Assessing the Characteristics of Late Nineteenth Century Manila-Based Business Establishments: A Review of the Contribucion Industrial

Marco Stefan B. LAGMAN\(^1\) and Ma.Simeona M. MARTINEZ\(^1\)

**Abstract:** The nature of Manila’s economy during the nineteenth century has long been described in western accounts of the Philippines and has been the subject of study of modern-day historians. While such works have been sufficient in providing a general understanding and appreciation of Manila’s economy, such as the dominance of the Chinese and Chinese mestizo merchants in specific activities, the types of establishments located along areas within its jurisdiction, the presence of European and American businesses in specific sectors of the economy, the cash crop-oriented nature of Philippine exports and the increasing importation of western commodities and machineries, research that describe and analyze the particular spatial distribution of business establishments in late nineteenth century Manila Province and the characteristics of its owners remain somewhat scant.

This historico-geographic research seeks to contribute in addressing this gap by producing a database from license permits bundles in the Philippine National Archives called the Contribucion Industrial that would indicate the location and classification of these businesses, the probable ethnicity and gender of its owners, and the monetary value of these permits. By combining this database with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools, this paper aims to provide a more spatial and nuanced understanding of the distribution and nature of commercial activities in Manila near the end of the nineteenth century through information that: a) describe district-level frequency of specific activities, b) show the diversity of business types in specific portions of Manila Province, c) indicate possible dominance of specific ethnicities in particular places and types of activities, and d) demonstrate the significant presence of women in certain types of economic activities.

**Keywords:** Geographic Information Systems, historical geography, urban geography, Contribucion Industrial, nineteenth century Manila, business ownership

---

1 University of the Philippines-Diliman
1. Introduction

The Philippine economy during the nineteenth century has been the subject of research of a good number of historians, and such studies have led to several general observations that have become part of standard facts learned by history students at the tertiary level in the Philippines. Works by Filipino economic historians such as Legarda (1999) and Corpuz (1997) explain how the opening of the Philippines to international trade in the first decades of the 1800s resulted in significant changes in the economy. These include rapid economic expansion, a shift from a subsistence-based economy to one that was centered on the export of a few agricultural crops (i.e., abaca, sugar and coffee) and an increasing dependence on imports to support basic necessities such as rice and textiles, and the seeming failure of both the public and private sectors to develop local industries outside the manufacture of tobacco products.

Much of the studies on the Philippine economy and its participants during 1800s would inevitably give much attention to Manila and its surrounding areas which, then and now, is the political, sociocultural and economic focal point of the country. An example of this is the landmark work of Wickberg (1965), *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, where he not only explained the widespread participation of the ethnic Chinese in the various sectors of the Philippine economy but also provided information that identified and located the activities that the Chinese were involved in, particularly in Manila, its districts and nearby towns.

Given the primacy of Manila in various aspects of Philippine culture and society, it is but natural that western accounts of Spain’s colonial outpost in Asia also took note of particular features of economic activities and industries that were located in the said region. Works of Mallat (2012), Bowring (1963), MacMicking (1967), Foreman (1980) as well as that of Le Roy (1968), among others, provide details of economic activities that the Chinese, Chinese mestizos, Europeans, locals and women were involved in and at times even indicate places or streets where their establishments or stalls can be found. While these descriptions lend the possibility that the geography of Manila Province’s businesses and economy can be reconstructed, these portrayals do not allow for detailed information nor are these backed by documentary sources.

It is in this light that the work of De Viana (2001) on the Binondo District of Manila from the 1500s to the 1800s highlights the attractiveness of harnessing both historical reports as well as colonial government records as a means of visually reconstructing a reasonably accurate picture of the economic and cultural landscape of a particular area. In the said work, she effectively utilized traveler’s accounts and government documents during the Spanish period to study, at the street and sub-area levels, the different structures and establishments of Binondo over time.

Much work has yet to be done with respect to actually providing a more detailed picture of commercial activity in Manila during the late 1800s, and there does not seem to be any study that has attempted to map out nineteenth century businesses in the Philippines beyond the district-level. In this regard, a pro forma historical document that could provide information on the type, location and ownership would prove vital in helping address such a gap. Moreover, information from such documents, if recorded as a database and combined with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools, can help researchers gain a more nuanced description and understanding of nineteenth century businesses in Manila.

