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Preserving Cultural Identities:

Philippine Dance and Culture Within the Bay Area

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**Abstract**

*Philippine dance and culture in the Bay Area has gained popularity and visibility through college run Pilipino Cultural Nights (PCNs) and Philippine/Philippine American hosted events such as Pistahan, Kalayaan, and SoMa Pilipinas' Undiscovered. Through these productions and celebrations, there has been a growth of representation and understand of Filipinx<sup>1</sup> and Filipinx Americans. Simultaneously, stereotypes of these communities are deconstructed or reclaimed. As a recent member of the Philippine dance community, I was interested to see how, if at all, Philippine dance influences identity formation and plays a part in the diaspora. I observed pre and colonial times in the Philippines, Philippine American history, and the evolution of Philippine dance. To connect my observations and further understand Philippine dance and culture, I interviewed various Philippine dance teachers and practitioners in the Bay Area. These individuals have shared their experiences and insights on the topics. Findings and future research directions are discussed.*

Keywords: Philippine dance, diaspora, Philippine and Philippine American, representation, cultural awareness

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<sup>1</sup> Filipinx is used to recognize the diverse identities from the Philippine and Philippine American community

**Preserving Cultural Identities:  
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*“Yes, Filipinos have a culture after all, but it should be labelled a ‘damaged culture.’ Far from being labelled a ‘damaged’ Filipino culture held its own, body and soul wherever the Filipino might be, in identity and spiritually, inspite of all the incursions by foreign cultures notably Spanish and American. In fact, Filipino culture is better characterized as a culture of invulnerability. Marunong lang sumakay ang Pilipino (The Filipino can dance to the music)*

*- Virgilio G. Enriquez*

“Are you a dancer?”

“All you Filipinx dance.”

“They’re really good.”

As a Filipina-American who grew up in Los Angeles, I have had this underlying “dancer” stereotype placed on me by strangers, peers, and authorities. Despite the fact that I danced Hip-Hop competitively, I did not understand why people assumed that I or my Filipinx community would have such a strong association to dance. It was not until I started studying at the University of San Francisco (USF) that I began to understand the contexts in which this stereotype began. Through my involvement with USF’s Filipinx-American organization Kasamahan, courses within USF’s Minor Yuchengco Philippine Studies Program (YPSP), and membership in Parangal Dance Company, I have realized that dance has always played a major role in Philippine culture.

I had never seen Philippine dance until I joined Kasamahan’s Dance Troupe in 2014. Here, I was told that Philippine dance had five suites: Lumad/Indigenous, Cordillera/Mountain, Barrio/Rural, Spanish/Maria Clara, and Moro/Muslim. Determined to bridge my passions for performance and culture, I continued to learn more Philippine dances through Kasamahan’s

annual cultural production, Barrio Fiesta. While I continued to participate in Dance Troupe and Barrio Fiesta, I also became a member of Parangal Dance Company in 2016, a San Francisco based Filipinx performance group that aims “to give tribute to Philippine heritage by preserving and promoting ethnic attire, music, and dance through research, workshops, and performances” (About, n.d.). Under the mentorship of its director, Kuya<sup>12</sup> Eric Solano, I discovered that Philippine dance is much more extensive than just the five suites. I became aware that there are over 110 indigenous groups in the Philippines. Among these groups are a multitude of dances some which have, and countless others which have not, been shared on America’s stage. Within the same year, I began to take YPSP classes such as “Intro to Philippine Studies” and “Barrio Fiesta.” By bridging my understanding of Philippine culture and history, I began to make the connections of how dance has played a major role in the diaspora.

Today, Philippine dance continues to evolve. It is practiced across generations and transcends borders. With companies and organizations such as the American Center of Philippine Arts, Parangal Dance Company, and Stockton’s Little Manila Center, the Bay Area has become a major center for Filipinx-Americans and platform for Philippines’ indigenous peoples. The ever growing relationship between Philippine dance and the diaspora continues to empower Filipinxs and Filipinx-Americans to communicate their narratives and struggles. Through movement, dancers are enabled to bring awareness to themselves and others on the indigenous roots of the Philippines.

In this paper, I will review the history and literature surrounding the Philippines’ relationships with Spain, America, and dance. I will connect how colonization has influenced

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<sup>2</sup> “Kuya” translates to “older brother” in Tagalog

Philippine dance within the nation and in the US while also recognizing artists and scholars who have completed similar research. In order to illustrate my findings, I will share the results of my interviews conducted with Filipinx and Filipinx-Americans who practice Philippine dance within the Bay Area.

### **History and Literature Review**

The following literature review is organized chronologically, starting with the influences on the archipelago before Spanish colonization. I summarize the beginning of Spain's sovereignty and the wars that began American rule. Continuing with the explanation of Filipinx experiences when moving to the US, three waves of immigration will be provided. After presenting historical contexts, I will examine the details and significance of Philippine dance.

#### **Pre and Colonial Times in the Philippines**

##### ***Pre-1521.***

The beginnings of the Philippines Islands were established on the archipelago along the northeastern border of Southeast Asia. It holds 7,107 islands that stretch for nineteen miles. Its population migrated between 30,000 B.C.E. and 200 B.C.E. on balangays, carved wooden vessels, which carried descendents of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Austronesia (Francia, 2013). Proof of this intercultural community is found in the elements of Philippine culture. Prior to Spanish arrival, the Philippines had its own writing system, *baybayin*. It consisted of twenty letters, old Tagalog words, and characters similar to Malaysian, Indonesian, and Arabic script (Francia, 2013). There were also similarities between nations in Philippine dance and attire. The hierarchy found within Muslim cultures resonated in Philippine dances, and the use of material

and style of loincloths were similar to many Thai and Polynesian cultures (Goquingco & Joquin, 1980).

Through books written by Filipinx national artist Leonor Orosa Goquingco and author Reynaldo G. Alejandro, I have learned about how scholars typically categorize Philippine dance: “Dances of non-Christian Filipinxs,” “Dances of Traditionalist groups,” or “Ethnolinguistic Groups.” The categories continue to be broken down by region, spiritual practice, and hemispheres. It has been noted that surrounding nations have also influenced these categories; some being Malaysia, Indonesia, or Thailand. Amongst the research, a common observation of pre-colonial Philippine dance is its inclusion in everyday life.

