

Constructing Images of Cities in Batangas through Urban Festivals

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine urban festivals in Batangas in the context of its place identity and festival typology. Specifically, two festivals held in the urban area and considered as an established practice given its annual celebration were chosen as subject of study. A qualitative research design was utilized in examining the urban festivals as a cultural text. It was found that Sublian Festival of Batangas City and Parade of Lights Festival of Tanauan City were identified to its host place. These rationally constructed festivals follow the features of the location where it is held in the context of physical setting, activities of the people and the meanings attached to the place. Host organizations capitalize on the historical, cultural, social, political and economic resources in their respective communities as springboard for the creation of festive celebrations. More so, festivals are described with distinct features emphasizing its festive spirit, uniqueness, authenticity, tradition and symbols in the aim of projecting the image of the community. As such, events incorporated in the festival celebration mirror the urban space's image to the public as well as the scope of community engagement.

Keywords: festivals, place identity, festival typology, community image

Introduction

In recent years, festivals and special events have become one of the fastest growing types of tourism attractions all over the world. These events are commonly held annually and can be understood, according to Padang et. al (in Ryan and Wollan, 2013) as “seasonal, rhythmical and temporal features of landscapes” (p.106). With the passage of time, there came various purposes for communities’ objective of holding festivals. It could either be based on a celebration of a tradition or a theme which is identified to the community. According to Jolliffe, Thanh Bui and Nguyen, festivals may reflect traditional social celebrations of a community or constructed by the community around a theme connected to the place (in Ali-Knight, 2009, p. 125). Festivals that are seasonal in nature, for example, highlight agricultural products while others are celebrated in commemoration of significant events in the particular area. Another objective of holding such events is its purpose as marketing tool and income generator for the community. As such, festivals possess the monetary value from the perspective of consumers, business and tourists’ spending on these events.

Of equal importance is its social value such that festivals as a cultural practice convey collective identity and belongingness. Identifying these non-economic outcomes is significant in recognizing the role of festivals in urban contexts. As stated in Festival and Special Event Management (2005), festivals are an important expression of human activity that contribute much to our social and cultural life (p. 14). Having a significant part in the cultural life of communities, festivals engender local continuity (Quinn, 2005) as it create new channels for social engagement, providing opportunities to enrich identity and build social bonds (Stevens and Shin, 2014, p.1). Moreover, social capital is perceived to be built through festivals and events brought about by the collective effort of the host community, participation of its stakeholders and visitors’ reception towards the celebration (Derrett in

Ali-Knight, 2009, p. 108). With festivals focusing on cultural and social aspects, it can be noted that these events could be examined and studied as a cultural text.

This study explores the urban festivals in the Region of Batangas, particularly in the cities of Tanauan and Batangas, as a cultural text. Following the social and cultural value that festivals foster, the study seeks to describe how urban festivals become an image-maker and manifest collective identity and belongingness in the community. Specifically, city festivals are described based on its typology and the signifiers that construct its image and identity as a community.

Festivals in Literature

Karlsen (2009) notes that festivals are events of ancient origin that have been arranged for thousand of years as well as considered a significant feature of the cultural life of late modernity (p. 129). Historically, festivals were described as a liturgical holiday, a religious celebration and at times a celebration against enemies. Rooted from the Latin word *festivus*, Levickaite (2011) describes these events as mostly staged by a local community, city or government which concentrates on a special occasion and celebrates some unique aspect important to both organizers and visitors of the festival (p.37-38). Falassi (1987) further explains that there are two Latin terms for festival that depict it as a celebration – *festum* meaning ‘public joy’ or ‘merriment’ and *feria* for abstinence from work in honor of the gods (in Ryan and Wollan, 2013, p. 102).

Following subsequent centuries up to the present era, festivals have played important social roles both in public and private, religious and secular spheres. According to Quinn (2005), the first festival that was thought held took place in Athens as early as 534 BC in honor of Dionysus, the god of wine, feast and dance. Levickaite (2011) notes that during ancient times, festivals do not only entail religious purposes but were also considered as celebration of victory over enemies. Reaching the post war period, there was an upsurge in the number of festivals established. Free festivals, visual arts exhibitions in non-traditional venues and experimental theatre groups for instance, emerged with the proliferation of grassroots social movements that led to alternative forms of cultural production and distribution (Bianchini, 1996, p. 4 in Quinn, 2005, p. 930). Nowadays, modern festivals are seen to focus on the community’s cultural, image, artistic, traditional and social aspects.

In the field of research, festival studies is recognized as an interdisciplinary field. Much attention has been given to festivals’ economic impact on their host municipalities (Karlsen 2009, p.130). Conversely, there are several studies that have been conducted about festivals focusing on its social and cultural value to the community. For instance, Karlsen (2009) looked into how festivals could be as source of musical learning. The study of Stevens and Shin (2014) highlights the significant role that local festivals play in the ordinary citizen’s everyday lives in local settings. Quinn (2005) reviews existing literature on festivals and how it contributes to the functioning of urban areas while Ryan and Wollan’s (2013) research focus on examining festivals as part of ongoing expressive individualism and form of aesthetic engagement. Moreover, a local study conducted by Magpantay et al (2014) explored on the socio-cultural effects of festivals in Batangas and it was found that as festivals provide unity in the community, a plan of action was proposed to enhance and promote the cultural tourism industry of the province.

