

The *TAGASALO* Personality

Margaret Helen Udarbe

Silliman University

The study investigated Carandang's theory of 'tagasalo' in efforts to describe and explain its origins, development, and dynamics. The possibility of *tagasalo* being gender-specific and related to birth order, was raised. Ten families were interviewed intensively. In addition, three psychological tests were administered to the identified *tagasalo* child and to another child least like the *tagasalo*. It was found that the *tagasalo* personality is not systematically related to gender nor birth order, but it can develop out of the need for a child to be different from a sibling who causes emotional upheaval in the family. The *tagasalo* is a responsible and caring person, a listener and a mediator, intent on harmony, and also has a strong need for control and a capacity for emotional distance. Instead of the self-doubting, unloved, compulsive, dependent, and passive *tagasalo* who appears to be acted upon in Carandang's theory, this study found them to be responsible, caring, and dependable children who actually take charge in efforts at relieving tension and resolving conflicts in the family. The *tagasalo* is actually a person who influences the family's dynamics, who actually holds power, and who seeks to be in control.

It has been observed that many if not most psychology students play the *tagasalo* (caretaking) role so well and that this is perhaps the reason why they were drawn to a helping profession. There seems to be a fundamental need on the part of the *tagasalo* to literally "catch" other people's problems, making them one's own and, thus, endeavoring to solve these problems him- or herself. To a large degree, such behavior may be considered laudable and socially approved of. And yet many of us may fail to see the other side of the picture—that is, the "burning out" that is characteristic of people who overextend themselves in the guise of "reaching out."

What drives one to be giving or, as the case may be, to be "too giving?" Is it possible to foresee the development of such behavior in order to prevent its compulsive, indiscriminate aspects? In this study,

we attempted to look into the dynamics behind tagasalo, the better to understand such a phenomenon among many individuals today.

Initially, however, it should be recognized that the term "tagasalo" originated in the Philippine context and our investigation involved Filipino cases in Filipino settings. Further, the approach in this study was that of the family systems perspective. Analysis therefore involved entire families and was not dependent upon the perceptions of an individual member. It was hoped that this approach would lead to greater insight into the dynamics of the tagasalo more than the study of the single individual would.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is the clinical psychologist Ma. Lourdes A. Carandang who first cited several cases of what she calls the "tagasalo" or "mananalo" syndrome in her book, *Filipino Children Under Stress* (1987). She states:

Tagasalo comes from the root word *salo*, which literally means "to catch." With the prefix *taga* it means "one who catches." Used colloquially, the word refers to one who "takes care, or one who comes to the rescue." *Mananalo* is a synonym of *tagasalo*. (p. 47)

Carandang believes that there is a tagasalo in every family. She discusses the syndrome's development in the context of a Filipino society where female members are expected to take care of household matters early in life. Eventually, these chores expand to the emotional care of family members and others outside the family. It can go on indefinitely and indiscriminately.

In addition to gender, Carandang (1987) also theorized on birth order, stating that the tendency towards tagasalo can be determined literally at birth. Carandang says that it is usually the middle child who feels unrecognized and must, therefore, strive for attention through acts that are socially approved of. A large part of the tagasalo's self-concept becomes dependent on her ability to please others in the family network. As the role is further reinforced by society, it takes on a personality that is not questioned until the person becomes physically and emotionally drained. Carandang further made the distinction

between the non-compulsive and the compulsive tagasalo. The non-compulsive tagasalo is the one who occupies the role of caretaker naturally and carries it out without being compulsively stuck to it. The compulsive tagasalo, on the other hand, tries very hard to be recognized and approved by her parents, always anticipating other people's needs because she herself needs to be taken care of.

It was hoped that this study would lend clarification to Carandang's theory of the tagasalo.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

At a 1998 social science conference, psychologists Allen Tan and Allan Bernardo both cited Carandang's theory building based on her clinical practice. In particular, Tan (1998) stated that "perhaps the best known example of this is Carandang's concept of the family tagasalo" and that "such practice based research will do much to help develop further the knowledge base of Philippine psychology." Bernardo (1998), for his part, spoke of the need for psychologists to be "mindful of their experiences in practice" and for researchers, in particular, to "conceive of alternative ways of understanding our reality."

