino Men and Masculinities

83. Marife M. Ballesteros, "Linking Poverty and the Environment: Evidence from Slums in Philippine Cities," *Philippine Institute for Development Studies*, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://dirp4.pids.gov.ph/ris/dps/pidsdps1033.pdf>.

84. Interview, Hilda, Caloocan City, May 15, 2019.

related and directly influencing the development of masculinities. These social structures also suggest the dynamics between men and women (as husband and wife, father and mother, brother and sister), and between men and men (sons and fathers, peers, male gangs, male authorities).

BAYANI AT BANAL (HERO AND HOLY): JESUS AS THE IDEAL MASCULINE

The critical study of Jesus in the Gospel using the lens of masculinity provides a deeper framework for understanding men and the ideals needed to nurture various forms of masculinity.

During Graeco-Roman times, hierarchy in society was not necessarily gendered; it was a hierarchy of humanity, which considered masculinity as divine and the highest in the ladder.⁸⁵ Because of this distinction, “male slaves, defeated enemies, and barbarians,” are considered without gender, and slaves, whether male or female,” did not have sexual privacy of control over their bodies.”⁸⁶

However, it is not enough to be born with a male body. He has to become a man. Masculinity was not considered a permanent state, but one that was “always under construction and under the scrutiny of other men.”⁸⁷ There were five factors to be regarded as a manly Graeco-Roman.⁸⁸ First, he should be “active, powerful,

85. Peter Smit, “Jesus and the Ladies: Constructing and Deconstructing Johannine Macho-Christology,” *The Bible and Critical Theory* 2, no. 3 (2006): 31.6.

86. Jeremy Punt, “Writing Genealogies, Constructing Men: Masculinity and Lineage in the New Testament in Roman Times,” *Neotestamentica: New Testament Society of Southern Africa* 48.2 (2014):308-309.

87. Susanna Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men: Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*, (Boston: Brill, 2018), 25.

88. Eric Stewart, “Masculinity in the New Testament and Early Christianity,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 46, no. 2 (2016), 94.

rational, and spiritual (as opposed to ‘fleshly’).⁸⁹ He has to be “impenetrable,” meaning able to protect his physical body “from being penetrated sexually or struck, marked or pierced.”⁹⁰ He is courageous, aggressive in battle, and brave to face pain and death. He is educated, trained for battle, and able to “speak on behalf of those who lacked public voice.”⁹¹ Most importantly, the Graeco-Roman man possesses the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, self-control, and courage.⁹²

The Gospel accounts paint contrasting views of the masculine Jesus.⁹³ In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was a “military leader” who was “self-marginalized” and who taught his followers to be servants.⁹⁴ Though a strong critic of the Roman rulers, the Markan Jesus was also “a passive, emasculated victim who suffers a humiliating death.”⁹⁵ His healing accounts were contrasted with conflicts with authorities, and as he proclaimed an alternative kingdom, he was subverting the existing structure of power.⁹⁶

In Matthew, Jesus was given honorific titles, a birth narrative that indicates he is “heir to the royal dynasty of Israel,” and a death and resurrection that fits well with the imperial tradition.⁹⁷ The Sermon on the Mount showcases Jesus as an

89. Ibid., 94.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., 96.

92. Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man*, 21-29.

93. The article does not intend to provide a comprehensive analysis of Jesus’ masculinity in the Gospels, but a picture of Jesus as the ideal masculine in the Gospels. Thus, the following paragraphs will only give a few examples of Jesus in the four Gospel accounts and as mentioned by various commentators.

94. Susanna Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men: Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*, (Boston: Brill, 2018), 48. Also see Will Moore, “A Godly Man and a Manly God: Resolving the Tension of Divine Masculinities in the Bible,” *Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, <https://jibs.hcommons.org/2022/07/20/moore-a-godly-man-and-a-manly-god/>

95. Conway, *Behold the Man*, 89.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., 124.

“authoritative teacher.”⁹⁸ While his words of wisdom expressed virtues of righteousness and justice, Jesus did not mince words about his opponents by calling them “hypocrites,” “adulterous generation,” brood of vipers,” and “blind guides.”⁹⁹

