
Psychoanalytic Social Theory, A Reflection Of The Filipino Personality

Understanding oneself is truly an important thing to know in order for us to guide ourselves in our everyday lives. In understanding the self, psychodynamic theories play an important role to help and explain different personalities, characteristics, behaviors, feelings, and relationships through various forces. Psychodynamic theory originated from the work of the famous Sigmund Freud called psychoanalysis, which is a type of psychotherapy that attempts to explore a patient's unconscious thoughts and emotions to be able to fully understand himself/herself. From this, it branched to several more theories which then explored the individual on a different perspective. Different psychological thinkers then contributed in the development of this theory which resulted to a more diverse view of the individual. From psychoanalysis, it now includes new works and approaches such as individual psychology, analytical psychology, object relations theory, psychoanalytic social theory, humanistic psychoanalysis, interpersonal theory, et cetera. Among these psychodynamic theories, this paper will only focus on psychoanalytic social theory and how it reflects the Filipino personality or "pagkataong Pilipino."

Psychoanalytic social theory of Karen Horney is based on the assumption that social and cultural influences, highlighting childhood experiences, are primarily responsible for shaping an individual's personality (Feist, J., & Feist, G. J., 2009). She emphasized that cultural influences are the primary bases for both neurotic and normal personality development. In this theory, Horney contradicted Freud's idea that pleasure is the principle that guides an individual, so, she identified two guiding principles instead – safety and satisfaction.

In today's modern time, since the world is continuously evolving and developing, we cannot deny the fact that even individuals' personalities and behaviors are also constantly changing. We shift from one to another as we base these in our surroundings, for our interaction and even for our own survival.

One thing about our culture as Filipinos is that we are a very collectivistic culture. This means that we put high importance on the needs and goals of the group more than the individual's needs and desires (Cherry, K., 2019). We give focus on the betterment of everyone and not just as individual human beings. Because of this, the interconnection and relationship established between the members of the group play an important part in the development and evolution of our personalities and identities. Since we have this collectivist culture, we also share common values and virtues towards individuals. We are focused on promoting selflessness and prioritizing the essentials of the community, we prefer to work as a group rather than as individuals, we put more highlight on the goals of the group over the individuals' (Cherry, K., 2019).

In the Filipino setting, one can say that this psychodynamic theory reflects our current society, our Filipino personality most commonly known as "pagkataong Pilipino." There are a lot of different social and cultural factors, arising from the childhood up until today, that affect our personalities. Most of these influences start from our family, our first and primary social group. We, Filipinos, value our family to the extent that we keep an intact connection through generations to generations. We make sure to spend time with each other, no matter what the

activity is – religious, recreation, or anything random. Family is the main contributor to the development and establishment of our personalities. For example, in our own homes is where we are first taught of the virtues and values that we must apply in our lives, and as we grow older, we continue to interact with them, thus, acquiring more of these. We then apply this to others through “pakikipag-kapwa,” where we share our selves to others whom we consider as “kapwa” (Reyes, J., 2015).

Through our constant and continuous interaction with our social group, we also adapt their ways and make them part of our own. Another example is the Filipino time, where we tend going late to a party, event, or any gathering compared to the actual time given. This is due to the freedom given to us by our social and cultural influences. With these given freedom, we tend to maximize its capacity. If this practice is being enacted repeatedly by the people around us, as a result, we tend to just comply and then adapt this behavior eventually.

On the other hand however, even if culture plays a big part in the development of our personality, it also gives rise to competition as it becomes modern over time. This is evident most especially in urban areas where people are more exposed to different foreign values, virtues, and even just languages. This dependence of the Filipinos on a borrowed language, English per se, it became dependent, too, on foreign theories and methods underlying the borrowed language, thus, resulting in a borrowed consciousness (Marcelino, E. P. 1990). Because of their shared self with others, Filipinos adapt these foreign culture mainly focused on individualism and independence which will then result to the existence of competition among them. As a result, they now give more value to themselves as individuals and not as part of the group.

This competition can be reflected in the Filipino trait of crab mentality. It's an attitude resembling the behavior of crabs in a bucket: when a crab tries to climb up, the others try to pull it down. As for the individuals, people tend to pull each other down to clear the way for their own gain, instead of helping each other make their way on the top (Spacey, S. 2015). People who acquire this characteristic focus only on their own goal and benefit, they do not want others to be above their heads so they pull them down for them to be on the same level again. This competition that exist among individuals, brought about by cultural and societal factors, will then give rise to basic hostility, and basic anxiety.

In Horney's theory, she identified 10 neurotic needs that characterize neurotics in their attempts to combat basic anxiety. Some of these neurotic needs can also be reflected in the Filipino personality. For example, the neurotic need for affection and approval. We cannot deny the fact that even ourselves, desire to be liked, to please other people, and meet the expectations of others even if there is no written rule about it. We think that these could give us validation in the things that we do. However, even if we exhibit this personality, we are also extremely sensitive to rejection and criticism. Similar to this need is the neurotic need for social recognition or prestige. We, Filipinos, like to be appreciated by others, so we always give our best shot at everything that we do in order to gain attention and recognition. Reflected also in our personality is the neurotic need for personal achievement as a result of basic insecurity. There is nothing wrong in acquiring achievements, however, some of us are so obsessed with them to the point that the goal is always to be on top no matter what the circumstances are. The reason some Filipinos exhibit this personality is because they are afraid of failure and feel a constant need to accomplish more than others.

Filipino personality or pagkataong Pilipino truly is a big puzzle composed of different pieces. There may be numerous different pieces that comprise this puzzle, but there is always a big picture that form the obvious part of this. Because of this big picture, we can easily place the remaining pieces into their right places in order to completely form the puzzle. This big picture is the psychoanalytic social theory of Karen Horney, stating that social and cultural influences are primarily responsible for shaping the Filipino personality, pagkataong Pilipino.

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