But, after Carandang (1987) introduced the concept of tagasalo in her book, no systematic studies have been done in the area in the Philippines even though it had been observed in clinical practice. It was thus considered essential to look elsewhere to find out if tagasalo was a universal concept rather than a uniquely Filipino one and, if so, it may, after all, have a different name.

Efforts to come up with a Western counterpart for the tagasalo syndrome have produced a wide variety of possibilities. Schaef (1990) used the term "careaholics" synonymously with "workaholics, busyaholics, and rushaholics" in *Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much*. She thought there was a need to speak to women (and men) who were doing too much, keeping too busy, and spending all their time taking care of others instead of taking care of themselves. She made no theoretical statements, however, regarding the origins of careaholic behavior.

Adler's (1973) "redeemer complex" characterizes "people who in a conspicuous manner, but unknowingly, take an attitude that they must redeem somebody." There are similarities between the redeemer's and the tagasalo's attitude of *helping others* as well as the unknowing, *unconscious aspect* of both. The difference is that in Carandang's conceptualization, the person is driven by a need for others to care for her whereas Adler's redeemer is motivated by a need for superiority.

Beattie (1987) offers another possibility in the concept of "codependency." She defines a codependent person as "one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior." Miller (1988) introduced a similar concept in describing "enabler," using the term synonymously with "pleaser," "family warrior," "facilitator," and "caretaker." Both codependency and enabling developed in the context of alcoholic families. Alcoholism was never a factor among Carandang's tagasalo cases.

Some of the tagasalo characteristics that Carandang (1987) enumerated include: the behavior's *compulsive* character—the person feels driven to take care of others and come to their rescue as if it were her duty and obligation to do so; its *unconscious* aspect—the person cannot seem to understand why she feels driven nor why she feels guilty when she says "no"; and, its *overgeneralized and indiscriminate* stance—the need does not appear to be delimited to family members alone.

Carandang theorizes that a large part of the tagasalo's self-concept becomes dependent on her ability to please others in the family network. As the role is further reinforced by society, it takes on a personality that is not questioned until the person becomes physically and emotionally drained. Otherwise the syndrome goes on indefinitely and indiscriminately.

In studying personality development in families, researchers like Kidwell (1981) and Smith (1984) pointed to the importance of looking into family characteristics related to the structure of the sibling relationship. These factors included birth order, sex composition of siblings, number of siblings (family size), and spacing between siblings. In a study examining the self-esteem of middleborn American adolescent males compared with firstborns and lastborns, Kidwell

(1982) found that middleborns have a significantly lower self-esteem. This was explained according to the "uniqueness theory" which suggests that firstborns and lastborns enjoy an inherent uniqueness in their birth order which facilitates status, recognition, and attention by parents and other siblings. In contrast, there is no inherent uniqueness in the position of middleborn child, whose role in the family is consequently less well defined. Kidwell also found support for the uniqueness phenomenon with regard to sex of siblings. Self-esteem of the middle-born male was significantly enhanced when his siblings were all female than when they were all male or of mixed gender. Smith's (1984) findings suggest that sex composition of the sibling group might be more important and that birth order might be less important for females than for males. He speculated on the theoretical basis of his findings in relation to what he called the effects of "structural differentiation of positions in sibling groups." He states:

A child in a family in which the majority of the children are of the other sex has a more differentiated position than a child who is not in a "sex minority." Likewise, a first- or lastborn is more differentiated from siblings than a middleborn, who is "surrounded" by siblings . . . it was assumed that structural differentiation of a child's position would result in a more "special" relationship with parents and thus, would increase the probability of accurate perception of parental orientations. (p. 906)

Smith's theoretical rationale regarding structural differentiation appears to be similar to Kidwell's uniqueness theory regarding siblings.

The preceding variations in sibling structure have been much studied but according to Pocock (1992), they appear to account for only 1-5% of the variance between siblings. He says that the most likely influences in shaping differential development appear to be parental behavior, sibling interaction, influences outside the family network such as school and peer relationships, and random experiences such as accidents or illnesses to one sibling.