In addition to having their own writing system and dance traditions, pre-colonial life consisted of barangays, or Filipinx settlements. Each settlement was led by a datu, chieftain (Scott, 2010). Barangays traded amongst each other and participated in the larger Asia trade network. Before missionaries introduced Christianity in the nation, the people of the Philippines were polytheistic and matriarchal. Many believed in *Bathala* (a supreme being), *diwatas* (gods), and *espiritus* (spirits), and *baybaylans* (healers and priestesses) (Pambid Domingo, 2013).

### ***1521 and Spanish Influence.***

On August 10, 1519, Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand Magellan, set sail on the Atlantic to search for a route that would lead to the fabled Spice Islands. Two years later on March 16, 1521, Magellan and his crew settled on the archipelago’s central region, Visayas, and christened the islands as the Archipelago of San Lazaro. They continued journeying south and were advised by Cebu’s ruler, Rajah Humabon, to defeat his rival and anti-Spanish Mactan Island leader,

LapuLapu. Outnumbered and outsmarted, LapuLapu killed Magellan and the rest of his men retreated.

The second notable Philippine expedition was led by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi under Spain's Prince Philip II, the Prince in which the archipelago would be named after. On November 21, 1564, Legazpi set off on his expedition with four ships, five friars, and 380 men. Landing in Cebu on February 13, 1565, Legazpi's conquest established Spanish sovereignty over the Philippines through Christian missionaries, trade systems between local communities, and alliances with Philippine leaders.

### **Philippine-American History**

#### ***Transition to American Sovereignty.***

Throughout the 1500 to 1800s, the Spanish continued to establish Catholic missionaries and imprint its own culture into the traditions and lifestyles of the Philippines. Under Spain's surveillance, Filipinxs were enslaved and subjected. Still, there were some that were able to migrate. The earliest documentation of Filipinxs in the United States, though not commonly known, took place in the 1840s. During this time, the Filipinx fishing village, St. Malo located in Louisiana, was established by sailors who reportedly jumped ship and swam to shore (Lee, 2016). At the opening of Lake Borgne, New Orleans, the hundred Filipinx male fishers lived on its banks in houses that sat on stilts. They exported their alligator, fish, and shrimp to New Orleans. From there, their catchings were sent to Asia, Canada, and South and Central America. Within the same century, another Filipinx fishing village, Manla Village, was founded in Barataria Bay between 1850 to 1870 (Lee, 2016).

At the end of the 19th century, Filipinx interactions with the U.S. moved past fishing. The Philippines and America had its first two major military and political interactions on April 21, 1898, beginning the Spanish-American War. Spain and America fought over the sovereignty of the Philippine Islands. As a reaction to the war between the nations, revolutions began in Cuba and the Philippines. After three months of war, the Spanish-American War came to an end and the Philippines gained its independence on June 12, 1898. Shortly after, Spain relinquished its remaining empire over to America through the December 1898 Treaty of Paris. Nations such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines became U.S. colonies (Lee, 2016). This was just the beginning for the Philippines' fight for independence.

A year later, the Philippines demanded its independence and refused American sovereignty. As a result, the Philippine-American War began on February 4, 1899 until July 2, 1902. After three years of violence, starvation, and disease, the Philippines lost about one million civilians (Lee, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that during these two major wars, Filipinx were not only at war. They also immigrated to America to escape violence and achieve "The American Dream." The dual experience were filled with struggles. Within five years, the Philippines had a strikingly high number of casualties and became an American colony. Fighting through their hardships, the people of the Philippines continued to carry their pride and resilience. They wanted to make a name for themselves and let America know that they have their own identity. The additional struggle to maintain their identity was carried during the 3 waves of immigration: 1) Colonial period from the turn of the 20th century before World War II, 2) Post WWII, 3) 1965 to the present (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016) (See Appendix 1).

### ***Three Waves of Immigration.***



The first major wave of immigration was during a colonial period from the turn of the 20th century before WWII (1939-1945). Now that the Philippines was no longer under Spain's reign, America used the Philippine people as a source of "cheap" labor (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). To further control the Philippine Islands, President William McKinley enacted the "Benevolent Assimilation" Proclamation in 1898. The Proclamation created American authority over Filipinxs "with its expansion of general public education and the US training of would-be colonial bureaucrats (for the example the *pensionados*), as well as the expansion of public health and the necessary training, also in the United States, of health personnel would form pools of prospective and unintentional 'immigrants'" (Manalansan and Espiritu, 2016, p. 35). If U.S. officials could control the educational, health, and government support they had on Filipinxs, they could assimilate Filipinxs into the "true Americans."

During this time, Filipinxs lived according to U.S. decisions and policies (See Appendix 1). While President McKinley's "Benevolent Assimilation" Proclamation was still in motion, the Pensionado Act of 1903<sup>3</sup> was approved. The act created elite Filipinxs who were qualified and would become educated with American ideals. Because only educated Filipinxs and Filipinas were allowed to immigrate, they became examples of how America's new colony was worth its investment in land and people.

Hard labor was the only other chance for Filipinxs to immigrate to America. Some Filipinxs moved to Hawaii during 1907 to work on the plantations or settle down to start a family (Labor Migration in Hawaii). A decade later between the 1920s and 1930s, mainly Filipinx men,

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<sup>3</sup> Under America's 1903 Pensionado Act, Filipino and Filipina scholars, *pensionados/pensionadas*, were granted permission to travel from the Philippines to study at U.S. universities.

nicknamed manongs,<sup>4</sup> immigrated to locations such as Delano, California to be farm workers. Even though Filipinx and Filipinas were advancing in academics and labor, Americans still saw them as their “little brown brothers” or “savages” that needed help (Espiritu & Manalansan, 2016). These attitudes constructed from Orientalism, the exoticism of Middle Eastern and Asian cultures (Said, 1934), were reinforced during the 1904 World’s Fair. In the event, the Igorot people, an ethnic group from Luzon, Philippines, were a featured exhibit for the public eye (Fermin, 2004). In total, 200,000 handbills, 10,000 posters, 50,000 special programs and 600 free tickets for teachers were dispensed to publicize the Igorots and the Philippine Islands (Fermin, 2004).

