

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE DILIMAN COMMUNITY

By Fe Rodriguez Arcinas

About thirty minutes ride from Quiapo, northeast of Manila, is the Diliman Community. Part of the mostly undeveloped 493 hectare University site, the whole area is a portion of the Quezon City plateau to the west of the Marikina Valley. Although the University of the Philippines has this big area for its site, the campus area at present is much smaller. The Diliman community itself has a total area of about one hundred and fifty hectares.

Instead of a fairly compact district, one finds the Diliman community, as of today, a wide scattering of settlement areas, bounded on two sides by man-made barriers. On the north side there is adobe stone wall behind the former Conservatory of Music building, and on the west side there is wire fence separating the AGRD area from the Signal Corps camp. Its eastern boundary is marked by a section of the Balara Road. On the south side is a Metropolitan Water District pipeline. Surrounding the community is a number of barrios—Coliat, the Balara Filters and Park, Pansol, Baranka, Barrio Quirino, Kruz na Ligas, East Diliman, Mahabang Gubat and Bago Bantay. The total population of these surrounding barrios has been estimated to be about a thousand.¹ There is reason to assume some change since that time.

At the time the study was made, the Diliman community consisted of clusters of residences around a large quadrangle. This approximated geographical center of the community is a rectangular piece of territory bounded by acacia-shaded asphalt roads with college buildings and dormitories symmetrically arranged around the rectangle. Portions outside of it are occasionally dotted with green well-tended mounds which constitute the nine-hole golf course. As if to form a broad phalanx, the various areas composed of residences and boarding houses are found behind the several college buildings. These groups of homes, (nine in number from the Mango Grove in the north through to Areas 1, 2, 3, and 5 towards the east and then southward through Area 11, "The Stockade," thence Area 14, 17 and and AGRD Laborers' Section towards a westerly direction), form in that order a horseshoe with the Mango Grove and the AGRD Laborers' Section as the two ends. Landmarks within this arrangement are the old, unchanged, and slightly weather-beaten chapel, the two new uncompleted chapels, six dormitories for women and two for men, the principal college buildings (the Administration, the Carillon, Engineering, Law, Library, Education and Liberal Arts). Little Quiapo is the commercial center, the "downtown" area which contributes a share of residents—the storekeepers who live right behind or above their respective stores—to the community's population.

¹ Data from Census of the Diliman community taken in 1951, an unpublished Document secured from the office of the University Registrar.

As of the latest reliable census, the total population of the community is 2,403; 1,163 of which are males (or 48.36%) and 1,241, females (or 51.64%).² This proportion between the sexes does not follow the pattern for the entire Philippines where there is a slight preponderance of males over females, (50.18% males to 49.82% females).³

A visual observation of the community's inhabitants gives the impression that it is a conglomeration of the young; an impression which is borne out by statistics. Obvious reasons for the situation are the newness of the community, the presence of the University and the nature of the jobs available.

The present population reservoir of the community was fed by migrants from the different ethnic regions of the Island with sprinkling of foreign-born residents, — 16 Americans, 15 Chinese, 1 German and 1 Czech.⁴ A random sampling on the community indicates the following regional distribution:

Regional Background	Number of Husbands	Number of Wives
Tagalog	19	17
Visayan	5	6
Ilocano	4	1
Pampango	1	3
Pangasinan	1	1
Total	30	28

The different ethnic groups retain to some degree vestiges of their regional peculiarities in food, in dialect and in attitudes. In the thirty sample homes visited, the Ilocanos, for instance, still preferred *pinakbet* and *bagoong*. The Cebuanos especially liked *malunggay*. The Pampango still betrays his origin by his mispronunciation of words beginning with vowels and/or "H". In the matter of dress, however, the ethnic group prefer the western style and in this one instance achieve uniformity. However, some of the old women and many of the male faculty group wear Filipino dress.

Persons of the same ethnic group, although desirous of living in the same vicinity wherever possible, are not necessarily found in the same residential group. Usually the families have been assigned to old cottages rented out by University authorities without regard for such considerations.