Anderson (1981) has said: "Regardless of theoretical orientation, there is little argument that the family is generally the most powerful and the optimal context for individual development" (p. 35). Huston and Robins (1982) explain that family relationships are likely to be "more enduring, involve more frequent interaction, span a greater

range of activities and be subject to a larger set of cultural norms than most other relationships" (p. 903). Yet in examining the family's role, we find it characterized as "wives' family sociology" relying on reports by the wife as sole indicators of family variables or school-based studies relying on children's reports of family life (Jessop, 1981). In other words, family research has relied heavily on the reports of individual members rather than on dyads or the entire family system.

From a family-roles perspective, the idea that family members develop certain roles in contrast to other members is similar to birth order, but the roles are not systematically related to the position of birth. Goldklank (1986) investigated family therapists' roles in their families of origin, including both the family therapists and their siblings plus a control group of individuals in nonhelping professions (e.g., biochemists, CPAs, engineers). It was found that significantly more family therapists played a caretaking role in their families of origin in contrast to their siblings. Furthermore, in contrast to the control group, family therapists were more often advisors, important regulators of their parents' self-esteem, mediators or linkers, moving in and out of being partners to their parents, linking family members, enacting what Goldklank referred to as "parentified roles." The power of the study lay in its inclusion of siblings who confirmed their differing roles from those of their family therapist-siblings.

Family therapist Murray Bowen strongly believes that it is important to go back to family of origin in order to understand the family in the present (Foley, 1986). The central concept in Bowen's theory is the *undifferentiated family ego mass* (Bowen, 1981), an emotional closeness that exists in all families in varying degrees at various periods of the family's life span. The basic building block of this emotional system is the *triangle*. Bowen believes that in calm periods, the two members of a triangle have a comfortable emotional alliance; in times of stress, a third person may be triangled in order to shift the tension within the system. The family ego mass gets built through an ongoing process of interlocking triangles, extending over generations. When little stress is experienced, all members of the triangle may be able to relate as individuals. The ability to relate as a differentiated individual is the primary goal of Bowenian therapy (Hansen and L'Abate, 1982).

Bowen's approach necessitates history taking, best served by using genograms. A genogram is a format for drawing a family tree that records information about family members and their relationships over at least three generations (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985). One may enlist the help of family members in both the nuclear and extended family of origin to get details about functions and roles, trying to understand how these may have had an impact on the family members.

According to Foley (1986), "the reason why this or that child is focused on in a given family is not always easily evident since the process may occur for a variety of reasons connected with the developmental stages of the marriage" (p. 12).

In the Filipino family, Medina (1991) discusses two types of socialization: deliberate or conscious and nondeliberate, unplanned or unconscious. In deliberate socialization, the individual is explicitly and directly taught the standards and values, the proper behavior, the social obligations, and other expectations of his family and instructions are carried out in actual behavior at home or elsewhere. In nondeliberate socialization, the child learns these cultural values and norms by him- or herself through observations and experiences and from interaction with other people. Medina (1991) adds:

Traditionally, children are encouraged to be dependent on the parents and to strongly identify with the family. They are taught to be respectful and obedient to authority, particularly to parents and elders, to be shy not aggressive, to maintain excellent interpersonal relations with neighbors and kinsmen, to be self-reliant and industrious, and to strive in order to achieve and improve their economic condition. (p. 200)

Go (1993) believes that "obedience" is a prime value in the Filipino child's socialization and that the extreme emphasis on this value gives the parent-child relationship an authoritarian quality. She speaks of "demand training" whereby parents send their children on errands or have them assist in household tasks. She clarifies, however, that sexual division in carrying out tasks is not as rigid as is commonly believed.