Alfred C. Newell, head of the Exploitation Department, claimed that the goal was not to bring people to St. Louis but to “lure people who were already in St. Louis to visit the Philippine exhibit” (Fremin, 2004, p. 9). The Department exceeded this goal, drawing local and international audiences in the millions. While the numbers represented success, the Igorots were exploited negatively by being put on display. They were expected to show Americans what everyday life was like in the tribes - they were forced to weave, display their spear-throwing spears, and dance their native ceremonies. Their attire defied American standards as men wore bahags<sup>5</sup> and women wore tapis<sup>6</sup> shirtless. Through the Igorot’s lifestyle and appearance, Filipinx scholars have commented that the 1904 fair has led to the “impression... that we are barbarians, that we eat dogs and all that sort of thing, and no matter how long we stay here, we cannot convince the public to the contrary” (Fremin, 2004, p. 1). By affirming people’s already

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<sup>4</sup> “Filipino brother(s)” in Ilocano, language from the Northern Philippines

<sup>5</sup> Loincloths

<sup>6</sup> Skirts

established primitive perceptions of Filipinxs, the 1904 World's Fair reinforced Orientalist views. To this day, the stereotypes of Filipinxs being “dog-eaters,” “good dancers,” and “aggressive” still live on.

With these underlying Orientalist views, Americans were convinced that Filipinxs needed to be “civilized,” and the following laws that promoted Filipinx exclusion were passed: The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934<sup>7</sup> and the Anti-Miscegenation Laws of 1935 and 1937<sup>8</sup>. Because the Tydings-McDuffie Act included a quota that restricted only 50 Filipinxs to be admitted into the U.S. per year and the Anti-Miscegenation Laws created social and racial segregation, messages such as “Positively No Filipinxs allowed” and “Get rid of all Filipinxs or we’ll burn this town down” were posted in areas like Stockton (Tintiangco-Cubales & Mabalon, 2007; Zarsadias, 2017; Lee, 2016, p. 35). This was just the beginning of Filipinx exclusion.

The second wave of immigration began after WWII and during a change in legislation. Though the wave was brief, its changes simultaneously created and prohibited opportunities for post-WWII Filipinxs. In 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed; opening a door for Asian groups like Filipinxs to move to America (Lee, 2016). On July 4, 1946, Three years later, the the Treaty of Manila was signed by President Truman on July 4, 1946 to relinquish U.S. sovereignty over the Philippines. Because of the Philippines’ endless acts of resilience, America no longer saw the islands worth their time or investment. They were losing money and soldiers, and Philippine revolutionaries like Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Aguinaldo, and Jose Rizal made it known that they and the people of the Philippines would never give up (Guerrero, 2014).

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<sup>7</sup> The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, or Filipino Exclusion Act, promised the Philippines independence in ten years and changed Filipino and Filipino statuses from “national” to “alien.”

<sup>8</sup> The 1935 and 1937 Anti-Miscegenation Laws prohibited marriage or relationships between members of different races.

But after the Philippines was finally recognized as an independent nation, they were not fully in good standing with America. Prior to the treaty and after World War II, President Truman enacted the Rescission Act of 1946<sup>9</sup> which revoked the benefits that would be granted to Filipinx veterans after their service was completed (Basco, 2017). The second wave of immigration was bittersweet yet inspired new generations of Filipinx/Filipinx-American activists.

The third wave of immigration began in 1965 and continues to the present day. It started with the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act which was the first time the U.S. accepted immigrants of all nationalities and eliminated the use of national-origin quotas. During the 1960s, the percentage of Asians and Pacific Islander immigrants increased from 31.9% to 35.7%, and there were about 181,614 Filipinxs living in the United States at the close of the decade (Tech Paper 29: Table 8, 1999). The trend led to the development of Filipinx communities like the Bay Area's Little Manila Stockton, Daly City, and SoMa (now officially known as SoMa Pilipinas since 2016) (San Francisco's Filipinx Cultural District, n.d.). Today, Filipinxs are the second largest Asian population in America ranging as high as 3.4 million (The Asian Population: 2010, 2012). Efforts to preserve the Filipinx community's history and culture can be found in its performing arts such as Philippine dance. In the following sections, Philippine dance will be analyzed in an American context to further explain how it has become a tool for Philippine representation.

### **Philippine Dance and Culture**

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<sup>9</sup> This issue inspired Filipinos American to fight for the rights of their Filipino Veteranos and create spaces such as the San Francisco Veterans Equity Center. It was only after October 2017 that Filipino WWII veterans were finally given recognition through the Congressional Gold Medal, an award lobbied by the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project.

**Pre-Colonial Times**

Pre-dating colonial times, dance has been as an important part of Philippine indigenous people's everyday lives and traditions. For example, in the Visayas<sup>10</sup>, Datus sponsored feasts that were accompanied with dance and gong playing (Scott, 2010). For communal rites, dance was used to communicate with the gods, celebrate life and death, and prepare for war. It was also used for daily tasks such as planting, harvesting, fishing, and coconut-wine gathering. Prior to Spanish colonization, travelers and traders from other nations landed in the arkipelago. Muslim peoples, as early at the 9th century, passed through the Philippines to trade and settle. Another surge of Muslim traders occurred in the 13th century. During this time, Islam arrived and became the oldest recorded, monotheistic religion of the Philippines. Along with religion, the Philippines adapted cultural aspects into our dance. Today, Islam is the second largest religion in the Philippines and a whole suite in Philippine dance is called, "Moro" or "Muslim" (Goquingco & Joaquin, 1980).

Similar instances occurred when the Spanish arrived but with even more colonial and missionary forces. Regardless of their aggressive, the people of the Philippines remained resilient and remade Spanish influenced art as their own. Dance, in particular, still maintained its role within everyday life and began to incorporate the Spaniards' culture, movements, and instruments (Goquingco & Joaquin, 1980). There were also dances created to teach Filipinxs how to combat the conquistadors. As an interviewee will later describe, these kind of dancers were the Filipinxs first form of rebellion. In this way, dance was a way to reclaim and reproduce.

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<sup>10</sup> Central region of the Philippines

And when Filipinxs started immigrating to America, they still carried dance as a part of celebrations, spirituality, and storytelling among Filipinxs and Filipinx-Americans.

### **Modern Day Philippine Dance**

A way Filipinxs and Filipinx-Americans have preserved Philippine dance and culture is through the creation of dance troupes. One of the first and most recognized collectives is Bayanihan dance troupe or The Bayanihan Folk Arts Foundation. It was created in the 1950s to express, as the Tagalog word “Bayanihan” translates, the “patriotism or love of country” (Bayanihan, 2003). Its first American debut took place in 1959 during New York’s Broadway featured show, “King of Impresarios” (Bayanihan, 2003). As Bayanihan continued to be featured internationally, the members created a repertoire – a set of dances that would be staged, rehearsed, and presented to the public. Its repertoire included five suites: the Maria Clara Suite, the Tribal Suite, the Muslim Suite, the Rural Suite, and the Cordillera Suite. It is important to acknowledge that “the suites are composed of dances that have been documented by company researchers through field research and visits to sites of dance, worship, and ritual, where they take notes and often physically engage with movement activities on site” (Patrick, 2014, p. 401).