Festivals are characterized by different typologies according to Getz (1991, p. 326): First, festivals foster the festive spirit through reflection of values and belonging through ritual, revelry, scale, fantasy and magic; second, festivals have uniqueness in terms of its program’s distinctive features, image making, promotions through site, scale, food and beverage and external experiences; third, authenticity is found in the elements associated with local cultural attributes; fourth, the tradition highlighted in the events rooted in the

community; fifth, theming which is the physical manifestation of elements like tradition, authenticity and festive spirit and sixth, the symbolism conveyed through production elements related to cultural values, political or economic objects (Derrett in Ali-Knight, 2009, p. 108).

Numerous communities have been actively hosting or developing new festivals and events as leisure and cultural pursuits for residents as well as for their economic and community development benefits (Getz, 1993; Frisby and Getz, 1989 in M. Saayman and A. Saayman, 2006, p. 571). The events are often developed not only for tourism and economic opportunities but also for the social and cultural benefits it provide to the public. Festivals are observed to be an increasingly popular tool for initiating economic renewal, enhancing community creativity, promoting community participation and place making (Ryan and Wollan, 2013, p. 99). Alongside these characteristics, cities and the festivals being held have long been identified as a representation of the place's identity. These celebrations serve as a vehicle for expressing the close relationship between the identity and the place. Muir (1997) has written about the important function that public festivities played in towns across Western Europe between 12th and 18th century in which identification of individuals with their own home town came to be the distinguishing characteristic of European civilization (in Quinn, 2005, p. 928). Also, Bonnemaision (1990) notes that festivals described as hallmark events "function like a monument, supporting and reinforcing the image of established power, whether religious or secular" (in Quinn, 2005, p. 925). Events are now established methods for promoting destinations and are geared towards creating positive associations and images with the place.

In the Philippines, Flores and Dela Paz (2014) note that the indigenous concept of festivals or fiesta (came to be known as a feast or celebration originating from Spain and Latin America in honor of saints) refers to a way of connecting to spirits of nature or celebrating life, thanksgiving and petition for good harvest if it is held during harvest season (p.153). In this case, festivals are found to encompass different aspects of belief, history of a place, economy, politics and social relationships of which various expressions reflect public performance and daily life. More common in the country are festivals hosted by a community or city that usually features its agricultural crops or local crafts as seen and experienced through parade, dances, exhibits, fairs and other cultural and art events. For instance, Batangas which is a first-class province of the Philippines located on the southwestern part of Luzon in the CALABARZON region, is known for holding festivals in different towns. The website wowbatangas.com lists the most celebrated festivals in the province as of 2010. Among these are the Simuam (San Jose), Sinukmani (Rosario), Tinapayan (Cuenca), Anihan (Lobo) Lambayok (San Juan), Balsa (Matabungkay), Kabakahan (Padre Garcia) and Parada ng Lechon (Balayan) (<http://wowbatangas.com/features/festivals/top-10-most-celebrated-festivals-in-batangas/>). As for the cities, The Parade of Lights and the Sublian Festival in the cities of Tanauan and Batangas, respectively are considered established urban festivals in the area.

Tanauan City is classified as a first class city in the province of Batangas. Considered as one of the oldest towns, it became a cradle of noble heroes brought about their contributions to the revolutionary movement. The most notable is Apolinario Mabini who is known as "Brains of the Revolution." Tanauan City became popular for its festival called Parade of Lights. The festival is part of Tanauan's celebration of 14 years since its incorporation as a city through the ratification of Republic Act 9005 in 2001.

Batangas City, on the other hand, is the capital city of the province of Batangas and is classified as a Regional Growth Center in the CALABARZON region. It annually celebrates the Sublian Festival every 23rd of July which is considered as a religious devotion translated to a dance form. Coinciding with the City's founding anniversary, traditionally, Sublian

Festival not only features devotional dance-song but also indigenous Filipino games, harana (serenades), the Lupakan, Awitan and Sayawan with folk songs and dances (www.batangascity.gov.ph/web/tourism/tourist-information/festivals).