Go (1993) adds that although obedience to parents is the most important, obedience to older siblings is also required. Medina (1991) refers to this as a "quasi-paternal status" where the eldest child, whether male or female, has authority, including the right to punish younger

siblings for misbehavior. Ventura (1985) adds that Filipino parents tend to be stricter in the enforcement of discipline for older children. Go (1993) concludes:

The hierarchical structure of authority in the family, fostered by the early socialization process which lays emphasis on obedience, nurturance of one another, and avoidance of conflict, reinforces the solidarity and cohesiveness within the Filipino family. The age-grading in the kinship system, mediated by other factors such as sex and individual capacities, clearly designates the roles and responsibilities of each member, not only to the family as a whole, but also to one another as well. Thus, it enables parents to control the behavior of its members and to maintain the traditional attachment of the young to their family. (p. 63)

Medina (1991) thinks that modernization has brought about the phenomenon of "generation gap" among some families where the conservative parents and the Westernized children have some problems in their relationships because of divergent values and behavior. In general, however, she believes that most Filipino parents and children have a combination of both traditional and modern traits, and have thus adapted to one another.

Statement of the Problem

The primary concern in this study was with the dynamics behind the development of the tagasalo personality. In general, the concern here is with an explanation and a description of the tagasalo that is as concise and as complete as can be, ranging from its origins, development, behavioral dynamics, and consequences in adulthood. The present study is a systematic investigation of Carandang's theory of the tagasalo in the context of the Filipino family but not necessarily in a clinical setting.

METHOD

Initially, the possibility of studying the individual was raised, but it became clear that an understanding of the tagasalo would best be accomplished in the context in which it developed. Thus, it became necessary to study the phenomenon through the family systems

approach.

The procedure for data collection which includes the interview, constructing of genograms, and administration of personality tests, was tested with selected individuals. Revisions in the choice of instruments were eventually made and the result was the present battery. Much of the interview procedure evolved from this preliminary exercise.

Research Design

Ten families were selected for this research. The number of cases indicates that research utilized a "multiple-case, replication design." Comparisons of tagasalo were made on the basis of family members' descriptions of the child identified as the tagasalo in each of the 10 families. Quantitative support was also sought from results of the administration of three psychological tests to both the identified tagasalo and the child identified as the least like the tagasalo in each family.

Sample

It was specified that each of the ten families should have at least two children aged 18 to 35 years old, but no specifications were made regarding gender. Each family was a middle-class urban family that was not a clinic sample; that is, the family had not been referred for therapy.

Instruments

For the purposes of this study, *genograms* were intended to provide an efficient summary, making it easier for the researcher to keep in mind family members, patterns and events. An *interview schedule* was used to obtain demographic data. This was followed by the major part of the interview consisting of questions regarding perceptions of the family members of the tagasalo in their family. Children were asked to identify the tagasalo from among themselves; parents were asked to identify the tagasalo from among their children. Each respondent was also encouraged to identify the family member whom they perceived as the tagasalo's opposite.

Three psychological tests were administered to the identified tagasalo and his/her opposite. The *Heroic Myth Index* (HMI) is a 72-item instrument designed to help people better understand themselves and others by identifying the different archetypes active in their lives. The 12 archetypes are Innocent, Orphan, Warrior, Caregiver, Seeker, Destroyer, Lover, Creator, Ruler, Magician, Sage, and Fool. The *California Psychological Inventory* (CPI) is a personality test developed specifically for use with normal adult populations (as opposed to clinical samples). It is a 462-item, true-false instrument that yields scores on 20 scales, including Dominance, Sociability, Responsibility, Empathy, Independence, and so on. The *Thematic Apperception Test* (TAT) is a projective test that helps reveal some of the dominant drives, emotions, sentiments, complexes and conflicts of a personality. Twelve cards (i.e., cards 1 to 10, and 13 and 16) with pictures were shown to each respondent and he/she was encouraged to tell a story about each picture. The results of the HMI, the CPI, and the TAT together were intended as tools for personality assessment in order to come up with a personality profile of the identified tagasalo and to explore correlates that differentiates him or her from other members of the family.

RESULTS

Interviews with family members of ten families produced descriptions of the child identified as the tagasalo (or the IT) and the child least like the tagasalo (or the LT). Results were also obtained for both the IT and the LT from the administration of the three psychological tests. The tagasalo profile based on family structure variables (i.e., gender, birth order, and number of children) can be seen clearly in Table 1. What follows is a brief analysis of the tagasalo's personality pattern. A more detailed description of the IT and the LT in each family as well as each family's genogram may be found in Udarbe (1998).