Luke’s account depicted Jesus as an “elite Jew” who could debate with elders and learned men but had compassion for the poor, outcasts, including women and children. The word ‘man’ appears many times throughout the Gospel and it purposefully implies the dominance of males in the worlds of education, government, and cult.¹⁰⁰ As a man, the Lukan Jesus was in control of his emotions as opposed to his opponents, who were plotting against him. Bringing Jesus in contact with the temple in several accounts, Luke also manifests the priestly role of Jesus, fulfilling the masculine ideal as “leader, founder, and savior.”¹⁰¹

John’s Christology brings to the fore Jesus’ “divine parentage.”¹⁰² As the word Father is mentioned 118 times and the word Son, nineteen times in the Gospel it also punctuates the masculinity of both God and Jesus.¹⁰³ Though many commentators have focused on the feminine Sophia of the Johanne Jesus, except for the symbolic imagery used to describe him (bread, water, etc.), some argue that Jesus, was hegemonic masculine as he is a “dispenser of power,” and one who had an “astounding range of authority.”¹⁰⁴ Jesus is depicted as expressive of his deep emotions, like the cleansing of the temple and the death of Lazarus, but was also shown as having control over his passions despite encounters with women, and exhibiting extraordinary control over his anger,

98. Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men: Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*, 48.

99. *Ibid.*, 49-53.

100. Conway, *Behold the Man*, 128.

101. *Ibid.* 138-139.

102. Smit, “Jesus and the Ladies: Constructing and Deconstructing Johannine Macho-Christology,” 31.1

103. Conway, *Behold the Man*. 144.

104. *Ibid.*, 149-154.

especially in the rigorous trials leading up to his death.¹⁰⁵ Though the piercing of Jesus at the crucifixion somehow disqualifies him from manhood,¹⁰⁶ the way he faced his death with distinguished courage manifests the nobility of a Greco-Roman masculine.¹⁰⁷

This complex picture of Jesus across the Gospels interprets Jesus through multiple lenses of masculinity. As a marginalized masculine, he carried out God's vision for the world in response to the injustice and oppression by embodying Graeco-Roman ideals of masculinity to fight against the empire.¹⁰⁸

FEW GOOD MEN: IDEAL MASCULINE RESPONSES IN THE WAR ON DRUGS

In the war on drugs, many men also manifested ideal masculinities rooted in the example of Jesus. Reflecting ideal masculine traits, like Jesus, their response was shaped not only by the call for justice and the prevailing needs of the victims and their families, but also by the transformation of the entire community.

Paninindigan sa Katotohanan: Firm Defiance to Protect the Truth. A bishop of a local diocese, heavily affected by the killings, was a brave critic of the national leadership's rhetoric. He spoke the Gospel message of justice without fail, but he also had compassion and was never afraid to face backlash against authority. He was instrumental in bringing forward one particular case of extrajudicial killings in the person of Kian de los Santos. He was able to do so by providing sanctuary to a witness, by securing all legal means and support to protect her and her family.¹⁰⁹ Fighting

105. Ibid., 145-147.

106. Stewart, "Masculinity in the New Testament and Early Christianity," 97.

107. Conway, *Behold the Man*, 148.

108. Ibid., 12.

109. Bp. Pablo David heads the Diocese of Caloocan and he have been outspoken against the war on drugs and the extrajudicial killings of drug users and dealers. The national leadership has taken offense against his prophetic stance that

for justice demands such courageous persistence to face dominant structures and forces that usurp their power to conceal the truth. When one holds on to the truth that lies, not in abstract truths, but in real bodies, bodies are awakened to their denial and fear.