Virtually everybody knows Tagalog. The children in general speak Tagalog better than their elders who have not been able to get rid of native dialect (other than Tagalog) influences in intonation, pronunciation, etc. Of the thirty sample families, twenty-two interpolate English words and phrases into the dialect spoken. To summarize the linguistic distribution, the following tabulation is presented:

² Ibid.

³ Journal of Philippine Statistics, August 1, 1951, Vol. 8; No. 8, Tables 6 & 7.

⁴ Diliman Census *op cit*.

Tagalog & English	16	English	1
Tagalog	3	Cebuano	1
Cebuano & English	2	Pangasinan	1
Pampango & English	1	Samareno & Tagalog	1
Ilongo & English	1	Cebuano & Tagalog	1
Ilocano & English	2		
Total	30		

In this community almost everybody goes or has gone to school and expects the same of others. This is understandable in a community which has a University offering a kindergarten-to-college degree curriculum, manned by able, highly qualified faculty. In the same neighborhood are two private schools, the Ateneo de Manila and the Maryknoll College. For the children whose parents cannot afford the U. P. Elementary tuition fees (P17.00 - P45 per term), there is the Balara Elementary School (tuition — P7 per term.)

Jobs lucrative enough to distract the younger population from school are non-existent. Such minor jobs as selling newspapers, shining shoes, running errands could well be done outside of school hours.

The result of all these factors is to raise the general literacy rate way above that of the Philippines as a whole. Of the persons aged ten and over, 87.8 per cent in Diliman are able to read, write, while the country's percentage is only 48.8 percent.⁵

TABLE I
GRADE STUDY OF THE DILIMAN POPULATION *

Age	Elementary							Secondary							College						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
20-24	0	1	0	3	5	6	4	6	6	9	10	29	39	54	76						
25-29	0	2	1	7	3	5	3	2	2	5	6	9	7	11	55						
30-34	0	2	4	5	2	1	1	1	4	1	5	2	4	0	54						
35-39	0	3	0	1	2	2	5	4	2	2	5	1	2	3	27						
40-44	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	2	0	5	0	0	0	23						
45-49	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	0	3	0	21						
50-54	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	27						
55-59	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	9						
60-64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8						
65 & over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2						

* 1951 Diliman Census

The gainfully employed population consists of 41 per cent of all members of the community: 57.7 per cent of which are males and 46.3 per cent, females.⁶

Jobs range from the professional occupation of the highest level to the unskilled manual laborers. Notwithstanding the wide variety of jobs,

⁵ Philippine Social Trends, Manila Bureau of Printing, 1950, p. 37.

⁶ Diliman Census, *op. cit.*

opportunities are limited since, with few exceptions, they are all derived from the University, directly or indirectly. Consequently, many of these jobs are seasonal and limited. University employees, however, are not affected by school vacations.

The distribution of the gainfully employed is as follows:

TABLE 2
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE DILIMAN COMMUNITY *

Occupations	Numbers	Percentages
Professional Occupations	177	8.10%
Managerial Occupations (Administrative officials of the lower level)	39	1.99
Office Workers	76	3.88
Skilled Workers	104	5.32
Semi-skilled Workers	97	4.45
Unskilled Workers	146	7.46
Domestic Help	236	12.05

* Diliman Census, *op. cit.*

The professionals are distributed as follows:

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE DILIMAN COMMUNITY *

Professional Employment	Number	Percentage
A. Administrative Officials	13	0.67%
B. Academic Personnel	149	7.61
1. Professors, Associate & Assistant Professors	53	3.40%
2. Instructors	67	3.40
3. Research Assistants	1	0.06
4. Elem. School Principals	1	0.06
5. Teachers	22	1.06
C. Other Professionals	15	0.82
1. Engineers	3	0.15%
2. Lawyers	2	0.11
3. Physicians	2	0.11
4. Dentists	2	0.11
5. Nurses	5	0.27
6. Painter	1	0.06

* Diliman Census, *op. cit.*

The 46.3 per cent for females is not explained by the Diliman census. The writer's sampling, however, show that of the 28 wives interviewed, only eight are gainfully employed; five being University employees. The non-gainful work of the household chores which fall on the shoulders of the remainder of the womenfolk should not be underestimated.