One type of source found in the Philippine National Archives is the Contribucion Industrial, a tax on businesses assessed by the colonial administration. It provides rich information on the types of commercial activities, its owners, its location in the various towns and districts of Manila Province (See Figure 1) as well as the cost of such a duty. As such, proper utilization of the Contribucion Industrial may prove vital in mapping Manila’s commercial activities in the last years of Spanish colonial administration.

Figure 1. Districts and towns of Manila Province using the present-day boundaries of Metro Manila.

2. Objectives

This paper is an attempt to map out duly-licensed business establishments in the Province of Manila in 1896, the year that marked the beginning of the Philippine Revolution which eventually led to the Filipino people’s independence from Spain in 1898. Using information indicated in four bundles of the Contribucion Industrial of Manila dated 1896 and combining the database that can be produced from it with GIS techniques, the researchers primarily intend to attain a deeper understanding of the type, ownership and distribution of economic activities that existed in Manila at the district and town levels during the...
said period. Through the production of several maps this study specifically seeks to achieve the following:

a) Classify and locate different types of sectoral and subsectoral commercial activities that belong to specific sectors of Manila’s economy;

b) Recognize locational patterns and distributions of specific businesses at varying levels; and

c) Confirm and identify the tendency of particular groups such as women and the Chinese to be involved in specific commercial endeavors.

3. Methods

Building a digital collection of the retrievable data from the Contribucion Industrial required the organization of each individual document into a digital database that would allow for counts and statistical summaries pertaining to the salient features of the tax contributors to be derived. All entries were rendered as a record in a spreadsheet where the following properties were noted:

- (a) Name of the business owner
- (b) Ethnicity
- (c) Gender
- (d) Business establishment or structure number
- (e) Street name, or the name of the street where the establishment is located
- (f) Name of the pueblo or district where the business in question is registered
- (g) Business type
- (h) Cost, or the business permit fee

In order to extend the utility of the said spreadsheet and spatially render each entry on a map, an extensive search using the registered addresses of the business establishments was conducted through online websites. The main intent of such an approach, at the minimum, was to properly locate each establishment at the street level. As many of the old street names might have changed over time, an important aspect of this search was exhausting multiple online sources to gather as much information on the street names registered in the CI, such as the Traveler of Foot journal entries, news articles in online newspapers, blog entries (De Viana 2007, Bautista nd, Dumindin 2006, Martinez 2008), and Google Earth and Google Map (Google Inc. Google Earth Version 7.1.1.1888. 2013). Surprisingly, many of the streets along the districts of the City of Manila have retained their names. The geographic coordinates of these streets were collected through Google Earth, using a single point on the street which is usually the midpoint, or an intersection with another street. Each entry in the spreadsheet for which the location could be retrieved was thereby given a corresponding set of X and Y coordinates.

To further verify the location of the streets, this study utilized the Plano de Manila y sus Arrabales of 1898 (De Gamoneda and Montes 1898) as reference for cross-validating the search “hits” collected from Google Earth and other online sources. The map was fitted into a recent high resolution image in Google Earth through the Image Overlay tool, using the Pasig River as the main control feature for warping. This method also helped in locating the streets whose new names could no longer be identified.

The Plano de Manila y sus Arrabales was georeferenced using control points collected from the output of the Image Overlay procedure in Google Earth. This allowed for the vectorization of the old streets based on a map of which creation matches the period covered in the Contribucion Industrial bundles that were used in this research. Other than initially representing each business establishment as a point in the thematic maps that would ensure that the analysis of data, street-level enumeration of businesses also became feasible.

The classification method employed in generalizing the types of businesses that are common among the entries were based on the raw descriptions of the business establishment that was written for each entry in the Contribucion Industrial. The general types of business are described below:

(A) Sales – includes establishments selling local and imported textiles, footwear, handicrafts, hardware materials, and woodworks;

(B) Food and Beverage – includes paniterias (noodle shops) and carenderias (roadside canteen), wholesale and retail shops selling local and imported food and beverage items, and less common products such as bread and pastries and local delicacies;

(C) Manufacturing – includes products such as cigarette and tobacco, carbonated drinks, construction materials, alcohol, printing press, household items such as soaps or jars and vases, and more specialized production such as that of chocolate, hats, and vehicles

(D) Recreation – consists largely of panguinge (a card game) and billards tables

(E) Others – includes a variety of goods and services such as:
   a. Wheeled transport
   b. Water transport
   c. Services (bookshop, perfume shop, medical and medicinal supplies, butchery, money lending, and other similar jobs)
   d. Warehousing
   e. Trading
   f. Ambulant vendor

4. Spatial concentration of businesses

The research team was able to locate 1,439 businesses whose owners paid the required business tax in 1896. Of these, 727 or 51% of all commercial establishments were concentrated in a very small and contiguous area composed of the then capital of the colony, the walled city of Intramuros (Foreman 1980; Reed 1967), the two adjacent commercial districts of Binondo and Sta. Cruz and the smaller communities of Quiapo and San Nicolas.
For convenience purposes, this region will be called the Binondo-Sta. Cruz-Intramuros-Quiapo-San Nicolas (BSIQS) Cluster (See Figure 2.).