It is generally observed that a festival's theme is linked to either a celebration of tradition or to the identity of place where it is hosted. The identity of a place refers to "that which provides its individuality or distinction from other places and serves as the basis for its recognition as a separate entity" (Lynch, 1960, p. 6 in Relph, 1976, p. 45 and Graham Brown and Shirley Chappel, p. 140 in Ali-Knight, 2009). There are three components found in place identity: the physical setting, the activities of the people and the meaning people attach to the place. Given this context, there are festivals which are "rationally constructed," as Lewis (1997) calls it, through identifying the place's characteristics and inventing a celebration that follows it (Brown and Chappel in Ali-Knight, 2009). Thus, the celebration becomes a tradition associated with the community and therefore reflected as its identity. Furthermore, in discussing the identity of the place through the image it projects and its relationship with the place, Foley, McPherson and McGillivray (in Ali-Knight, 2009) notes Richards' and Wilson's argument that events are perceived as "cultural currency that creates a favorable impression of a city (or nation) as a destination worth visiting (p. 55). As such, festivals are continued to be supported for their identity-enhancing roles as they become an instrumental tool for urban revitalization and for attracting visitors and locals into city spaces through place marketing (Fainstein and Judd, 1999; Evans, 2001; Pratt, 2008, Quinn, 2010 in Olsen, 2013, p. 481).

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research design in examining the urban festivals as a cultural text. Two identified festivals in the Province of Batangas, namely Sublian Festival of Batangas City and Parade of Lights in Tanauan City were selected for study based on characteristics anchored on its location (i.e. the event is hosted in an urban area) and its incorporation in the community's tradition (i.e. it is an established practice and celebrated annually).

Primary data were gathered from key informant interviews with representatives from the municipalities who are part of the hosting organization. Specifically for the background on Tanauan's Parade of Lights, an interview was conducted last August 25, 2017 with Ms. Caitleen Cabrera, the Community Affairs Officer 1 and the designated focal person of the said event. As for Sublian Festival, information were gathered from Dr. Renato Maligaya, the Social Sciences Area Chairperson of De La Salle Lipa and a former member of the Batangas Cultural Affairs Committee.

Moreover, independent analysis of documentation in the form of festival programs, photos uploaded in LGUs websites and social media, newspaper clippings and archival records were used as sources of data for discussion in this study. Primarily, semiotics was used as a methodology in identifying the signifiers of "Tanauaneyños" and "Batanguenos" toward the construction of their identity as a community in context of discussion. The urban festivals are viewed as a cultural text given its following attributes according to Getz (1991): it has a theme, open to the public and have a social and cultural meaning to the host destination (Ryan and Wollan, 2013, p. 102). In this regard, the festival as a text is comprised of language and form which could be studied.

Dela Paz and Flores (2014) describe a text as any manifestation or aspect of reality that consists of form, language and production (p.137). There are coded symbols from which meanings could be attached to. Symbols in the form of images are comprised of codes which are given meanings and to understand these meanings, "reading" may be applied as an approach in order to interpret and give value to these images. As Guillermo (2001) contends,

“Understanding an image is like a re-representation of the world, a creative construct and activity that conveys complex ideas, feelings, values that come from world views and ideologies (p.1). Given the form, language and production in a text, conceivably, festivals contain cultural elements that could be given meanings in relation to its representation of the community’s image and place’s identity.

In reading the two urban festivals as a cultural text, the festival typologies identified by Getz (1991) was used to outline their characteristics as events in connection to how the identity of the place is represented through the festival. The festival is illustrated through typologies such as festive spirit, uniqueness, authenticity, tradition and symbolism .The physical setting of the place, activities of the people and meanings people attach to the place embodies how the image of the place is being constructed. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