Boses ng Pagbabago: Voice of Change. One of the first ecclesial responses that stood defiant against the *tokhang* was a foreign-born parish priest. The government had asked the church to partner with them to knock on the homes of drug addicts and invite them to surrender. But the parish priest who supported the program did not believe it would work and insisted on a different approach. He asked the police for the list of suspected drug addicts and prepared BEC leaders, mothers, and grandmothers to facilitate their surrender. What happened was that the suspected men were not afraid because they were assured of the church's protection, and the police force became cautious in handling their cases. It was dangerous, but it worked.¹¹⁰ On the day of surrender, realizing that without any protection, the vulnerability was high, the parish also invited media outfits – journalists and radio personalities, local government officials, as well as church officials. This priest was interviewed on TV, and the mass surrender was announced on TV and radio. His heroic masculine response proved successful. Killings dropped in their place, as the diocese and local government fully supported their proposal for a community-based rehabilitation program. In this story, it might be argued that the dynamics of power relations among men played a role since before a white man,

he would announce false stories about him. See Paterno Emasquel II, "Duterte said kill the bishops – and his word become flesh," *Rappler*, Updated December 4, 2019. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/224537-duterte-word-became-flesh-kill-bishops>.

110. Fr. Luciano Felloni, a priest from the Diocese of Caloocan was born in Argentina. When he entered the seminar to become a priest, he was sent to the Philippines and decided to remain in the country and serve the local church. He was a parish priest for the Our Lady of Lourdes in Camarin, Novaliches, a community that suffered many deaths at the onset of the war on drugs by the Philippine government. Interview, Luciano Felloni, Camarin, March 28, 2019.

the local hegemony stood subordinate. Hegemonic bodies cannot resist when they are also engaged to witness and to testify to the truth.

Pagpukaw Kamalayan: Conscientization. A well-known priest-theologian likewise stood defiant against the ongoing killings.¹¹¹ During weekdays, he teaches at a school of theology and on weekends he serves in a dumpsite community. The community was also burdened by the slaughter of people involved in the drug trade. The parishioners expressed their fear and anxiety over the rampant killings and as the killings increased through the weeks, the pastoral team decided to gather the affected families. Apart from attending to the needs of the families of victims, there was a need to conscientize the parishioners for their role in the ongoing killings. In December 2016, as the community prepared for Christmas through the nine-day *Simbang Gabi* (dawn masses), the body of a resident who was killed was still waiting to be buried because of the insufficiency of funds. To raise awareness on what was happening and since most of the residents remain supportive of the government leaders and their program, his homilies for the nine days revolved around the issue. He was clear about his stand, “this is wrong; no matter what you think of it, your neighbor died. Whether he was an addict or not, he was killed.” By proclaiming the Gospel call for justice and equality, fearlessly and awakening bodies to the power of becoming the body of Christ, people take the courage to care for the victims and their families.

These stories are examples of *bayani at banal* - ideal masculine responses that recreate the narrative and confront the

111. Danny Pilario is a member of the Congregation of the Mission, the Vincentians. A prominent Filipino theologian, he is Dean of the St. Vincent School of Theology. Fr. Pilario, together with the pastoral team of *Ina ng Lupang Pangako* Parish in Payatas, founded the SOW (Support for Orphans and Widows) for left-behind families of victims of extrajudicial killings in the parish. Fr. Pilario has written extensively from the “rough grounds of *praxis*,” and has courageously spoken against the war on drugs.

oppression and victimization of marginalized men. Their courageous resistance deprives the dominant voice of its *pathos*.¹¹² However, it must be mentioned that many others chose the easier way: by remaining silent in the midst of injustice and subscribing to the ideal of hegemonic masculinities by condoning the killings.¹¹³

MASCULINITY-ABSENT LENS IN ECCLESIAL LIFE AND PASTORAL RESPONSES

Such display of heroism and holiness, however powerful in the midst of a national crisis such as the war on drug, demand structures that do not only protect the marginalized but are able to empower them. The recent synod consultations attest that while women's presence in church life is evident, "participation of men is sorely lacking."¹¹⁴ Further, the absence of vulnerable sectors including victims of injustice and oppression calls for a church that does not only take them as recipients but as subjects in the task of evangelization.¹¹⁵ Transforming marginalized masculinities necessitates a critique on paradigms that do not support their inclusion and holistic development in community life.

A classic Filipino creation story speaks of the shared identity between the first man, *Malakas*, and the first woman,

112. *Pathos* is the "emotional and psychic yielding to the drama being enacted or intimated through the master story." Jennings, "War Bodies: Remembering Bodies in a Time of War," 28.