Creating a repertoire had two outcomes on the direction of Philippine dance in the US: 1) Providing a foundation and 2) Setting a standard. While Bayanihan developed the foundation for their fellow Philippine folk dancers and communities, it also created a standard for what people outside of the Philippine dance community would come to expect. As a Philippine dancer, I acknowledge that all teachers of Philippine dance do their best to represent the 110 indigenous people of the Philippines, but it is not possible for them to represent all 7,107 islands on stage for a time-limited performance. In my experience in the Philippine dance community, I have noticed

two major topics that arise in conversation: 1) Tradition and 2) Authenticity. Students, community members, and myself often wonder is this style or movement “traditional” and whose work is “authentic.” In order to answer such complex questions, I have recognized that Philippine dance serves a greater purpose: Philippine dance is a tool that upholds cultural identity and representation.

### **Researching Philippine Dance**

A Filipina folk dancer and scholar who pioneered the idea of Philippine dance as a tool for understanding cultural identity was Bayanihan dance troupe member, Francisca Reyes Aquino. In her 1926 thesis, *Philippine Folk Dances and Games*, at the University of the Philippines, she observed that “dance not only has been the subject of interpretation and reinterpretation by academics... it has become an instrument for research” (Aquino, 2014, p. 400). Her research became a publication of *Philippine National Dances* (1946) and piloted how cultural dance can be viewed as an academic lens. Aquino synthesized how the understandings between Philippine folk dance and learning is not only a performance, it is also a kinesthetic way for participants and viewers to better understand Philippine culture and identity.

After Aquino, more scholars and Filipinx folk dances have attempted to create foundational understanding of Philippine dance. One foundation proposed two major categories and subcategories of Philippine dance. The first grouping is described as the first being “savage, vigorous, and mimetic in character... light-hearted while being also mimetic” or “pagan, primitive, indigenous, ethnic, traditionalist” (Goquinco & Orosa, 1980, p. 31). Its category of non-Christian Filipinx dances are subdivided into a) Dances of traditionalist of ‘pagan’ groups; and b) Dances of Muslim groups. The second grouping is mentioned to have much Spanish and

Western influences that involved more theatrics, summarized as the Dances of Christian and lowland Filipinx or Western-Influenced dances (Goquingco & Joaquin, 1980).

Yet another foundation created categorizations of Philippine dance: 1) Hispanic-Influenced Dances of the Lowland Christians, 2) Ethnolinguistic Groups, 3) Dances of Northern Highlands, 4) Dances of the Muslim South, 5) Dances of Traditionalist Communities, 6) Theatrical Dances (Alejandro & Santos-Gana, 2002). When comparing the two different set to the suites in Bayanihan's repertoire, it is shown that Philippine dance embodies the break between pre and colonial times.

### **Moving Philippine Dance Research Forward**

Provided with Aquino's research and the different repertoires that categorize Philippine dance, two important matters arise. The first regards the connection between Philippine dance and history. Each categorization illustrates how Philippine dance differs before and after colonization. This shared agreement of the importance of colonization recognizes that Philippine dance has changed as nations outside of the Philippine have affected Philippine culture and traditions. Similar to how Philippine dance has shaped its identity through its experiences, it is important to analyze how Philippine dance continues to evolve within the American diaspora and how Philippine dance contributes to identity formation of Filipinx and Filipinx-Americans.

The second matter draws attention to the act of categorizing. As companies and scholars continue to group Philippine dances, it is important to acknowledge that this can also promote competition, exotification, and questions of authenticity. When viewed in an American context, Philippine dance becomes multifaceted. Although Philippine dance troupes build community, they may also create competition between groups. While Philippine dance represents its culture,



non-community members are limited to exposure and understanding. As Philippine cultural bearers teach their mentees, newer community members seek to know which teachings are “traditional” or “authentic.”

Dance within Filipinx culture has, first and foremost, been used for cultural practices. Now that Philippine dance has migrated to America, I aim to better understand how Filipinx and Filipinx-Americans use Philippine dance as a tool to preserve and better understand one’s cultural identity. Therefore, I propose the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the significance of Philippine dance within the diaspora?

RQ2: How does Philippine dance enable dancers to connect to their cultural identities?

## **Methods**

### **Positionality**

My own experiences with Philippine dance in the Bay Area have become my foundation to exploring my identity as Filipina-American. Being a member of Parangal Dance Company for two years, I have experienced what it is like learning the repertoire of a Filipinx folk dance group and the importance of Aquino’s “dance as research.” Through serving for two years as the Cultural Director of Kasamahan, the University of San Francisco’s Filipino American student organization, I have gained a better understanding to how dance can preserve and represent Philippine culture.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected by conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews with eight participants. Interviews were conducted via online, in person, or email. Participants range in age, gender, ethnic background, and involvement in the Philippine dance community within the Bay

Area. I purposively sampled a variety of Philippine dance companies and position(s) within the involved company or companies and I used a semi-structured interview guide which included questions that ask interviewees to reflect on their experiences with Philippine dance. For example, participants were asked to share and reflect on the following: 1) Positionality, 2) Views on Philippine dance, 3) Definition of the diaspora, 4) Vision for the future of Philippine dance (see Appendix 2 for full interview guide). With their consent, I asked participants of their preferred name and gender pronouns to maintain their authenticity and voice.

Interview guides served as a basis and focused more on highlighting aspects that I felt needed more in depth responses or further explanation to become more accessible to those not in the Philippine dance community. Interviews lasted an average of 50 minutes and reached a range of 2 to 10 pages of verbatim transcriptions that I transcribed, along with 3 electronic responses.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed immediately after each interview was conducted and transcribed. I read through each transcript looking for themes found within participants experience or insights. Through this process of open coding, I was able to generate a list of those themes, which I then constantly compared to other interview transcripts. After each round of analysis, I wrote memos to further analyze any themes that differ or correlate. The memos included translations of any mentioned phrases or dance names, and I paraphrased participants' responses to be accessible to members outside of the Philippine dance community. I reviewed memos once more to pull any ideas, themes, or keywords reiterated during the interview. This allowed me to observe interviews further and analyze responses to curate my results.