The three types of business concerns in Diliman are the University Cooperative, the University operated Cafeteria, and private establishments. The first answers the students' need in groceries, school supplies and refreshments. The second operates as a non-profit cafeteria and serves as a laboratory for students of Home Economics. The third consists of six restaurants, five grocery stores, four dress shops, two tailor shops, two shoe repair shops, two bookstores, two watch repair shops, two laundry service establishments, one refreshment parlor, and one dining store. All these establishments are doing an estimated three-fourths of a million pesos annual business. Conspicuously missing are commercial theaters, taxi service and fresh meat and vegetable stores.

The University influence does not seem to extend to the business methods of sanitation in the private establishments. Business is carried on like anywhere in Manila or Quezon City. The stores are dingy, small, and crowded. The owner's family often lives behind the store. Sanitation continues to be a big problem.

Because of the insufficiency of dormitories, many families have found accepting boarders to be a lucrative business. Eleven of the thirty families interviewed have boarders and two have lodgers. One family has as many as seven boarders. Rates range from P25.00 to P100.00 monthly. Below is a list of rates charged by families interviewed:

Rates	No of Families Charging Such Rates
P100.00	1
95.00	1
70.00	3
55.00	1
50.00	1
45.00	1
40.00	1
25.00	2 — (The 2 boarders with this family are relatives.)
	11

(Twenty-five pesos does not seem too low as irregular payments in rice, eggs, and chickens, etc. are made. The above rates do not differ much from those of the two regular dormitories. The YWCA charges P70. for board and lodging monthly. The thirty-two residents of St. Cecilia's Hall pay P80. a month each for board and lodging. In addition they pay P5. extra for car service.) Truck gardening by six of the thirty families interviewed in the home yards save themselves P2. to P7. worth of vegetables a week. The gardens range from two to ten square meters in size.

Similarly, livestock such as pigs, chickens, goats, and pigeons provide additional income. Of the thirty sampled families, nine are engaged in this subsidiary economic activity. Two hope to make poultry raising a paying proposition. The other seven are content with their livestock for home consumption. In addition a college instructor's piggery in Pampanga nets him an average of P300 a month. Occasional odd jobs

(as one may call radio or opera singing by a college instructor or radio repair by an auto mechanic), yield as much as P150. additional. Some Diliman families are farm landowners as indicated by seven of the thirty interviewed. Two of the seven earn P1,000 a year from the farms, one gets P350, one, P300, one, P150, and another P50.

Apartment of houses in Manila are leased out by five of the thirty interviewed and income derived ranges from P40 to P300 monthly.

Social Classes:

It is generally accepted that no society is classless, but disagreement exists as to "how sharp class distinction should be and on the minimum number of people which is needed to constitute a separate category."⁷ The criteria by which one judges the class membership of his fellowmen are numerous and varied. They differ with prevailing values and operative social forces. Thus, some societies stress wealth, standard of living and family background, while others would emphasize education and intellectual superiority or inferiority. Some societies may use a combination of several of these factors. Although as has been mentioned, they usually do not give equal importance to all of them.

In the Diliman community where the organized social activities cut across all class lines, detection of the presence of social classes is no easy task. Social distance between the extreme classes is, however, considerable. The lower class members of the community are painfully aware that, socially, they cannot be in the same level with the upper class members who have superior education, expensive clothes, cars, better furnished homes, better food, family prestige, and higher incomes. There has been no instance, at least among the thirty sample families, of intermarriage between the two groups. The lower class members marry other lower class members. Upper class members, if they marry within the community, marry within the middle class and upper class levels. For children, however, class lines appear to be much less sharply drawn. For small children there are almost no distinctions, and ideas of how they are to deal with the children of other families are gradually implanted in their minds through the home and other influences.