113. Agnes Brazal, "Complicity in the Summary Executions in Duterte's Drug War," *Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church*, accessed November 4, 2017, www.catholicethics.com/forum-submissions/complicity-in-the-summary-executions-in-dutertes-drug-war

114. Salubong, "The Philippine National Synod Report 2022," <https://synodphilippines.com/salubong-the-philippine-catholic-church-synodal-report/>

115. CBCP Synod Assembly, "Tentmaking: The Philippine Report on the DCS," January 19, 2023

Maganda. God created the world with the sun and the moon, the clear blue skies, and the stars. God created grass, trees, and flowers, as well as the oceans and rivers. But at the end of the days of creation, a bird went flying around when it heard a voice coming out from a bamboo plant. It was pleading with him to peck on the bamboo hard so that it could come out. The bird, though at first afraid, obliged. It pecked on the talking bamboo and out came the first man on one side of the bamboo, who is named *Malakas* (power) and the first woman, on the other side of the bamboo, who is named *Maganda* (beauty). Showing equality between a man and a woman, this narrative also alludes to the beautiful combination of power and beauty reflected in Filipino values.

Church emphasizes the need for conversion of relationships because “inequality between men and women is not part of God’s design.”¹¹⁶ Synodality and integral ecology is about “relationality” and by listening to the excluded and marginalized, it harnesses the power of shared identity reflected by *Malakas* and *Maganda*.¹¹⁷ Jesus’ mission was characterized by the shared power between men and women. Shared power, as a “a relation of force,” manifests sacred power.¹¹⁸

Sacred power is present whenever power is used to attain mutuality or right relations. Or to generate “power with” so that we can live more just and compassionate lives. This sacred power lies in the

116. Pope Francis, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission Final Document,” XVI

Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 2024, #52 ENG--Documento-finale.pdf

117. Pope Francis, Final Synod Document, #48.

118. Agnes Brazal uses Charles Foucault’s definition of power as she explains the shared power in men and women. Agnes Brazal, “Power-Beauty: Feminism and Post-Colonial Leadership,” In *Feminist Catholic Theological Ethics: Conversations in the World Church*. (New York: Orbis, USA), 77.

interconnectedness of all things...What we see in Jesus' ministry is not a unilateral transfer of power from the powerful to the powerless but of power in mutual relations at work.¹¹⁹

Such power-with dynamics may not be harnessed if there is a masculinity-absent lens in community interventions and pastoral care. Advocacy efforts aimed at improving women's status in society have increasingly renewed their attention to forms of masculinity and to the development of shared leadership between men and women.

Katuwang sa Pag-unlad: From Women-in-Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) Framework in Development

In the Philippines, development paradigms have been largely influenced by the Women-In-Development (WID) framework which believes in the importance of the empowerment of women in poverty alleviation.¹²⁰ This framework was propelled in the early 1970s by feminists from the Global North who were convinced that promoting the liberation of women will respond to the poverty and oppression globally.¹²¹ From their personal and political lens, third world analyses were undertaken through which

119. Ibid.

120. Although development programs in the Philippines are characterized as gender responsive, most of its activities focus on poverty alleviation through empowering women. See United Nations Development Program, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Philippines," *UNDP Philippines*, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/philippines/docs/Governance/fastFacts%20%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Women%20Empowerment%20in%20the%20Philippines%20rev%201.5.pdf>. Also see Commission on Women, "Philippine Initiatives on Gender-Responsive Governance," accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.pcw.gov.ph/focus-areas/gender-responsive-governance/initiatives>.

121. Ruth Pearson, "Which Men, Why Now? Reflections on Men and Development," *IDS Bulletin* 31, no. 2 (2000): 42-43.

successful programs for women's empowerment, as well as development concerns in the area of health, women's rights protection, crisis intervention concerning women, were implemented. Examples of programs patterned after this framework are Grameen banking which provides livelihood programs through cooperatives run by women,¹²² and the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program or 4Ps, which seeks to alleviate poverty in poor families through financial support implemented through wives and mothers alone without the men.¹²³