### **Results and Findings: Representation through Movement**

After interviewing the selected Bay Area Philippine dance teachers, I have organized participants' information and responses. As I transcribed and coded, I noticed how the participants constantly pulled from their personal experiences. Their responses came from first hand experience as a dancer, teacher, or person. These experiences provided unique, authentic thoughts and observations on three topics discussed during the interview: 1) Experiences and observations of Philippine dance, 2) Defining the diaspora, and 3) Vision for Philippine dance.

### **Experiences and Observations of Philippine Dance**

When asking participants to share their first time seeing or dancing Philippine dance, their answers included either being introduced by their family, university, or community. They each mentioned a Philippine dance group they had or eventually joined, including the names of their mentor(s). Through their groups and mentors, Philippine dance has enabled them to connect to community and self. It has also inspired them to continue sharing Philippine dance by becoming mentors themselves. Based on their responses, I observed that Philippine dance has been described as participants "falling into the community," identity formation, educational, and (r)evolutionary.

### **Falling Into Philippine Dance**

A common trend found amongst participants was their experience of how they joined the Philippine dance community because their family and friends were already members. They either "grew up with it" or "fell into it." If the Philippine arts was a part of their upbringing, their first experience with Philippine dance was seeing a family member teach or perform. For Herna Cruz-Louie, her family of dancers and musicians would teach in Filipino Town, located in Paradise Hills, a town in San Diego, California. Her Dad was in the US Military so her family

settled in San Diego. She was surrounded by Filipino military families which made the Filipinx and Filipinx American community, as she described, was “quite rampant.” Within her own family,

*“My Dad is a musician so he loved music. We listened to Rondalla<sup>11</sup> music even when I was a baby. When my Grandmother came to live with us, they did the same. My Mom’s Mom is a singer so all these old songs she would sing to us every day”*

Her family’s love for music and Philippine arts not only reflected in Herna’s household, but also the community. Her parents established a town association in San Diego and “part of it was we want our kids to dance.” This began Herna’s dance career as early as the age of 5, practicing in community members garages. From these spaces and teachers from a San Diego Philippine dance troupe, Samahan, Herna began to learn. As she continued dancing and performing for the town’s novenas<sup>12</sup> and celebrations, she eventually began to teach to her community. This passion continued when she came to San Francisco for college, teaching Philippine dance and music to high school and college students. Currently, Herna is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of the American Center of Philippine Arts located in Oakland. For Philippine dancers, she shares:

*“Learn all that you can because you don’t know for how long these teachers will be around... Learn from as many teachers as you can, I’m not the only teacher out there. Stay hungry because I’ve seen it too many times where people get burnt out... And it’s okay to take breaks... Remember that if you’re going to stick to this work, it’s important to pass it on”*

Similarly, Stephanie Herrera’s Mother, “Tita” (Aunt) Polly, would teach Stephanie with her friends from Bayanihan Dance Troupe. Eventually, Tita Polly founded Kariktan Dance

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<sup>11</sup> Philippine music that uses stringed instruments such as a the Bandurria, Laud, Octavina, and more

<sup>12</sup> Weeks worth of prayer and celebration held during Christmas time

Company where Stephanie continued to dance and teach. Now she mentors college students with their PCNs (Pilipino<sup>13</sup> Cultural Nights<sup>14</sup>), a student run production that shares Pilipino and Pilipino American narratives through music, dance, and skit. Contrasting Herna's experience of joining the dance community voluntarily, Stephanie shared that she at first did not want to perform Philippine dance because she was shy. She expressed that it was out of her comfort zone because she was shy when she was younger.

*"I went in kicking and screaming. I did not want to be involved at all, and I cried the whole way up until the performance. I didn't want to do it haha... I think I was just really shy. The idea of putting myself out there and being in front of all those people - I was fine watching it and I thought it was cool and really pretty, but the idea of me being the one doing it and having people watch me really freaked me out and I didn't want people to watch me"*

Stephanie continued to share that despite these feelings, she still completed her first performance at the age of 14 at San Francisco's Fresta Filipinas Parade. And "something clicked that day." She may have fallen into Philippine dance by obligation but as she continue learning and practicing from her family and members of Bayanihan dance troupe, she found the significance of Philippine dance.

*"I think it's a huge starting off point. It's a cultural entry point... Dance is an entry point. A lot of times, (Filipinx American) dancers didn't know a lot about the Philippines except that their parents are Filipino, you know? By coming into a dance company or being exposed to it - whether through PCN or watching a show or from going to your friends performances or talking to your friends who are in it - I feel like when you're exposed to it in that way, it kind of wakes something up..."*

Herna and Stephanie's stories share how Philippine dance can be introduced by one's family. Because of the family members who participate in the Philippine dance community,

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<sup>13</sup> Pilipino instead of Filipino is used to respect that there is no "F" in the Tagalog alphabet

<sup>14</sup> Also known as Pilipino American Cultural Night, Pilipino Awareness Night (PAN)

Filipinx and Filipinx Americans fall into the art intentionally or involuntarily. For those that have chosen to stay in the community, the role of family in the Philippine dance community shares how Philippine dance can strengthen bonds with family, community, and self. Kinship within the community can also be found among friends. As Eric Dong mentions,

*“I was just volunteering that year because a lot of my friends were in that group... So I just volunteered and I was able to watch the show at the same time. And then from there, it was something that I wanted to get involved in because it looked awesome”*

His involvement began during Kasamahan at USF’s (University of San Francisco) PCN called Barrio Fiesta. He explained that he volunteered for Barrio during his first year at USF and saw his friends perform. What he saw drew him to become a cast member for Barrio Fiesta the following year. This began his mentorship under Herna. Initially, he began playing music but that year’s Cultural Director for Barrio Fiesta expressed that they needed more dancers. “I kind of stepped into a role of being a dancer and also played music at the same time,” he stated. Eric’s experience shares how Philippine arts are not exclusive to dance and how its members are often pulled into participating in multiple aspects of Philippine arts.