Distinct divisions of Diliman families into particular social groups run along the following lines: family income, University positions, type and location of dwellings, education, and the possession of prestige objects (cars, modern furnishings, electrical appliances and the like). Family influence is also an important determining factor, but it is one which is quite difficult to trace. For our purpose, we can see the emergence of three general types of families which we can designate as the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class. The upper class families have annual incomes ranging from P12,000 to P20,000. They live in the most desirable housing area of the community, and they hold important University administrative positions. Such prestige objects as modern furnishings, cars, electrical appliances and the like are the characteristic possession of such families. The middle class exhibits a wide range of characteristics;

⁷ Hunt, Coller, Corpus, Guiang & Nelson, *Elementary Sociology University of the Philippines, Quezon City, First Edition, 1953, p. 127.*

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so that it may further be sub-divided into two groups. These two groups have similar educational attainment, University positions and housing quarters, but one group has a lower income and has less prestige objects than the other. The line between them, however, is not distinct enough to warrant separating them into two different classes.

The Diliman middle class families as a whole have an income range of P2,500 to P12,000. Most of them are University academic personnel. They do not reside in the Laborers' Section, AGRD, or in Area 11. They also have prestige objects but usually not as numerous nor as expensive as those belonging to upper class families. In education, there is very little difference between the upper and the middle classes.

The laborers' families make up the community lower class. Such families are within the income range of P1,000 to P2,000. The poorest type of housing quarters are theirs. House furnishings for them are few and crude. Most of them have had only an elementary schooling. There are no collegé graduates among this group.

Of the thirty sample families interviewed, two satisfy the qualifications of the upper class. Four have lower class characteristics and the rest belong to the middle class.

The following table, a result of the interview of thirty sample families, shows annual income derived from the University and other sources. The latter may include income from boarders, odd jobs, investments, and/or farm lands. The one family among the thirty samples who does not derive any income from the University is the lessee of a cottage in the community thru a brother who is a U.P. faculty member. (Subleasing is not too uncommon).

University Income	Outside Income	Total Income Bracket
P12,000.00	P7,344.00	16,000 — 20,000
8,400.00	6,600.00	12,000 — 16,000
3,000.00	8,400.00	
6,000.00	4,800.00	9,000 — 12,000
4,200.00	6,000.00	
2,400.00	6,600.00	
7,200.00	1,200.00	
4,200.00	4,020.00	
5,700.00	2,400.00	
2,700.00	5,280.00	7,000 — 9,000
—	7,680.00	
2,100.00	5,120.00	
7,380.00	—	
3,600.00	3,360.00	
6,000.00	600.00	5,500 — 7,000
4,800.00	1,200.00	
3,900.00	1,800.00	
4,800.00	600.00	
4,800.00	480.00	
2,700.00	2,400.00	4,500 — 5,500
3,600.00	360.00	
2,700.00	1,200.00	3,500 — 4,500

2,714.00	1,092.00	=		
2,400.00	840.00	=		
1,440.00	1,600.00	=	2,500	— 3,500
1,440.00	1,320.00	=		
1,920.00	400.00	=		
1,620.00	600.00	=		
1,440.00	60.00	=	1,500	— 2,000
1,404.00	—	=	1,000	— 1,500

One's social status can be more or less perceived just by knowing the area he lives in. Thus, by the size, quality and appearance of the cottages in "King's Row," one can easily tell that here is where the upper stratum of the community resides. Formerly located in the present site of the U.P. Liberal Arts Building was "Mount Olympus" so called because like its classical counterpart, it was the abode of the "local gods." The Diliman version was the residential location of the "elite" of the community.

Most of the "bottom group" are concentrated in two areas, about three quarters of a kilometer apart — in Area 11 where a group of about thirty families occupy make-shift huts and in the Laborers Section of the former AGRD compound. In Area 11 is a small barbed wire-enclosed space known as the "Stockade". It was in this particular place that the late settlers of this area (Area 11) came to live.⁸ Living quarters in the "Stockade" are generally smaller and of poorer quality than those located in "Area 11 proper." Parts of some of the houses here have the bare ground for a floor. In the Laborers Section AGRD, about seventy-six families are cramped in the galvanized iron-clad *kamalitig* (warehouse-like structure) which formerly housed the voluminous records of the U.S. Army. The other areas are the "strongholds" of the community middle class with an occasional family of both extreme classes interspersed. Each middle class area has its own advantages and shortcomings. In the determination of the social structure of this community, home areas and occupational status of families seem to be closely linked.