The results of this study reveal a wide range of characteristics exhibited by the tagasalo, but certain patterns in behavior and attitude did emerge. While this study did not cover all of each family's dynamics, the fact that family members chose to discuss certain events or behavior

Table 1. Tagasalo Profile Based on Family Structure Variables

Tagasalo	Sibling Sequence		male	o female
A	-	o	-	o
B	-	o	-	-
C	-	-	o	-
D	-	o	-	o
E	-	-	-	-
F	o	-	-	o
G	o	-	-	o
H	-	-	-	o
I	-	-	-	o
J	-	-	-	-

+ identified tagasalo
 - least like the tagasalo

that stood out about the tagasalo warrants further examination. What follows is an attempt at pointing out patterns in the dynamics of tagasalo across families.

Sense of Responsibility. When family members were asked to identify the tagasalo in their family and to explain why they thought so, they invariably described the person in terms of the extent towards which he or she took on responsibility. There were various reasons for the role's origins, such as birth order and father absence, but the dynamics of the role were usually similar across families. First, the tagasalo took on responsibility early in life, if not in their elementary school years, by their teens at the latest. Examples of early chores included helping in parents' businesses, preparing food for and feeding younger siblings, and helping them with their homework. Second, the responsibilities were of an "external" nature, that is, the actions did not simply involve taking on responsibility for the self, as in "shopping alone in Singapore at age 9," but actions that were for the benefit of others in the family. The question is: Why is a particular child chosen to do particular chores? The concept of responsibility has many facets, as shall be seen shortly.

The Ability for Listening. Perhaps the reason why certain people are called upon to be the tagasalo is because their communication lines with their parents are relatively open. Their parents can talk to them, they listen, and they understand. This aspect is evident in such

descriptions as “Mommy’s listener” and parents’ “shock absorber,” “*hindi sumasagot at hindi nagtatanim*” (does not talk back or hold a grudge). For some of the tagasalo in this study, the role of listener developed at an early age, just as the sense of responsibility did. One or the other of the parents would presumably require an outlet and the tagasalo became the most reasonable one because of that ability to listen and to absorb. As one mother says, “We needed a tagasalo in the family” and her tagasalo daughter, in turn, acknowledges that she is the one who “understands her family best.”

The Need to Mediate. The tagasalo looks at this open relationship with the parents in a positive way and feels bad that the other siblings are not as open with their parents and, in fact, fear their parents. The person’s mediating role then becomes part and parcel of his role as a tagasalo. It is mainly from this mediating role where the tagasalo could experience stress and subsequent burning out because of the emotion involved, as evidenced in the statements, “*Ako ang naiipit parati*” (I always get caught in the middle) or “I’m the one who has to understand.” It is important to note that what the tagasalo seems to desire is more open communication between parents and children and, perhaps not as strongly, open communication between siblings. In cases where it is the siblings who quarrel among themselves, the tagasalo’s role would be to mediate between siblings, presumably to spare the parents the trouble.

The Need for Harmony. The feeling of wanting more open communication among family members leads to another of the tagasalo’s concerns, that of wanting some kind of harmony in the family. The tagasalo “gets upset over conflict” or “cries” when family members quarrel. The need then becomes one of “fixer,” wanting to resolve matters quickly and taking on the responsibility for doing so. It seems that the experience of conflict in the family and the subsequent stress that follows somehow leads to discomfort in the tagasalo so much so that he or she wants to fix things quickly. At the very least, the tagasalo’s reactions are influential in immediately diffusing the family situation during conflict.