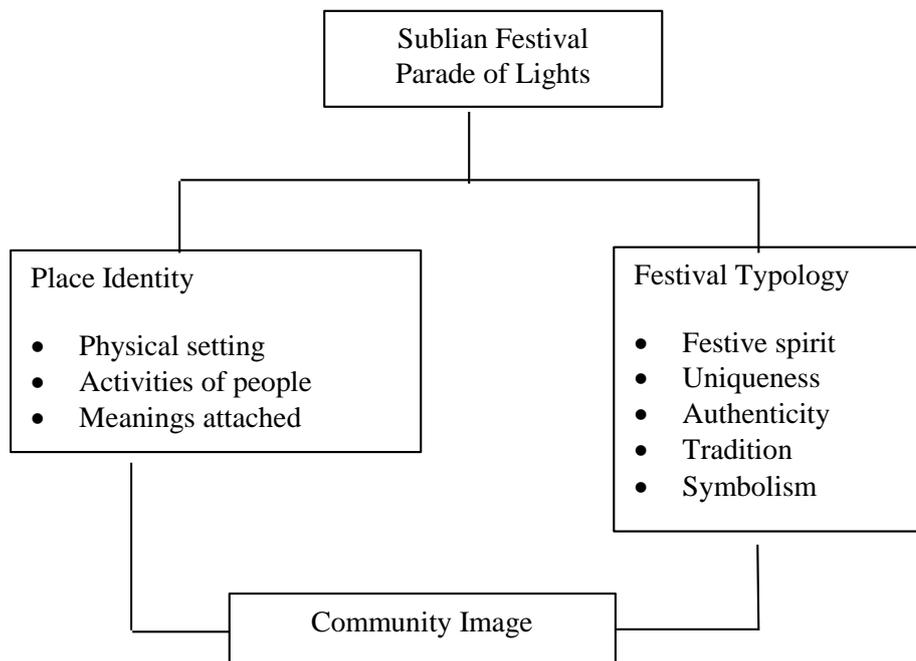


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study describes the characteristics of the urban festivals in Batangas in the context of its place identity from which the celebration is anchored in. The physical setting of the area and activities of people that include traditional practices, customs and lifestyle are explored as its attributes are found to be incorporated in the activities being held during the celebration. Furthermore, the meanings attached to the place are commonly expressed through city mottos that are perceived to enhance the area’s economic, cultural, historical or social value. Following the place attributes, festivals are created with distinct features emphasizing its festive spirit, uniqueness, authenticity, tradition and symbols in the aim of projecting the image of the community. Accordingly, these celebrations are considered as an image-maker, manifested in the collective identity through the participation of the community.

Discussion

Identity of the Place

One common feature among urban festivals is its association and identification with the host place. Rationally constructed festivals follow the features of the location where it is held in the context of physical setting, activities of the people and the meanings attached to

the place. Drawing upon on festive settings, festival events bring attention to particular spaces through specific activities. For instance, both Sublian and Parade of Lights in Batangas and Tanauan cities' celebration are anchored on the characteristics of their respective places; thus, festivities not only serve as a tourism event in the community but most importantly, they aim to project a positive image of its host community as manifested in the whole dynamics of the celebration.

Public spaces in Batangas City play a significant role in the social development aspect of the city. It prides itself of several public establishments and historical landmarks that signify the fusion of the old and contemporary life in the urban setting. Moreover, the importance that Batanguenos place on religion, heritage, environment and politics are reflected on their preservation of these public spaces being a part of their cultural values and tradition as a community. Some of the notable structural works in the city are Plaza Mabini which is a reminder of the urban planning way back Spanish period, the Laurel Park that features sculptural works that represent the virtues of the Batanguenos (i.e. nobility, industriousness, bravery, wisdom and beauty), Batangas City Sports Center, Batangas Convention Center, Ancestral Houses, Heroes Promenade Shrine, the Provincial Capitol Building and the Basilica of Immaculate Conception. Classified as a Regional Growth Center in the CALABARZON region, Batangas is likewise viewed as a progressive city with the presence of commercial establishments and the international port which are features of the city that showcase its industrial progress.

In terms of people's activities, Batanguenos are known for the practice of Subli as a form of religious devotion traditionally performed after prayers and offering of flowers to the Virgin Mary. Other traditional practices known in the community are awitan, also known as "sinilangan" or "pandangguhan" which is a song-dance performance accompanied by a guitar or improvised violin called as "rabel" during wedding and baptismal celebrations; tapatan which is a song-debate that uses the melody from the Pasyon and also performed during the Lenten season; harana which is considered part of the social fellowship and courtship among young Batanguenos in rural communities until the 1970s. Harana features traditional kundiman songs and even popular love songs from which were aired through a local radio station following the program launched by the Local Government, the Harana sa Barangay (Roces, 2006, p. 139)

Tanauan City, on the other hand, is known for its motto The City of Colors. This city branding is said to represent the grand vision of the City Mayor Antonio Halili who aims to transform the city into a spectrum of lively colors through the synergy of private and public sectors' cooperation. Evident in the public spaces in Tanauan City are the colorful lampposts, construction of colorful covered walkways along the streets of Mabini and President Laurel Highway and public mural paintings which were considered part of the first projects of the said town mayor. Alongside these structures is the city's new municipal building that is painted with a variety of colors, similar to what was done with the old municipal hall that houses the Museum of Tanauan. Library, Investment Livelihood Center and an upcoming work place for local artists (C. Cabrera, personal communication, August 25, 2017).

It can be viewed from the promotional video uploaded in the city government website (www.tanauan.gov.ph) the slogan that the City uses, i.e. Masaya at Makulay sa Tanauan. It embodies the tourism ad campaign which highlights the place as a blend of education, recreation and industrial growth opportunities in the Province of Batangas. Tanauan City is likewise geographically proximate to industrial parks which serve as hub for foreign investments and business. Furthermore, the video featured notable groups from Tanauan such as the Dragonboat Rowing Team, Sagwan Tanauan, the kids' baseball team who had competed in international competitions as well as El Gamma Penumbra, a shadow play group who became popular through their big win in an international talent competition.

Aside from the use of colors as an identifiable character of Tanauan City, its residents also recognize the place as Cradle of Noble Heroes attributing to political leaders such as Apolinario Mabini, the “Brains of the Revolution” and Jose P. Laurel who is a former statesman and president of the country as proud sons of Tanauan.

Table 1 presents the summary of the identity of Batangas City and Tanauan City as a place.

Components	Batangas City	Tanauan City
1. Physical setting	presence of public spaces for culture and heritage	presence of colorful structures
2. Activities of the People	Traditional practices such as Subli, Awitan, Harana	No specific traditional practice identified
3. Meanings attached to the Place	Industrial Port City of Calabarzon Progressive city	City of Colors Cradle of Noble Heroes

From these components, the urban festivals are considered “rationally constructed” such that these celebrations were established following the identity of the place.