Another aspect of his experience is that he does not identify as Filipinx or Filipinx American, reflecting how Philippine arts are not exclusive for Filipinx and Filipinx Americans. Eric’s participation and engagement has been well perceived because of his willingness to learn about Philippine arts and his contexts. A lesson he learned from being in Philippine dance community and reiterated to me was,

*“...there should be some sort of context that there should be some sort of understanding that, yes this is a form of entertainment for us here but also that you’re representing a culture as well too... You want to be able to give a first*

*impression in that you can give a little bit more context, and something you'd be proud to put out as well."*

Eric fell into the Philippine dance community and was invited to participate. Through this involvement, mentorship was found. By learning about Philippine arts and culture, he has found connection to his own Chinese community; especially through Philippine instruments. He has also seen how Philippine dance is not just a performance - it is a practice that requires conversations surrounding who and where these dances come from and why they are danced. He has learned to how to appreciate and not appropriate. Eric continues to play music for Barrio Fiesta while being mentored under Herna Cruz-Louie, whom she now calls Ate (big sister) as a sign of respect.

### **Communicating Identity**

The Philippine dance community has an intersectional identity and its members have also formed their individual identities. When listening to participant's experiences as a Philippine dance teacher and mentor, I have observed how Philippine dance can influence dancers to reflect on their identities and experiences as a person of color here in the United States. In addition to learning dances, they have an opportunity to learn about themselves - whether dancers identify as Philippine/Philippine American identity or not, they are able to talk and explore their identity. As shared by Jae Tioseco from Barangay Dance Troupe and an alumna of Skyline College's Filipino group, Kababayan,

*"How I found that sense of healing was through folk dance. At first, it was just how I started being a resource in dancing - I kind of fell into it... I find so much healing and love and comfort and confidence in who I feel I truly am supposed to be"*

Once again, the theme of “falling into” Philippine dance is a common experience for Philippine dancers. And when dancers fall into the art, they are also able to fall into themselves. For Jae, Philippine dance has been a source for healing, belonging, and empowerment. From her opportunities to learn from Kababayan and Barangay Dance Company, she has expressed how Philippine dance is multi purposeful because it is physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual. She shared that being a trans Filipina American has been challenging in her personal life, but Philippine dance has affirmed and welcomed her identity. When she touches on her experiences growing up in a multigenerational, matriarchal household, she includes the diaspora:

*“The diaspora in itself in a general, on a very general level, is such a long, endless journey of reflection, healing, realizations, and basically it’s a transformation of who we are as Filipinxs”*

Jae’s journey is Philippine dance reflects how Philippine dance can influence one’s identity formation. From her spaces, she has dug deeper into understanding her individual identity and her role of being a student to a mentor. She mentioned her hopes to inspire students to learn about themselves and their culture like she did because Philippine dance is not only a means to heal, it also a way for Filipinxs to survive as members of the diaspora.

### **Philippine Dance as Living Through the Diaspora**

Asking participants to define “the diaspora” required more time and exploration because the term is not used frequently in everyday conversation. While some could define the word without context, some asked, “What does that mean?” Each reaction was valid and all responses reflect how definitions vary based on personal experience and exposure to the term. Participants provided different answers that were authentic to their understandings. If a participant needed



context, I shared how my family is from the Philippines and eventually moved here to the States. While acknowledging how the term “diaspora” was initially used to describe the dispersion of Jews from Israel (Dufoix, 2015), I have connected that experience to the narratives of Filipinx and Filipinx Americans that live outside of the Philippine. Collectively, participants shared feelings, stories, and descriptions to describe the diaspora, sometimes using that term and other times speaking about theirs or their family’s immigration story.

Their stories tied to immigration patterns found within Philippine American history. Some came to escape dictatorship, some came to join the US military, and some came for a better living opportunity for themselves and their families. The correlation between the books and people’s everyday lives influence how participants described their relationship to society, family, and selves. Participants recognize the need and want for representation, both on and off the stage. They see how family and community have influenced their ideas and livelihoods. They recognize their call and responsibility to be artists to preserve and share Philippine arts and culture.

All participants explained how Philippine dance is a way of surviving and keeping the culture and its people alive. Eric Solano, founding Artistic Director of Parangal Dance Company, shares that Philippine dance is “something more beyond the art. Who’s behind us... Philippine dance is a way for anyone in the diaspora to get to know what is Filipinx or what is Filipinx.” He continues that the diaspora is both the migration and the people - the people encompassing those who are here presently and those who have come before us. It is both those who have left and are still home in the Philippines. Eric S.<sup>15</sup> expresses how it is important to remember the indigenous

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<sup>15</sup> Initial used not confuse with Eric Dong

people of the Philippines when sharing Philippine dances to the greater community. Every year, he goes back to the Philippines to learn from indigenous communities. When he returns home, he sends videos of practice and performances to receive feedback.

*“Cause now you hear the voices of the Philippine dance community. Then you also hear the voices of the people that taught you. But if I have to chose between those voices, it’s those indigenous groups that matter more”*

Interview participants and additional mentors of the Philippine dance community put emphasis on learning the context of dances and whom they come from. Context includes the voices of the indigenous people. While they may not migrate away from the Philippines, they are still a part of the diaspora. As Eric S. says, they are the bridge home.

### **Continuing a Legacy: Visions for Philippine Dance**

#### **Bringing In and Sharing Out**

This bridge bring me in people as dancers or viewers. As dancers, they can receive in depth understandings of Philippine dance and culture. Participation invites dancers to multiple avenues in their Philippine dance experience:

- Being a dancer
- Becoming a Philippine musician
- Diving further into their identity as a Filipinx or own ethnicity
- Accepting a responsibility to be a teacher and mentor
- Stepping away from the community
- And more

Collectively, the Philippine dance community contains cultural bearers, practitioner, and advocates. They preserve Philippine culture through dance and keep its heritage alive. They advocate through movement and discussion, reminding participants that it is more than dance. It is a legacy that continues to grow through generations of Filipinxs, and now, pan-ethnicities.

Outside of participating in Philippine arts, viewers can gain insights to Philippine dance and culture. Philippine dance presents multiple first impressions because it constructs and deconstructs ideologies towards Filipinx and Filipinx Americans. They see what is presented on stage and often do not talk to performers pre or post performance. Therefore, they walk away from performances taking away only what they perceive of the dancers. Because of their own form of participation, they are also a part of the diaspora.

From what I have heard from participants and audience members, Philippine dance is tool for learning. It is inclusive to all identities but especially serves the Philippine and Philippine American people. Brian Batugo, Stockton's Little Manila's Board Vice-Chairperson, dance collective artistic dir from, US history educator, and a member of Parangal Dance Company, says:

*“On many different levels, dance is one of the most powerful ways to communicate our culture. Because the Philippine culture is so diverse, there are thousands of different dances that tell different stories. With Philippine dance, it can communicate the different moods of our people: for example, many dances were inspired from animals, war, celebrations, or nature”*

Brian summaries Philippine dance to be powerful, diverse, and communicative. This is the legacy of Philippine dance. Passed down through indigenous communities and into the people of the diaspora, Philippine dance is a means of storytelling. It shares how dance is a tradition that has been and will always be a part of the Filipinx. Whether or not people participate, it cannot be denied that Filipinos have been called “good dancers” - and for good reason. And this reason has been reclaimed through the dancers who have embraced the responsibility to share Philippine dance and culture. Because movement is

one of many ways to communicate the Philippines and its diaspora's past, present, and future, it is important that its evolution continues to be recorded.