The Need for Control. Perhaps the most significant of the test findings based on the HMI is not so much that the tagasalo has a sense of responsibility, but that he or she is also concerned with having

a sense of power. There seems to be in the tagasalo the need to be in control, but not necessarily to be controlling. In other words, the tagasalo is tasked with taking full responsibility for his or her life, not necessarily to control other people, but to be more in control of his or her own self, if the findings are to be based on HMI interpretation. Of course, taking responsibility for the self might be at issue. Nevertheless, there is the controlling of others as well and such descriptions as disciplinarian, managing, assertive, dominant, Mr-Know-It-All, presumptuous, and bossy cannot be ignored. The tagasalo in this study has indeed had some influence on the family's dynamics so much so that family members "don't fight in his presence" or "avoid him until his mood changes." A sibling seen as the least like the tagasalo in his family described himself as one who "does not interfere in people's lives," perhaps implying that the tagasalo does. Inherent in the aforementioned actions is the "power" that the tagasalo holds.

The Parents as Central. Still and all, it cannot be denied that the parents are central in the tagasalo make-up. The tagasalo is accessible and held responsible precisely because of his or her relationship with the parents. The tagasalo wants family harmony presumably to please parents and takes on various responsibilities to spare them the trouble. One might see tagasalo behavior going beyond the immediate family, but for the most part, what the tagasalo does is founded on the very need to get parental approval and appreciation. Indeed, even as the tagasalo behaves as he or she does in order to be "protective of siblings" or to "find alibis" for them, his or her actions are still dependent on parental behavior and expectations. One tagasalo goes on work leave because his father needs help with the business; another's travel plans are put on hold because "Who's going to take care of Mom and Dad?" In both examples, the tagasalo is a younger sibling and not the eldest in birth order.

Capacity for Caring. The capacity for caring needs further elaboration because it is not only directed towards parents, but to others as well, and not just within the immediate family but beyond it. Descriptions of generosity, approachability, and thoughtfulness appear to be indicative of this capacity for caring. Somewhere in the tagasalo's personality is the need to go beyond the self, to reach out, so to speak. This is like the sense of responsibility in its outward or external

direction, originating from within the tagasalo and benefiting someone else. This aspect of the tagasalo of caring and self-sacrifice appears to be the image that one generally associates with the tagasalo. It seems that there is confirmation of its presence, as shown in the descriptions of tagasalo in this study.

The Tagasalo as Sibling. One is able to see a lot more about the tagasalo when viewed in the context of siblings. In particular, one may see the tagasalo in another light when the question is raised, "Who do you think is the least like him or her among the siblings?" In family descriptions of the sibling identified as the least like the tagasalo, one invariably notes signs of rebellion or at least some family event that caused some emotional upheaval or tension. In most cases, this sibling was usually the "family isolate," to borrow a term cited by Leigh (1986).

Seen in this context, one can almost tangibly feel the tagasalo moving in the opposite direction. The parents continue to be central, naturally, but there seems to be some pushing and pulling and the tagasalo finds him- or herself caught in the middle, trying to distract parental attention by being the opposite. In other words, it is not so much the least like the tagasalo who tries to be the tagasalo's opposite, even though the manner of this research implied such. It is the tagasalo who tries to be the least like the sibling who has contributed the most to the family's emotional turmoil. The immediate action seems to be of a distracting nature. The tagasalo gets anxious, feels uncomfortable or upset, and tries to distract attention to his or her more "positive" acts of tagasalo for the household and for siblings.

Capacity for Emotional Distance. Perhaps one other characteristic which seems descriptive of the tagasalo is the capacity to be detached. Whether it comes from being burdened with the family's concerns or a predisposing tendency to intellectualize (a Freudian defensive maneuver), the tagasalo inevitably distances the self from everything he or she is faced with. Logically, it must be assumed, especially in the case of the noncompulsive tagasalo, that one has to somehow keep the self from drowning in helplessness or uncertainty, though this could happen in initial stages of stress. One has to make decisions, one has to be in control in order to carry the family's burdens. This latter trait is perhaps the reason why the tagasalo's siblings tend to view the

tagasalo in such a negative light. The tagasalo is helpful, it is acknowledged, but does the tagasalo also have to come across as unfeeling? Many of the tagasalo in this study felt misunderstood. There are many other reactions to stress in the tagasalo in this study (e.g., moodiness, withdrawal, intensity, crying, physical injuries, and fatigue). Detachment seems to be the most frequently perceived, and perhaps, the tagasalo's most frequently used, defense mechanism.