Urban Festivals and Its Typology

Sublian Festival

Subli in Batangas City is rooted in the Batanguenos’ devotion to the town’s patron, the Holy Cross in Bauan and Agoncillo and the Sto. Nino in Batangas City. It is described as a religious devotion translated to a dance and considered as integrative art that is traditionally performed to the accompaniment of drums and chanting along with poetry, movement and music as a form of praise to the Patron. According to Yraola (in Roces, 2006) in her anthology, the dance is described as a whirlwind ritual performance with men moving quickly in contrast with women who perform, as described by the author, “an extreme economy of movement...like their lifted away, it seems, by a slight wind across clouds” (p. 144). From here, women are considered “portrait of stillness while men convey vigor.” It can be noted that in literature, Subli can be found in two varying forms - the Agoncillo, Taal and Sinala, Bauan versions that conform to the religious practice evident in the chanting of prayers and use of castanets. The Talumpok version, meanwhile, is described to be more playful, motile and vigorous from which the only sound emanates from the Tugtugan (a one headed drum) and does not involve utterance of formal christian prayers. The latter is viewed to be more of a social practice, referring to Subli as “nalaro” or play (Borbon in Roces, 2006, p.148).

From the historical perspective on Subli as a form of devotion and game, Maligaya (2015), citing the studies of Mirano (1989) and Roces (2006) noted that people began to be aware of the tradition when it became a form of street dance competition in 1988 as part of the City’s Foundation Day celebration alongside the commemoration of the birthdate of Mabini. The inclusion of Subli as an event during the Batangas Festival celebration in July 23, 1988 was part of the Cultural Affairs Board’s plan to reanimate the ritual performance

through the so-called “Street Subli” for the pupils of the city’s different private and public schools. The event also includes a competition for elementary, high school and tertiary categories along with community practitioners who were able to preserve the dance’s traditional form. It was then in 2001 when Subli was transformed into a festival brought about by local government’s drive for tourism programs (p.5). Along with these changes that Subli has been regarded with a new perspective as a festival. The Festival became an independent celebration following the recognition given by the Cultural Center of the Philippines and National Commission on Culture and the Arts.

Annually, the Sublian Festival coincides with Batangas City’s Foundation Day celebration. A theme is celebrated that portrays the social values that people in Batangas uphold, expressed in the local dialect. Some of the past themes include *Sublian Festival: Isapuso ang Tradisyong Batangueño* (2011), *Sublian Festival: Sa Manlulupig Di ka Pasisiil* (2012), *Batangueñong Sama-sama, Tagumpay Kayang-kaya* (2013), *Idol Kita, Ka Pule* (2014), *Yamang Batangueño! Palakat na ih! Tara na sa Sublian Festival* (2015) and *Sublian Festival: May Panibagong Sigla* (2016). In 2017, *Sublian Festival* marked its 48th year carrying the theme, *Sublian Festival: A Chance to Discover Batangas City*. Series of activities spearheaded by the Cultural Affairs Committee highlight the whole festival celebration. Prior to the Sublian Festival which is scheduled every 23rd of July, religious activities are held such as *Papuon ng Lungsod ng Batangas* that involves *Salubong sa mga Mahal na Patron* (patron saints from seven parishes are brought to the provincial convention center for a prayer service), *Rosario Cantada* (praying of the rosary), *lua at dalit* (folk poetry recited as novena prayer) and *te deum* (early Christian hymn of praise). Furthermore, the celebration includes *harana* (a serenade form of courtship and social rituals of welcome), *pagbubukas ng Haying Batangan* featuring the sharing of *lupakan* (a local delicacy made of mashed root crops and plantains), *awitan* (folk songs), *sayawan* (showcase of modern dances) and a culinary competition on Batangas delicacies.

Describing the festive spirit of Sublian Festival, residents of Batangas City is observed to share values and belonging primarily through the practice of Subli as a religious devotion. Evident in the annual celebration are the prayer activities that showcase reverence to the Mahal na Poong Sta. Cruz and Sto. Nino as well as to the saints from different parishes. Subli is seen not only as a form of prayer but also translated to dance that Batanguenos highlight in their celebration. Street dancing of Subli are participated in by students from various public and private academic institutions along with the city government offices from which units become part of the parade held in the morning. It can be observed that the recently held *Sublian sa Kalye* became a display of custom, costumes and colors as the participants got the feel of a Mardi Gras event that costumes and props display the inspiration from other festivals in the country such as *Sinulog* of Cebu, *Ati-Atihan* of Aklan and *Panagbenga* Festival of Baguio City. Activities that showcase Batangas City’s advocacy on environmental sustainability are annually integrated in the festival in the form of *Pista ng Kalikasan* in a form of community clean-up and arts competition that highlight themes in environmental protection