### **Embracing and Evolutionizing**

*"Filipinxs are part of these cultural landscape around the world. Part and parcel of the diaspora. Being a Filipinx is being authentic to yourself. Being proud of your cultural identity. Embracing your roots"*

Sydney "Wawa" Loyola, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of American Center of Philippines Arts and Former member of Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, is my first mentor of Philippine movement. Through her USF class, "Philippine Dance and Culture," this research pulled heavily from my first understandings in this class. Because of her teachings, my curiosity grew and made me want to learn more. As she mentions, authenticity to self and culture is vital to the diaspora and experiences as a dancer; and her class is what made me begin to embrace my roots. Her work as a dancer and person reflects growth and inspires others to do the same.

*"I like to see Philippine dance nurtured and developed in schools. Dance is one of the most dynamic aspects of the human experience – and we are all engaged in it. Dance can be part of the dialogues of both student and educator"*

Like Brian, Wawa sees power in dance. All participants agreed that Philippine dance can be influential in the classroom. For Wawa, Philippine movement can go past folk<sup>16</sup> dance. It can pull from stories or legends to lead to creative movement. Her work is an example of how Philippine dance can evolve because it still includes what every mentor said is important for Philippine dance: content.

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<sup>16</sup> Dances such as Tinikling, Singkil, etc.

Expanding on evolution, Philippine dance should also be considered outside of academic settings. Philippine dance as education can also serve outside of formal classrooms and curriculum. In the community, it can be the first insight into Philippine people and culture; starting the dialogues mentioned by Wawa. As mentioned, Philippine dance is bridge building across people, communities, and the diaspora. While it has its place on many college campuses and is beginning in elementary and secondary education, it is important to make Philippine dance accessible here in the states. Like how communities in the Philippines practice dance and movement in their everyday lives, the Philippine dance community should aim to make Philippine arts even more accessible to enhance representation.

The Philippine arts is revolutionary because it is growing and gaining recognition; especially in the Bay Area. It is breaking stereotypes, boundaries, or past stigmas; claiming them, even. Filipinx and non-Filipinx have taken the stage to share Philippine and Philippine American narratives - narratives of Philippine regions, indigenous peoples, and selves. Philippine dance gives members the opportunity to reflect on oneself and communicate these insights on stage or in discussion. This process is evergoing and should be incorporated in spaces with Philippine dance. Without conversation, there is a lack of understanding and context. But with mentorship and peer support, Philippine dance builds community and self. After talking to my mentors and reflecting on my own experience, our work continues to ask:

- Because Philippine dance in the US is staged, how do we continue to respect our homeland? How do we prevent our work from being counterintuitive? (i.e.: Exotifying, othering, orientalism)
- What do members of the Philippine dance community think about conversations surrounding Philippine dance as traditional, cultural, and/or authentic?
- How can we make the Bay Area's Philippine arts resources accessible beyond the Bay?
- How can we facility more conversations like these among our companies, collectives, and community?

### **Conclusion**

Reiterating Virgilio G. Enriquez' observations in "Indigenous Psychology: From Traditional Indigenous Concepts to Modern Psychology Practice," "Marunong lang sumakay ang Pilipino (The Filipino can dance to the music)." Since one of Philippines peoples' major debuts in America at the 1904 World's Fair, outside members viewed Filipinxs and Filipinx Americans as dog eaters, savage, and good dancers. Dance is one of the many ways Filipinxs and Filipinx Americans have reclaimed their narratives. They have taken the stage and used dance to speak their truths.

### **Limitations**

While research and interviews provided significant insights into the Philippine dance community, this topic can be extended. Focusing on the Bay Area reflects the culture and climate of a specific region. Perspectives can differ when expanding pass the Bay and California in general. Because San Francisco is seen as progressive, participants responses could have matched this view. As a student who has studied in San Francisco for the past 4 years and is a current member of the Bay Area Philippine dance community, I heavily agreed with participants. If I was not a part of either communities, I could have asked them to explain topics even further or challenged ideals. This is relevant to the fact that majority of my participants were from the dance company I am currently with, Parangal Dance Company. Diversifying my pool of dance companies and collectives would have gained even more perspectives towards Philippine dance and culture and its relationships to the diaspora.

Further limitations include how interviews were conducted in 3 different ways: 1) In person, 2) Online, 3) Email. In person and online interviews required participants to respond

instantly, email interviews enabled participants to format and edit their answers. Holding interviews in person and online can change the dynamic of interviews, both verbally and nonverbally. Body language and proximity can play a huge role in what and how a participant responded. Maintaining a consistent method for interviews could have provided different results.

While in person interviews are an effective tool for qualitative research, quantitative surveys can gather more and even quicker responses. Scheduling interviews was a challenge because participants not only have their dance schedules, but also his work schedules. Interviewing participants who were over 18 also pulled results from a certain age range. Opening interviews to young adults and even children can build on the conversations surrounding the significance of Philippine dance and its role in the diaspora.

Something admirable about many participants was their completion of a degree in Higher Education. This provided academic lenses on Philippine arts, much like Francisca Reyes Aquino's 1926 thesis, *Philippine Folk Dances and Games*. While terms and theories such as "gender pronouns," "intersectionality," and "the diaspora" were mentioned in this research, these may not be common knowledge to all. Having such a critical, academic lense could have set a standard to participant's answers. In my future research, I would like to make this research more accessible to individuals of all experiences.

I noticed that none of my participants brought up the 5 suites of Philippine dance (Lumad/Indigeious, Cordillera/Mountain, Barrio/Rural, Maria Clara/Spanish, Moro/Muslim) that are usually taught to PCNs and companies. I did not mention this topic during interviews because it strayed from conversations that were taking place, and this lacked insights to a topic that I

found much research on. This limitation questions if the 5 suites still serve as a foundation for Philippine dance.