Such prestige objects as cars and electrical appliances (refrigerators, electric ranges, electric toasters, and electric irons) denote high status in the community. The more of these conveniences one owns, the higher is one's social class rank.

Of the thirty families interviewed, three have automobiles. Its possession seems to be the best line of distinguishing one class from the other. The two upper class families interviewed have cars; only one middle class family has it. No lower family possesses this particular prestige object.

People living in the Laborers' Section AGRD drink less milk and coffee, eat less meat, fish, vegetables, but more rice per capita compared with those living in any other area of the community. The laborer's meal is indeed a humble repast. Meat dishes among their families are rarely served, one reason being that the price of meat is considered prohibitive (P2.50 to P3.00 a kilo), in relation to their incomes. Inevitably, they turn

⁸ Information gathered from a Sociology II term paper by Angelina Villanueva entitled "Social Life in Area II."

to vegetables of the ordinary local variety, such as *kangkong* and *camote* shoots as well as fishes of the small and cheap species. To compensate for the lack of quality and variety, a proportionately bigger consumption of rice is resorted to.

There are reasons for believing that with regards to preferential access to University opportunities, the upper and middle classes definitely have an edge over those of the lower class. Of the non-faculty employees, only those who have been connected with the University for at least five years are entitled to the privilege of being exempted from the payment of their children's tuition fees (regardless of the number of children) in all the different units of the University, (provided, of course, that children obtain an average of 75% or better for a normal load in the last semester attended). The members of the U.P. faculty and the administration personnel enjoy the same privilege without the prerequisites of having to serve the University for a specified number of years. Although an apparent discrimination, the difference finds some justification in the fact that the U.P., in an attempt to make up for the relatively low pay it gives to its faculty members, has to offer this privilege to qualified faculty members. While laborers, clerks, janitors, carpenters, etc. are numerous, qualified faculty members are not so easy to find.

The University basis for priority in the housing rights gives the most weight to salary and to the husband's employment in the University. The following table indicates privileges given primarily on the basis of income and occupation. Since occupation and income are two items which are frequently used as criteria for social class, this table may be considered recognition of class differences by official University circles. This statement is not made as a criticism since class privileges are reflected in most social groups.

TABLE 4

PRIORITY POINTS FOR HOUSING ASSIGNMENTS IN THE DILIMAN COMMUNITY*

Basis for Priority	Points
Annual salary	5 for each P1,000 or major fraction
Both husband & wife employed in UP	4
Only husband employed in UP	3
Only wife employed in UP	1
Unmarried children	1 each child
Length of service	1 to start with & 1 for every subsequent 5 yrs. or major fraction.

Relative weight given to faculty member and other University employees. All other things being equal, faculty members will be given priority.

Other points give credit for waiting period and a distinction is made between temporary and permanent employees.

* University Housing Committee

Differential treatment of individuals is a reflection of class prerogatives in all societies. It is generally accepted that while the upper class may enjoy certain privileges in certain matters, they are held strictly accountable in others. In the same way, the lower class people "get off" quite easily in some instances, in others, they have more to answer for.

In the Diliman community, the upper class as well as some of those in the middle class do have some privileges. Nonetheless, it is worthy of mention that in this particular community, it seems that the people of this category restrain themselves from exercising too many of these privileges, (unlike the upper class in an ordinary community) lest they regard accorded them by the rest of the community be deflated. Also, they realize that their conduct is subject to scrutiny by the general public since the faculty and administration of the State University are regarded as more or less the intellectual leaders of the country. Here is one instance wherein the cliché "What will people say?" is highly respected.

Like the upper and middle classes, the members of the lower class vary in relative rank; although this particular class does not break up into clear subdivisions of water-tight compartments. Interview with the four laborer families revealed attitudes among the members which cause a disturbance sufficient to make these finer distinctions float to the surface. Thus, for example, Mang Isko's family looks down on Mang Gorio's because the latter's family has only two sets of clothes, the family and their children do not have shoes on at the proper time. The family whose breadwinner has a steady job, although low paid inevitably, has a feeling of superiority over another family whose breadwinner is a casual low-paid laborer.