As for the distinctive features of the program, public spaces in Batangas play a significant role in the festival as the activities are held in these historical and cultural venues for participation of the residents and spectators. Furthermore, these venues mark the City’s promotion of its image that highlight tradition and progress. Religious activities are commonly held at the Basilica of Immaculate Conception, the first Basilica in the Philippines and entire East Asia to be vested with the honor and privilege of “Basilica Minor” of the Infant Jesus and Immaculate Conception (*Batangas City Socio-economic, Physical and Political Profile*, 2015, p. 161). Subli dance competitions and other activities related to job fair and employees’ sports fest are held at the City Sports Center while meeting up of various

parishes for the veneration of their patron saints and talent competitions such as *Patimpalak Parangal para kay Mabini* are held in Batangas Convention Center. The traditional harana in recognition to the hailed Ms. Batangas City Foundation Day, the muse of the celebration, is conducted at the Acosta-Pastor Ancestral House while Plaza Mabini, a landmark that Batangas City is popular for, serves as the venue for Haying Batangan: Lupakan at Awitan which is a competition for the best Batangas cuisine joined in by various sectors of the community such as housewives, senior citizens, hotel and restaurant management/culinary arts students and food caterers (Appendix A).

Various activities in the Festival coincide with the tourism promotion of Batangas as a city along with individual promotions particularly made by commercial establishments with their presence in the celebration. The float parade, for instance, feature both public and private entities including commercial establishments and academic institutions that mark the city's progressive landscape. Even business establishments which were not from Batangas were invited to join the parade and this event becomes an opportunity for them to market their products and services. Also, political groups particularly figures during the 2010 elections became part of the float parade that gave them the venue for campaigning (Appendix B).

Authenticity in the Festival is observed through the reanimation of a ritual performance and local culture. Subli is the subject of the entire celebration. A competition category of Subli dance are participated in by students from various year levels performing the traditional version which is different from the popularized version of National Artist, Francisca Reyes Aquino and the Bayanihan Folk Dance Troupe. The traditional version of Subli varies from the barangays of Sinala in the town of Bauan; Pook in Agoncillo; and Talumpok in Batangas City. Performances are judged according to authenticity in dance and music. In this way, Subli as a form of devotion translated into a dance has been continuously practiced and witnessed especially by the young generation.

Tradition in the Festival is rooted in the community events that reinforce traditions and practices. Primarily, the festival coincides with the celebration of the city's founding anniversary that culminates every 23rd of July. Also, as Subli is rooted in the Batangueno's devotion to the town's patron Holy Cross in Bauan and Agoncillo and the Sto. Nino in Batangas City, activities center on paying homage to their patron saints. Elderly Subli performers pass the traditional practice of the dance which is indigenous to the town through tutelage especially for the youth. Not to mention the inclusion of traditional practices such as harana, santakrusan, putungan ng korona, papuon, lupakan and awitan which are featured in the festival celebration. However, there are traditional practices that seem to divert from its original form beginning the 20th century such as the harana which has become more of a staging than the actual courtship of men from rural communities and the Awitan that turned into a showcase of folk songs from its traditional practice of dance-song style which originated in the province called Kumintang (then known as Batangas) featuring the combination of voice and instruments along with improvised (or memorized) texts with topics encompassing aspects of ordinary life.

With regard to symbolism, there are elements of production in the Festival that can relate to cultural values, political or economic objects. For instance, the traditional dance of Subli features sequence of prayers in verse, songs and dances in fixed sequence to the tugtugan and wooden clappers called kalaste. The terminologies describing Subli as "nalaro" or play were documented for preserving the traditional movements in practice (i.e. girian, katian, koronahan, mapulon, nagbibilao, tagiliran, taguan, saliwa, salugbungan). Men and

women wear native costumes such as shirt and trousers and *baro't saya*, respectively adorned with small-brimmed and *alampay* (scarf) over the shoulder. The showcase of traditional attire to symbolize Batangueño attributes and customs has been one of the highlights not only in the Subli Dance Competition but also in the *Sublian sa Kalye* (street parade) participated in by both private and public institutions. Aside from the private sector, different departments from the LGU displayed costumes such as the traditional wear of Subli performers. Conversely, there are groups that do not only conform to the theme of Subli but also represent their unit through the designs and patterns used. Other participants' costume design were observed to infuse other cultures such as the Muslim-inspired costumes of the City Mayor's Office and the nature patterns of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) (Appendix C).

The Holy Cross and the image of Sto. Nino are prominent symbols that signify Batanguenos' religious values particularly seen during the performance of Subli as dance and devotion. Commonly, the Festival culminates with the parade of the town's patrons Sta. Cruz and Sto. Nino that are lodged in Basilica Immaculada Concepcion. On one hand, the Sto. Nino is considered as the patron of Batangas City which residents refer to when asked about the origin of the town. A story is told that the Sto. Nino was discovered on top of a floating tree trunk called "batang" at the mouth of Kalumpang River; the child Christ of Cebu was said to be lent to Batangas - the place of the floating tree trunk and was found missing on a ship bound for Cebu. It was then assumed that the image chose to stay behind; thus, acknowledging it as the patron saint of Batangas City (in Roces, 2006, p. 38). On the other hand, the devotion to the Poong Sta. Cruz which is known in Alitagtag and Agoncillo is perceived to be a source of miracles for the devotees who seek to please the Poon. It could be observed that the image bears the *alampay* which is likewise part of the female dancers' costume, replaced after every Sublian. The owner of the used *alampay* treats the object as a form of amulet, protection from harm and danger, as it is commonly placed at the altar in homes, jeep windows or inside the wallet (in Roces, 2006, p. 38).