### **Future Research**

When I presented my poster at the University of San Francisco's Creative Activity and Research Day (CARD), guests asked me what I would like to do next (Appendix 3). I plan to continue this research to share the importance of Philippine dance and its influence towards identity formation, impact on the the community, and playing a role in diasporic experiences. I will conduct more interviews with teachers and eventually, students. Students can range from age, location, and demographic (such as level of education, race, ethnicity, nationality, etc). This will accumulate even broader findings and encourage members of the Philippine dance community to feel empowered about their participation.

An important topic discussed during interviews was the ideas around Philippine dance as traditional, cultural, and/or authentic. There are questions regarding what should be characterized as "traditional," why we should remember the "cultural," and how to be authentic when taking part in the Philippine dance community. I would like to dive into these observations further and talk to more community members. This research as become a stepping stop for me to understand the power of Philippine dance and its relationship with communities and myself. Hopefully, it can also serve as a resource for students (whether or not in education systems) to continue pursuing Philippine dance. Because from what I have learned through this process, it is more than just dance. It is a way of understanding culture and self.



**Appendix**

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1  |  |  |   |
|  | <b>First Wave of Immigration (Pre-WWII)</b>  | <b>Second Wave of Immigration (Post-WWII)</b>                              | <b>Third Wave of Immigration (1965-Present Day)</b>         |
| <b>Presidents significant Filipinx Immigration</b> | -William McKinley (1897-1901)  | -Harry S. Truman (1945-1953)   | -Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969)                              |
| <b>American Policies</b>                           | -1898: “Benevolent Assimilation” Proclamation<br>-1903: Pensionado Act<br>-1934: Tydings-McDuffie Act<br>-1934 & 1937: Anti-Miscegenation Laws | -1946: Rescission Act<br>-1946: Treaty of Manila (Philippine Independence) | -1965: Immigration and Naturalization Act                   |
| <b>Filipinx/Filipinx-American Experiences</b>      | -Pressured to assimilate<br>-Working on Hawaiian plantations<br>-Positively No Filipinx Allowed”   | -Filipinx gain their own sovereignty<br>-Manongs in agriculture            | -Now able to establish Filipinx communities                 |
| <b>Attitudes on Filipinx</b>                       | -“Cheap” labor<br>-“Little brown brothers”<br>-“Savages”   | -“Dog eaters”<br>-“Orientals”<br>-Dirty                                    | -Model Minorities<br>-Good dancers<br>-Nurses               |
| <b>Events</b>                                      | -Released from Spanish sovereignty and under American rule<br>-1904 World’s Fair   | -1934: Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act                                 | -Filipinx became the 2nd largest Asian population in the US |

**Appendix 2: Interview Guide**

1. What is your name and gender pronouns? (Give example of my pronouns)

2. Ice breaker: Can you recall your first time watching/performing PI dance?
3. Tell me more about your involvement within the [Philippine dance] community.
  - a. When and where did you begin to learn to dance? In relation to PI dance?
  - b. Who/Which group taught you?
4. In what ways can dance communicate our culture? (RQ2)
5. When and how did you start teaching Philippine dance?
  - a. What makes for a good dance instructor?
  - b. How has PI dance been communicated to you?
6. [What does it mean to be Fil-not-in-the-Philippines] How would you define the diaspora? What does it mean to be Filipinx? (RQ1)
  - a. Please share more about your ethnic background and how you or your family came to America.
7. What role does Philippine dance have in the Diaspora? (RQ1)
  - a. What role does PI dance have in Fil/Fil-Am lived experiences? (RQ2)
  - b. Authenticity/Tradition (RQ1)
8. IYO, do PI dance troupes have personalities/styles of their own?
  - a. If yes, is it the dance style or the dancers or the instructor, or some other cultural aspect? Does it change over time?
  - b. Can you describe/characterize your group and any local groups within the Bay area?
9. How would you like to see the legacy of PI dance grow?
  - a. Where would you like to see your group in terms of PI dance in 20 years


**Appendix 3: Poster for USF’s Creative Activity and Research Day**

## Philippine Dance and Culture: Performing the Diaspora

Jazlynn G. Eugenio Pastor, University of San Francisco, jgpastor@dons.usfca.edu

**Background**

- ✦ Dance has been a part of Philippine culture and heritage prior, during, and after colonial times<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ Filipinx started immigrating to the US as early as the 1700s<sup>2</sup>
- ✦ 5 suites of Philippine dance are Lumad/Indigenous, Cordillera/Mountain, Barrio/Rural, Maria Clara/Spanish, and Moro/Muslim (examples photographed in order)<sup>3</sup>



**Research Questions**

- ✦ What is the significance of Philippine dance within the diaspora?
- ✦ How does Philippine dance enable participants to build their individual identities and connect to their cultural identities or culture?

**Methods**

- ✦ Semi-structured interviews with Bay Area Philippine dance mentors that will be transcribed and analyzed
- ✦ Qualitative thematic analysis

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**Methods (continued): Participants**

| Name              | Gender/Pronouns | Position  | Gen. |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|------|
| Brian Batugo      | He/Him/His      | Teacher and arts director with the Little Manila Foundation in Stockton                                   |      |
| Eric Dong         | He/Him/His      | Member of American Center of Philippine Arts and Parangal Dance Company                                   | 2.5  |
| Eric Solano       | He/Him/His      | Founding Artistic Director of Parangal Dance Company  | 1.5  |
| Herna Cruz-Louie  | She/Her/Hers    | Executive Director and Co-Founder of the American Center of Philippine Arts (ACPA)                        | 2nd  |
| Jae Tioseco       | She/Her/Hers    | Member of Barangay Dance Company  |      |
| Jonathan Mercado  | He/Him/His      | Member of KULARTS and Parangal Dance Company  |      |
| Stephanie Herrera | She/Her/Hers    | Choreographer and Member of Karikitan Dance Company   | 2nd  |
| Sydney Loyola     | She/Her/Hers    | Former member of Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, Artistic Director & Co-Founder of ACPA | 1st  |

**Preliminary Results**

**1<sup>st</sup> Generation**  
(Born in the Philippines and moved to the US as an adult)

**1.5 Generation**  
(Born in the Philippines and moved to the US as a child)

- "Philippine dance is a way for anyone in the diaspora to get to know what is Filipino or who is Filipino" –Eric Solano
- Dance gives insight to culture and community

**2+ Generation**  
(First or following generation(s) born in the US)

- "Labels separate us and dance breaks that by sharing we are Filipino, we are one." –Herna Cruz-Louie
- Philippine dance as (de)constructing identity and bridge building

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