DISCUSSION

Consider again Carandang's theory of the tagasalo. There is first a compulsion to care for others as if it were a duty and an obligation to do so. Second, the need is unconscious and the person does not understand why he or she is driven nor why there is guilt over inaction. Third, the tagasalo has a tendency to overextend the self and indiscriminately be a "catch-all." Where does a need to be a tagasalo come from? What dynamics operate for the tagasalo? This study sought to discover the answers to these questions and it may have done just that and more.

First, it is now known that although sibling structure variables such as the person's gender and birth order might be related to the development of tagasalo, there is no particular pattern that can claim exclusive cause.

Carandang had previously theorized that the tagasalo is usually female and usually the middleborn, if not the eldest. This study has shown that many males are the tagasalo in their families. The tagasalo may also be a younger sibling, but more often than not, an older sibling. This latter finding may be due to the sample's being a nonclinical one.

Bulatao (1998) has suggested looking into the "Ate" (older sister) pattern versus the tagasalo pattern. But a "Kuya" (older brother) pattern bears further examination also because many of the identified tagasalo were elder males. In light of the Ate or Kuya patterns, it might no longer be surprising that many of the needs that came out on the "tagasalo factor" were achievement needs, such as the need to do a good job, the need to achieve great fame, the need to work, and the need to make money.

There was some support for the theories of structural differentiation or uniqueness. It might be recalled that Kidwell (1981) and Smith (1984) theorized that a person not in a sex minority or one who is surrounded by siblings (i.e., not a first- or a last born), is not in a differentiated position, and therefore, not unique. However, there were only two middleborns.

It is still believed, however, that the tagasalo personality was not as much influenced by the aforementioned family structure variables as they were by parental behavior, sibling interaction, and random experiences.

A second point, therefore, is that whatever the tagasalo really is now has much to do with parental expectations and behavior. In the literature review, it may be recalled, Bowen discussed a theory of family systems in relation to triangles and alliances. In this study, it has been found, that whenever triangles were observed, one or both parents were inevitably present, and, usually, the tagasalo was the one in the middle, either between parents, or between parent(s) and siblings. The tagasalo is the one who, in Bowen's terms, gets triangled in, to relieve the tension.

It might be recalled that Goldklank (1986) wrote of "parentified roles": how certain family members more often were advisors, important regulators of their parents self-esteem, mediators or linkers, moving in and out of being partners to their parents. In this description can be found the essence of the tagasalo personality.

Bowen also spoke of the differentiation of self from one's family. He believes that all human functioning is on a continuum from enmeshment or almost no differentiation of self at one end and independence and maturity at the other end. It is assumed that the tagasalo in this study in general are moving (or have moved) towards maturity and independence so much so that between the tagasalo and the parents, there is an emotional closeness, but there is also an emotional distance. This latter observation is probably borne of the study's nonclinical sample again where presumably some form of individuation has occurred in the tagasalo. Perhaps more of an emotional fusion would be found in a clinical sample.

But why does the tagasalo feel that he or she must please his or her parents? We have seen the kind of attention, negative though it

may be, that the least like the tagasalo receives. In this sense, Carandang's theory that the tagasalo feels unrecognized and strives for attention through acts that are socially approved of is confirmed. However, from this study, it does not appear that the tagasalo feels unloved as well, as Carandang theorized. The tagasalo might feel dependent or unappreciated, but that seems to stem from being overwhelmed by the responsibilities he or she has taken on, not from a lack of love from the parents, to begin with. In fact, the tagasalo seems to occupy a position of distinction: he or she has the ear of the parents, a privilege that the siblings both appreciate and dislike.

A third factor, therefore, must take into consideration the power angle. The tagasalo in this study did not, or chose not to, discuss being powerful or dominant. Perhaps the tagasalo did not see this as one of any major importance even as the siblings all referred to the tagasalo's controlling (i.e., managing) aspects. The power angle did come out in test data as well. This is perhaps where the unconscious dimension of tagasalo comes from: the lack of awareness that he or she is driven by the need for power.