Paradigms on gender such as discourse analysis and deconstruction have strongly opposed the discourse of male dominance and women's oppression reflected in development programs.¹²⁴ Many express that the narrative of women as victims who need to be empowered has become an indirect and subtle strategy towards "silencing dissent, containing dissonance, and maintaining orthodoxies."¹²⁵ Though foundational in the poverty alleviation process of many communities, a "women-in-development" framework has also failed to achieve its purpose as

122. Grameen reframed misconceptions about the poor such as – they were not capable of “remunerative occupations...not bankable...cannot save...” or would not pay back their loans, by creating communities of women and equipping them not only with financial capital but human resources. <http://www.grameen.com/breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty/>. Women farmers are not only provided with capital to start their business. Grameen also engaged them with other players in the field and provided training for capacity building to succeed in the industry. See The story of Edna (Tata), accessed April 3, 2020. <https://grameenfoundation.org/stories/stories-of-change/edna-story>.

123. Official Gazette, *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program, accessed March 10, 2020, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/programs/conditional-cash-transfer/>.

124. Andrea Cornwall, “Men, Masculinity, and Gender in Development,” *Gender and Development* 5, no. 2 (June 1997): 7.

125. Andrea Cornwall, “Missing Men? Reflections on Men, Masculinities and Gender in GAD. *Institute for Development Studies Bulletin* 31 (2): 22. See also Richard Eves, “Men, Masculinity and Development in the Pacific,” *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia* No. 2 (2009): 2.

the cycle of poverty continues.¹²⁶ By essentializing one gender and not acknowledging the shared power and production relations between men and women, family life and parenting issues are also not addressed.

The shift from Women-in- Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) has called for the “inclusion of men, male identities, and masculinities in mainstreaming gender within development discussions.”¹²⁷ Not only are women in need of empowerment but also men. Social issues related to poverty, such as violence, risk-taking behavior, and unemployment are seen to affect more men than women.

By disregarding the complexities of male experience, by characterizing men as “the problem,” and by continuing to focus on women-in-general as the “oppressed,” development initiatives that aim to be ‘gender-aware’ can fail to address effectively the issues of equity and empowerment that are crucial in bringing about positive change.¹²⁸

Re-engaging the marginalized males should, therefore, work towards more “male-sensitive and male-centered approaches for interventions” to “avoid demonizing and stereotyping men.”¹²⁹

126. Fernando Abocejo and others, “Microfinance Lending Program of Cooperatives in Cebu, Philippines: Realities, Benefits and Women's Participation,” *CNU Journal of Higher Education- Special Edition of Poverty Alleviation* (2012): 25-39, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287196765_Micro_finance_Lending_Program_of_Cooperatives_in_Cebu_Philippines_Realities_Benefits_and_Women's_Participation

127. Angeles, “The Filipino Male as *Macho-Machunurin*,” 4.

128. Cornwall, “Men, Masculinity and Gender in Development,” 8.

129. Romeo Lee, “Filipino men's familial roles and Domestic Violence: Implications and Strategies for Community-based Intervention,” *Health and Social*

Malakas at Maganda sa Pagkalinga: Shared Leadership in Pastoral Care

The feminist framework in the analysis of human development is also reflected in church ministry. Social action ministries that seek to alleviate poverty and respond primarily to women and children. In focus group interviews conducted in the parish, women would share about sons or husbands of their companions or beneficiaries who are involved in the drug trade. When asked if there is any concrete plan of action to reach out to them, they would mention ways by which they reach out to the mothers, wives, or their children.¹³⁰ The fact that most, if not all parish workers or volunteers, are women could be a factor in such a response. Most of the involved men are only visible on Sundays and they are in upfront liturgical functions. Women workers, who may have also experienced physical abuse or domination from their husbands, or are accepting of their subordinated role vis-à-vis men, may already feel threatened when they carry out roles that cross the line. It is ironic how most of those tasked to reach out and document the cases of victims are women pastoral workers. Many of them responded because there was no one else to carry the much-needed service. Since most social action ministries are also managed by women, the task of attending to the victims and their families is largely placed in the hands of women.