There are other religious activities that are Sublian-related offer petition and thanksgiving prayers such as *Salubong sa mga Mahal na Patron, Te Deum, Rosario Cantanda, Lua, Dalit and Papuri* are annually integrated in the festival event. The float parade, on the other hand, can be perceived as a symbol of how Batangas City has reached its progress and development as an urban area as seen in the various commercial and business establishments that partake in the event. Politics have paved its way in the Festival as observed in the presence of local government officials and representatives in the entire festival along with invited non-government and socio-civic organizations. Conversely, the value placed on Apolinario Mabini as the local hero from Batangas whose birthday is commemorated on July 22 is manifested through pre-Sublian activities that are reflective of his traits and deeds such as the annual *Parangal kay Mabini* (cultural song and dance competitions) and Festival of Talents, *Paragames - Skill Enhancement, Abilympics* (for person with disabilities) particularly held in 2014.

Parade of Lights Festival

Tanauan City launched its slogan as the City of Colors through the Parade of Lights Festival that commenced in March 8, 2014. The first celebration of the festival was in line with the celebration of the City's 442nd Foundation and its 13th cityhood anniversary. The said branding embodies the grand vision of its City Mayor Antonio Halili, aiming to transform Tanauan into a spectrum of lively colors through the synergy of private and public sectors' cooperation.

The highlight of the entire festival is the float parade which is open to all public and private organizations even those which are not from Tanauan City. Local Government Units

from nearby towns, aside from business establishments, participate in this annual event held every second Saturday of March featuring the floats that use LED lights as the main design that represents their organizations' identity. The festive spirit of the celebration lies in the image that the City projects to the public as expressed through its language, the City of Colors. The LGU has become open to invite other organizations outside Tanauan as a way to add more color and vibrancy to the festival. On average, thirty floats annually join the festival parade (Appendix D).

Uniqueness in the festival is observed through its distinctive program feature. It is celebrated at night time which is uncommonly seen in other festivals that begin early in the morning. This paves way to highlight the beauty of the parade through the use of multicolored LED lights that represent different sectors and barangays in the city. Also, the presence of street dancers in illuminated costumes complements the lights emanating from the floats in parade. There are awards given for the best float judged according to craftsmanship and ingenuity and the street dance competition winners which add to the spectacle of the festival.

Part of the annual parade that becomes one of its highlights as well is Tanauan City's entry in the float parade. During the first year when this activity was launched, the float featured the historical and cultural landmarks of the city like the prototype of the city hall building along with its local heroes who are known Tanauenos - Apolinario Mabini and Jose P. Laurel. The following year, the LGU featured a globe that represents its vision of transforming Tanauan as a world class city. During its third year of celebration, a prominent dragon boat group which is identified as a pride of the city became the highlight in the parade - Sagwan Tanauan as the city is known for hosting the annual Dragon Boat Race as part of its sports and tourism program. During the recently held festival, Tanauan City's image is projected through solar panels, envisioning the city as a futuristic urban area following its thrust of sustainable development (Appendix E).

As for tradition, there is no specific community practice that the festival highlights. Primarily, the festival is a celebration of the foundation and cityhood of Tanauan similar to other festivals that coincide their celebration with the anniversary of their LGU. The festival therefore is observed to be a reflection of a theme connected to a place. The float parade becomes an object of the celebration that signifies the collaboration of the various public, private and business entities with the colored lights as visual representation of the city's vision. Furthermore, it could be observed that there are no particular themes that the Festival upholds every year. In an interview with Ms. Cabrera, she mentioned that the city mayor would prefer to have the invited organizations to practice creativity in conceptualizing their own themes in the aim of promoting their products and services and as manifested in the design and form of their respective floats.

With the launching of the Parade of Lights to promote Tanauan as City of Colors, it can be noted that the celebration likewise coincided with the 150th birth anniversary of the city's greatest son, Gat Apolinario Mabini. The city motto thus embodies the value that they place on Mabini as a hero whose works, wisdom and principles, according to Ms. Angelina Amat, the City Community Affairs Officer, "conveyed colors of hope, courage and nationalism." Mabini's heroic contribution to the country is compared to a form of enlightenment that served as an inspiration for the LGU to launch the festival. To quote, "Our hero's intelligence and heroic deeds provided light our country during the darkest hours - ...the Parade of Lights glistening in the midst of the dark and rising above the challenges as we envision our city to become in this present generation." (A. Amat, personal communication, August 25, 2017).

