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The Philippine educational system was and remains one of the legacies of colonialism in the country. It was initially introduced under Spanish colonization (which lasted from 1571 to 1898), and widely disseminated in the 1900s under American colonization (from 1898 to 1946), with the so-called modern educational system (Agoncillo, 1990; Constantino, 1971). Among the colonially implanted knowledge fields was psychology, European and American in influence, until pioneers of indigenization started in the 1960s to critique and challenge academic colonialism and proposed alternatives based on indigenous Filipino experiences, concepts, languages, and orientation.

There are three major indigenization movements that fermented in the main campus of University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, namely Sikolohiyang Pilipino ( Filipino Psychology) – founded by Virgilio Enriquez, Pilipinolohiya ( Filipinology) – founded by Prospero Covar, and Pantayong Pananaw ( which in Filipino literally means point-of-view from us and for us), founded by Zeus Salazar, a perspective that distinguished kami (Filipino term for exclusive “ us”, and thus, history by and for foreigners) from tayo (Filipino term which means inclusive “ us”, and thus, history written by and for Filipinos) (Covar, 1995, pp. ix-x). These three projects held in common the two-pronged objective of decolonizationindigenization, and they cross-fertilized each other.

Sikolohiyang Pilipino ( Filipino Psychology ) can be defined as the psychology rooted on the experience, ideas, and cultural orientation of the Filipinos. It is regulated by the National Organization of Filipino Psychology (Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino) which is established in 1975 by Virgilio Enriquez, regarded by many as the Father of Filipino Psychology. It is usually thought of as a branch of Asian psychology, the placement, determined primarily on culture. However, there is an ongoing debate on the make-up of Philippine culture, because this will generally determine whether Philippine Psychology is to be placed under the realms of either Asian psychology or Western psychology. From the beginning of the periods when the Philippines was colonized by Spain, and then the USA, academic psychology, or the psychology taught in schools, was predominantly Western in theory and in methodology.

Many Filipino intellectuals, notably the two Philippine heroes Jose Rizal and Apolinario Mabini, expressed dissatisfaction at the pejorative interpretations of Filipino behavior by Western observers. This disenchantment continued as Filipinos struggled to assert their national and cultural identity. In the 1960s, many Filipino intellectuals and scholars were already sensitive both to the inadequacy as well as the unfairness of the Western-oriented approaches to psychology. For instance, in the area of personality, the Western approach in research of not being enmeshed and bound by the culture being studied has resulted in a characterization of the Filipino from the ‘‘ judgmental and impressionistic point of view of the colonizers’’. For example, the predisposition to indirectness of Filipino communication was regarded as being dishonest and socially ingratiating and reflecting a deceptive verbal description of reality (Lawless, 1969, cited in Enriquez, 1992) rather than a concern for the feelings of others. (There are many other examples which are discussed further in this article.)

Thus, using American categories and standards, ‘‘ the native Filipino invariably suffers from the comparison in not too subtle attempts to put forward Western behavior patterns as models for the Filipino (Enriquez, 1992, p. 57). However, there was no concerted effort in the 1960s to reject and correct the traditional way of teaching and studying psychology. It was in the early 1970s that this was initiated when Virgilio Gaspar Enriquez returned to the Philippines from Northwestern University, USA with a Ph. D. in Social Psychology and lost no time in introducing the concept of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology). Together with then-chairman of the Department of Psychology at the University of the Philippines (U. P.), Dr. Alfredo V. Lagmay, Enriquez embarked on a research into the historical and cultural roots of Philippine Psychology.

Subsequently, the research included identifying indigenous concepts and approaches in Philippine psychology and developing creativity and inventiveness among Filipinos. From these researches, a two-volume bibliography on Filipino psychology and a locally developed personality test, Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao (Measure of Character and Personality), were produced. In 1975, Enriquez chaired the Unang Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino (First National Conference on Filipino Psychology) which was held at the Abelardo Auditorium at U. P. In this conference, the ideas, concepts, and formulations of Sikolohiyang Pilipino were formally articulated.

There are four traditions upon which psychology is rooted that is being identified by Zeus Salazar, a historian. Those are the (a) Academic Scientific Psychology or Akademiko-siyentipikal na Sikolohiya, a Western Tradition which follows the tradition of Wilhelm Wundt in 1876 and is essentially the American-oriented Western psychology being studied in the Philippines; (b) Academic Philosophic Psychology or Akademiko-pilosopiya na Sikolohiya, a Western Tradition which was started by priest-professors at the University of Santo Tomas. This tradition is mainly focused on what is called ‘ Rational psychology’; (c) Ethnic Psychology or Taal na Sikolohiya which is the tradition on which Philippine psychology is primarily based. This refers to the indigenous concepts that are studied using indigenous psychological orientation and methodologies;

(d) Psycho-medical Religious Psychology or Sikolohiyang Siko-medikal: The tradition that fuses native healing techniques and explains it in an indigenous religious context. Filipino Psychology has constructed a core, Kapwa which means “ togetherness”. This refers to community or not doing things alone. It has two categories, namely “ Ibang Tao”(other people) and “ Hindi- Ibang Tao”(not other people) . Ibang tao ( refers to the outsiders) has five domains namely Pakikitungo (civility), Pakikisalamuha( act of mixing), Pakikilahok(act of joining), Pakikibagay( conformity), and Pakikisama( being united with the group). Hindi- Ibang Tao (also known as “ one-of-us”) has three domains namely Pakikipagpalagayang- loob( act of mutual trust), Pakikisangkot( act of joining with others), and Pakikipagkaisa( being one with others).