In the Diliman community, however, the major cleavage appears to be between the small upper class with its closely allied middle class on the one hand, and the lower class group on the other. The ownership of modern convenience and the greater access to University opportunities reflect the wide gap between the two.

Cultural and intellectual activities are among the most extensive pre-occupations in Diliman. Reading of printed matter is widespread. University-sponsored concerts, operas, and plays are well attended. Radios provide extensive recreational activity for most of the upper and middle classes who own sets. Limitations in this field are indicated by the fact that of the thirty sample families, only fifteen subscribe or buy newspapers regularly. Concerts and operas do not have much appeal to laborer families. While many families have had their share of foreign travel, a great many others have not been out of the Philippines.

The relative isolation of the community from downtown Manila is a significant factor in modifying the leisure time pursuits of the population. There seems to be a dearth of movie-goers and participation in civic organizations of greater Manila is practically nil.

In spite of the availability of facilities, physical sports are not very popular among all social classes. For a time and only during the first months of the U.P. Recreation Hall, bowling and pool took the community by storm. On the other hand, golf is considered relatively expensive for the average Diliman resident.

Three out of the nine residential areas in the community—Area 17, Mango Grove, and the Laborers' Section, AGRD—have formed organizations of their own. Important considerations in the formation of clubs in these areas may be the physical remoteness from other areas and the relative homogeneity of their respective populations.

The community is obviously aware of the power of the vote. A high percentage of the total qualified voters casts their ballots in the last two elections. Although many of these are reputedly independent voters, the reason behind the independence is not necessarily political issues, but quite often personal considerations. There is no apparent political activity in the community whether in the form of political organizations or political campaign meetings.

Campaign speeches have never been delivered in Diliman due perhaps to the fact that politicians are aware of the probable reception such speeches will receive in this community. Only four out of the twenty-eight housewives interviewed believe that the statements of facts made by the candidates in their campaign speeches can be relied upon. One possible reason for the "allergy" of politicians to this area is the healthy respect they have for the intellectual level of the residents and the consequent fear of being put to task on the loose statements which are unavoidable in campaign speeches. Again, politicians may be of the impression that the residents, being connected with the State University, are expected to be non-partisans. For his part, the average Diliman inhabitant takes for granted the absence of such campaign speeches in the community.

Except for the wall which marks the boundary of the U. P. campus behind the former Conservatory building, one immediately notices the absence of high fences and tall forbidding walls in the Diliman community. It is true that there are barbed-wire fences in certain areas but these are around the women's dormitories and some are the remains of the enclosing fences serving as a boundary line around the area which, until recently, was occupied by an American community. Lawns of residences start right from the street curb and end at the very doorstep. As a result, children playing in the garden, on the street or on the neighbor's lawn are a common sight. Similarly, neighbors come to feel more free to drop in for a chat or exchange views on the weather. For even more trivial matters, one may shout across lawns.

A natural consequence of this personal relationship among the neighbors is the building up in the Diliman resident of a feeling of having common interest with the neighbor. Thus, the neighbor's safety and welfare are viewed as his own. Mutual protection and concern are thereby developed.

Since the residents of this community are of this attitude, the work of those in charge of the maintenance of peace and order is greatly relieved. The preservation of Diliman group sanctions and taboos which have solidified into laws is secured not only through the force of public opinion but also mainly through the efforts of an official enforcement agency, the University Security Guards. This corps, which also acts as the community fire department, is paid out of the University funds. It consists of one chief, three sergeants, three desk sergeants and thirty-one guards.

From the foregoing, it may be safely concluded that Diliman is not very different from other Philippine communities. Its inhabitants display fundamentally the same traits and idiosyncracies as those of any other community in the Philippines. Its distinguishing characteristics such as a higher educational level and literacy rating, its greater response to Western, particularly American, influence,—all these may be attributed to the existence in its midst of a high institution of learning, the University. To a certain extent the Diliman resident may be said to be still a marginal man in that he is neither wholly within the grasp of Philippine mores nor is he totally Westernized.