The Missing Map:
Eco-Social Asset Mapping

An Introduction

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The focus of this special section of UNITAS is on the recording and preservation of freely available social assets like meeting places, market places, community halls, playgrounds, public open spaces, and green infrastructure, including urban greenery, both planned and unplanned. As evidenced by the experience of countries worldwide, these spaces in general have a particularly strong impact on the wellbeing of marginalized groups because in situations of rapid urbanization and change, they can quickly be overrun.

Background

The Newton-CHED Institutional Links research grant to the University of Santo Tomas, entitled "Eco-Social Surveying: Mapping Social Assets, Urban Greenery, and the Connections Between Them in Rapidly Changing Cities" together with its collaborative partner University of Reading (UoR) of United Kingdom is funded by the British Council through the Commission for Higher Education (CHED) and was approved in December 2017. As may be gleaned from the papers included in this special section, this project has used participatory design techniques to map out social assets and green infrastructure eco-social assets in two small cities, exploring the connections between them towards meaningful place-making.

The Missing Map

These papers, written by the University of Santo Tomas Newton Research Team headed by Leah Dela Rosa, were presented during the Missing Map Research Symposium, organized by the Urban Living Research Group, held on June 25-26, 2019 at the School of Architecture, University of Reading, UK. In the effort to explore eco-sociocultural concerns in context, the symposium looked into how mapping may provide visual and/or participatory ways of exploring alternate perspectives in addressing such concerns. Specifically, by taking into consideration the stories behind these maps, it was hoped that previously unrecorded narratives might richly complement our understanding of where and how we live (Samuel 2018).

"Manila's Binondo District: Beyond Restaurants and Tourist Trails Mapping Social Assets of Binondo Within the Social Construct of Chinatown" by Simoun Ong looks into the political district of Binondo, Manila in the Philippines, which is known to be the oldest Chinatown district in the world, dating back to the Spanish colonial period. Based on his own experience and through the mapping of social assets, identified through surveys and interviews in and around the district of Binondo, the author takes note of how the Chinatown has expanded into the nearby districts of Tondo, Santa Cruz and San Nicolas through time. The paper also compares and contrasts how insiders and outsiders look at these assets as identifiers of Chinatown.

"Redefining Street Life: The Intertwine of Public and Private Spaces in the Streets of Santa Rosa, Laguna, Philippines" by Noel Cruz, John Clemence Pinlac, and Vinson Serrano focuses on the three main streets in three barangays of Santa Rosa, Laguna with different socio-economic profiles. The paper describes how the streets have been redefined as seen in the overlapping use of the public realm such as streets and adjacent private spaces which is a common occurrence in most Asian cities. The street profile documentations were analyzed through the interrelation two qualitative frameworks, namely, (1) socio-cultural contexts and (2) physical attributes.

"Mapping Urban Ethnography Through Streetscape Analysis: A Case Study of Barangay Kanluran, Santa Rosa City, Laguna, Philippines" by Noel Cruz and Kimberly Ronquillo, examines are the streets of Barangay Kanluran

in Santa Rosa through the use of the ethnographic research methods such as streetscape characterization, transect walk and key informants interview, identifying material and non-material cultures. It highlights how material cultures greatly affect and sustain non-material cultures such as religions, organizations and customs and traditions. Notwithstanding regulation issues, the combination of socio-economic structures in the barangay, as shown in the output map and streetscapes, reflect some positive aspects of the Filipino culture such as mutual trust and "bayanihan."

"Mapping the Eco-Social Construct of Santa Rosa: An Emerging City in a Watershed of Opportunities for Development" by Nathaniel C. Bantayan, Leah Dela Rosa, Sylvia D. Clemente, Magdalene P. Guevarra, and Kyle Pierre Israel studies the possibility of involving communities in the process of academic research and innovation by analyzing the selection of projects such as in the promotion of the concept of the Local Advisory Council (LAC) while identifying localized community assets. It focuses primarily on geographically-defined communities of each of the participating barangays of Santa Rosa based on the ecological perspective of the city's watershed. Moreover, while taking on a historical perspective and studying the current state of land use, the paper employs methods in remote sensing and Geographic Information System also known as GIS.

Participatory approaches currently occupy a prominent position in community development practice. From the results of the participatory mapping with local communities indigenous expert knowledge is shown to be the source of the social and cultural representations of the local landscape. Out of the eighteen (18) barangays of Santa Rosa, five (5) barangays have been identified to have an in-depth identification of their eco-social assets.

Collectively these papers have amplified the eco-social values of the communities identified through participatory approaches resulting in the drawing not just of cartographic maps but the formulation of social maps— "missing maps"—generated from the shared unique stories and narratives of the community members as they navigate their valuable public places.