Therefore, this study attempts some reframing on the theory of tagasalo. Where before the tagasalo was viewed as a passive recipient of responsibilities and obligations, being acted upon by external forces seemingly beyond his or her control, now it may be said that the tagasalo is actually an active individual who makes a significant impact on the family. To borrow a term used by family members, the tagasalo is actually the "prime mover," a very influential person in the family's life.

In sum, the findings of this study must be viewed from the following perspectives: (a) it is a study based on a nonclinical sample, (b) it is a study that is based on a family systems approach, and (c) it is a study that both negates from and adds to Carandang's theory of tagasalo.

The tagasalo in the Filipino family can either be male or female and can be of any birth category. What is important is that somewhere in the family system and at various periods of a family's life, alliances may experience stress and the person who gets recruited, or triangled in, to relieve stress is the tagasalo. The tagasalo does not fulfill the role because he or she lacks love and attention. The tagasalo fulfills the role because he or she feels that someone must be in control of the

situation and must set some form of order.

The tagasalo also feels discomfort in times of stress; he or she feels most uncomfortable, it seems, and logically takes control with his or her strong sense of responsibility, capacity for caring, abilities for listening and mediating, the strong need for harmony, and the capacity for emotional detachment.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted with the end in view of possibly contributing to the theory and practice of psychology and it is believed that it has done so. Much of Carandang's original theory of the tagasalo was confirmed or elaborated upon in a systematic study that was nonclinical in nature.

Carandang had theorized that the tagasalo might be a dependent person needing to be taken care of. On the contrary, it has been found that it is the family system that is dependent on the existence of tagasalo.

Carandang also speculated on the role's unconscious aspects: "How come the tagasalo feels she has no choice about it? Where does the need to take care come from?" It is now believed that the tagasalo role does not develop from the feeling of being unloved but the feeling of wanting to be more in control. The tagasalo in this study did not bring up the sense of power or dominance even though other family members did, and it came out in test data as well. Perhaps the closest that some tagasalo got to expressing this aspect had to do with not knowing why there was a lack of understanding of what they tried to do for the family and the feeling of guilt over impatience and intolerance. It is now theorized that it is from this controlling stance or power angle which the tagasalo personality derives its unconscious aspect. To control, to decide, to be powerful—these are easily superior roles that the tagasalo would not readily admit precisely because it appears incompatible with the concept of caring and sacrifice.

At the very least, it is felt that this possible explanation for the tagasalo's unconscious element is significant in its elaboration of Carandang's theory.

The issue then becomes one concerning application. How can the tagasalo be helped in order that he or she finds the role more acceptable and more manageable. And how can the indiscriminate aspect of tagasalo now be prevented so that the tagasalo does not become compulsive and burn out as a result?

This has implications for both the Filipino family and psychologists. Somewhere in the family system, some caring and responsible individual takes on the family's concerns; that is, someone takes on the role of tagasalo. It becomes a cycle of convenience for the family. That the role becomes indiscriminate and overextended is not only the responsibility of the tagasalo, but of the family as well. Therefore, family members must be made aware of the tagasalo's limitations and set limits on the degree towards which they unload their burdens on a single family member.

Psychologists must be made aware of these dynamics themselves. Therapy of the compulsive tagasalo has traditionally involved making the individual realize that he or she has a choice, presumably because the individual is unaware of this. But, as has been shown, there is more to the tagasalo's unconscious aspect. There must be added awareness of one's need for control and the harnessing of this need for positive outcomes ought to be worked through in therapy as well.

Perhaps the tagasalo can now be made to understand that it is within his or her power to choose not to be a tagasalo in everything or to everyone. The tagasalo can now view the role in its more positive aspects, as one of privilege. But the tagasalo must be made to understand as well that all roles have inherent responsibilities. It is within the tagasalo's capability to control oneself so that one does not become an intellectual monster—powerful, but detached. On the basis of their need for more self-control, it appears that they are taking steps in that direction.

This study began with the premise that the tagasalo personality is seen in a negative light because it can become indiscriminate and compulsive. Now the study has shown that this does not have to be the case. It is within the individual's own capacity to choose to be simply caring or to care too much, knowing that he or she does not suffer from being unloved.

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