Table 2 presents the summary of festival characteristics according to its typology

Festival Typology	Characteristics	
	Sublian	Parade of Lights
1. Festive Spirit	Subli as religious and cultural practice	City of Colors
2. Uniqueness	City spaces as venues for traditional practices	Festival schedule Use of multicolored LED lights
3. Authenticity	Reanimation of a ritual performance and local culture	Showcase of ingenuity and brilliance of constituents through float and street dance parade
4. Tradition	Celebration of the city's founding anniversary	Celebration of the foundation and cityhood
5. Symbolism	Sta. Cruz Sto. Nino Apolinario Mabini	Apolinario Mabini City vision (world class and a city of the future)

Conclusion

Urban festivals are found within the context of the place with its identity conveyed through the image projected by the city. The physical setting, activities of the people and meanings attached to the place are aspects that make up its identity from which typology of festivals are perceived to be anchored on. Host organizations embark on the historical, cultural, social, political and economic resources in their respective communities as springboard for the creation of festive celebrations. Elevating those resources as a showcase of spectacle becomes the essence of merrymaking in festivals. In relation to the production elements of a festival, symbols serve as embodiment of cultural values, political and economic objects found within the context of its space. Accordingly, these symbols are found to produce meanings that are attached to the identity of the space. As symbols characterize the city identity, events incorporated in the festival highlight the celebration of these signifiers which, in turn, mirror the constructed image of the urban space to the public as well as the scope of community engagement. This exemplifies the festivals capacity to become a city's' image-maker.

More so, with the perceived meanings attached to the objects identified with the celebration of festivals, these further describe the cultural and spiritual values that Batanguenos and Tanauaneos uphold. On one hand, the weeklong Sublian Festival combines religious and cultural activities as its main subject, the Subli, is both perceived to bear social and spiritual significance to the community. Changes with traditional practices are evident though as festivals continue to revitalize the urban life in the modern times. On the other hand, the Parade of Lights is inclined more on the commercial value with the participation of various business enterprises along with private and public organizations. The celebration is strongly attached to the aspiration of the city, expressed in its grand vision. As both Sublian and Parade of Lights highlight their economic value through the spectacle conveyed; nevertheless, the festivals project positive images for their respective cities, creating a space for tourism promotion and community participation.

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Appendices

- Appendix A: Haying Batangan
- Appendix B: Sublian Float Parade
- Appendix C: Sublian Street Dance
- Appendix D: Parade of Lights Float and Street Dance Parade
- Appendix E: Floats of Tanauan City Local Government Unit

Appendix A – Haying Batangan (Photos from Facebook Timeline Posts)



Photo courtesy of Office of the Veterinary and Agricultural Services



Photo courtesy of Romel Ortega



Photos courtesy of Office of the Veterinary and Agricultural Services



Photos from Palala Batangan's post

Appendix B - Float Parade (Photos from Facebook Timeline)



Downloaded from:
<https://www.google.com.ph/search?q=sublian+2017+float+parade&dcr=0&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiSgqTcgovWAhVEJpQKHSwyB4oQsAQIiw&biw=1366&bih=646#imgcr=z9QBqeBmxtjpwM>



<https://www.facebook.com/ocvasbatangascity/photos/a.961413447332249.1073741891.563765867097011/961414787332115/?type=3&theater>



Photo courtesy of Fernandez Photography and Service

Appendix C – Street Dance (Photos from Facebook Timeline Posts)



Photo courtesy of Claudette Ambida



Photo downloaded from https://www.google.com.ph/search?dcr=0&biw=1366&bih=646&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=sublian+festival+2017+street+parade+photos&oq=sublian+festival+2017+street+parade+photos&gs_l=psy-ab.3...6516.14535.0.17791.26.20.6.0.0.0.139.1870.16j4.20.0....0...1.1.64.psy-ab..4.0.0.RfVZsYu1M6o#imgsrc=AQumKocQMSIQEM



Appendix D – Float and Street Parade (Tanauan City Parade of Lights)



Downloaded from:
https://www.google.com.ph/search?q=parade+of+lights+festival+tanauan+city&dcr=0&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjZ2-G1_YzWAhXlqJQKHc19B64QsAQIPw&biw=1366&bih=646#imgrc=b-JQ29g8_c8byM:



Downloaded from:
https://www.google.com.ph/search?q=parade+of+lights+festival+tanauan+city&dcr=0&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjZ2-G1_YzWAhXlqJQKHc19B64QsAQIPw&biw=1366&bih=646#imgrc=d_5QgqvrMLO9JM:



Downloaded from:
https://www.google.com.ph/search?q=parade+of+lights+festival+tanauan+city&dcr=0&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjZ2-G1_YzWAhXlqJQKHc19B64QsAQIPw&biw=1366&bih=646#imgrc=o_NQ9xx_VKW63M:

Appendix E – Floats of Tanauan City Local Government Unit (Photos from Clinton Galasinao, ZHENSitive blog and mjane mjane youtube videos)