There are obvious dangers involved in carrying out ministry to extrajudicial killings since many of the families of victims do not want to be interviewed. One female worker shared how she was threatened by the family members and their neighbors,

Care in Community (19 August 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2524.2004.00512.x>

130. Interview, Sr. Matilda, Caloocan City, March 9, 2019.

that she would be killed if she ever visited them again.¹³¹ When asked why only women are involved in this work, the pastoral worker reasoned out that men do not typically engage in social action ministries because it is only for women. Then she said, “but Father (referring to their priest) is a man and he is our coordinator. He tells us what to do.”

Pagsambang Ganap sa Diwa: Towards Engendering Worship Spaces

Aside from gendered practices in pastoral care, expressions of worship tend more towards a feminized Christianity. Practices that promote devotion to the Virgin Mary, rosaries and novenas, even practices from various charismatic movements appeal more to women. Basic ecclesial communities are still largely a women’s movement.

Devotions that appeal to males like the devotion to the Black Nazarene however can help redeem masculinity and enable the exploration of power and participation.¹³² The devotion to the Black Nazarene has a wide following among Filipinos.¹³³ Many of the devotees belong to poor communities both in urban and rural settings. To be a devotee entails the living out of a *panata* (commitment), an embodiment of one’s relationship to the *Poon* (Lord Jesus)¹³⁴ The ritual has been characterized as chaotic and

131. Interview, Darwin, Caloocan City, March 4, 2019.

132. Paul Francois Tremlett, “Power, Invulnerability, beauty: producing and transforming male bodies in the lowland Christianized Philippines,” *School of Oriental and African Studies, University Centre Website* (2016): 13-15. See also Jazmin Badong Llana, “Inaesthetics of Performance in the Black Nazarene Procession,” *What is Performance Philosophy? Staging a New Field International Conference* (University of Surrey, April 11-13, 2013).

133. Antonio Gonsalves, “Understanding the Fierce Devotion Behind the Black Nazarene,” *Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene Website*, accessed August 21, 2019, <http://www.quiapochurch.com/author/clemignacio/>.

134. Jack, Caloocan City, May 12, 2019.

fatal, owing to injuries and deaths caused by heat, fatigue, and being crushed by the crowd.¹³⁵ But it is astounding how male unity, masculine strength, and perseverance is showcased throughout the procession.¹³⁶ As shown in the rituals, the devotion not only conveys piety but also understanding of power, the role of men in society, and relationships.¹³⁷ Taking part in the *Via Crucis*, the ritual is a “showing of doing,” “fosters a real, immediate and corporeal relationship with Christ,” that is facilitated through the “interpersonal and inter-individual relationships of trusting faith.”¹³⁸ Integrating masculine rituals and practices in the worship space may enhance the presence of male bodies in ecclesial life as well as promote masculine practices that are also needed in remembering the voiceless and the traumatized.

CONCLUSION

The story of the war on drugs from the lens of masculinity implicates the entire community. Though hegemonic masculinities have created the war, power dynamics from the family to society have marginalized men and contributed to their victimization. Jesus identifies with them as a marginalized male in the Graeco-Roman times. But he embodied heroism and holiness, as one rooted in values of equality and justice and by his lived experience of oppression and injustice. Though Jesus’ masculinity is exhibited by men who spoke truth to power and fought for those oppressed, a

135. Rambo Talabong, “Zero Fatalities, hundreds injured in Nazareno 2018,” *Rappler*, January 10, 2018, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/193283-zero-casualties-hundreds-injured-nazareno-2018>.

136. Calano, “The Black Nazarene, Quiapo, and the Weak Philippine State,” 173.

137. Tremlett, “Power, Invulnerability, Beauty,” 13-15.

138. Julius Bautista, “*Hesukristo* Superstar: Entrusted Agency and Passion Rituals in the Roman Catholic Church,” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 28 (2017): 160-162.

masculinity-absent lens in ecclesial life will not alleviate the plight of marginalized Filipino men in society. Pastoral care and ecclesial response that reinterprets the narrative of Malakas and Maganda and restores shared power between men and women in community through gender integrative pastoral mechanisms and interventions will empower marginalized masculinities and bring about a more inclusive, synodal, and holistically empowered society.

Jessica Joy Candelario, PhD

Bukal ng Tipan, Inc.

joycandelariobnt@gmail.com