Figure 2. Street-level concentration of business establishments in the BSIQS Cluster.

It should be noted that available literature commonly describe two out of the five aforementioned districts as sites where commercial activity was conducted. Binondo was commonly identified as a bustling commercial area (Reed 1967) so much that it has also been described as "the most important and opulent pueblo and real commercial capital of the Philippines" and "center of national and foreign commerce" (De Viana 2001, 48). The district of Sta. Cruz is likewise mentioned in historical accounts as a place where merchants resided (Bowring 1963) in well-built houses (Agoncillo 1990) and where the city's "gold and silverworks quarter" was located (Reed 1967, 264). As opposed to these descriptions of Binondo and Sta. Cruz as places filled with vibrancy, adjectives such as "sober" and "gloomy" have been employed to depict Intramuros (De Viana 2001, 48). Yet the business tax information gathered from the Contribucion Industrial bundles indicate that high levels of commerce in the Ciudad de Manila can also be observed in the country's capital. It could even be argued that, by numbers alone, the geographic cluster formed by these three communities, along with the adjacent areas of Quiapo and San Nicolas, may have well been the economic center of the Manila Province.

Hartshorn (1992, 137) describes cities as "service centers," providers of goods and services to a larger region, and an area that facilitates the exchange of ideas and commodities. A more nuanced review of the businesses within the BSIQS demonstrates that the said agglomeration is indeed a central area for services. As can be observed in Figure 3, inclusive of businesses associated with food and legalized gambling, 54% of all companies and proprietorships within the BSIQS are involved in the selling of some form of good or service. If these two aforementioned sectors would be classified along with sales activities, the nearly seven out of every 10 establishments in the cluster in 1896 provided services that had varying ranges and thresholds.

Figure 3. Percentage share of businesses by type per district/ town/ cluster.

5. Variety of establishments as a measure of centrality

The centrality of a particular settlement can also be ascertained by either determining the quantity and variety of high or low order goods within it (Short 1996) or using a particular service as a proxy indicator of an area's central importance (Hartshorn 1992). When compared to other districts of Manila as well as with the surrounding towns of what was then Provincia de Manila, the BSIQS is again head and shoulders above other settlements in terms of the variety of services it provides. The Binondo district has the most number of business types at 41, followed by Intramuros which had 37 establishments. Sta. Cruz, on the other hand, had 33 kinds of commercial proprietorships and companies. Only the district of Dilao, which lies along the periphery of Manila, reflected a comparable variety as it has at least 28 different types of businesses. Other settlements that are part of Manila's suburbs such as Sampaloc and Pandacan each have only 13 different types of commercial activities. The heterogeneity of businesses continue to decrease as one observes the pueblos that are farther.
from Manila. With the exception of Tambobong (11), the towns of Pineda (6), San Felipe Nery (6), Marikina (6), Caloocan (4), San Pedro de Makati (2) and Navotas (2) have less than 10 types of licensed enterprises (See Figure 4.).

**Figure 4.** Variety of businesses per district/town/cluster.

Corpuz (1997) noted that, as late as 1902, certain industrial activities in the Philippines can only be found in particular settlements. Businesses that were involved in the manufacture or marketing of umbrellas, pianos, saddles, chocolates, smith works, presses and printers as well as furniture shops seemed to be only found in a few provinces. If the uniqueness of a business is employed as a crude indicator of centrality, then select places in Manila Province can be considered as central places. For instance, with respect to temporary accommodations for visitors or students, only Binondo, Sta. Cruz and Intramuros have a few guest or boarding houses. Establishments that sell or store products wholesale are likewise considered central places (Hartshorn 1992), and close inspection of the data gathered shows that Sta. Cruz is one of the few districts that has such establishments.

The distribution of food stalls and shops further demonstrates the importance of Binondo, Sta. Cruz and Intramuros as the country’s main centers of commercial activity. If a person visiting Manila would like to eat out at a restaurant, pastry shop, cafe or a canteen, he could only find a good number of options in Intramuros and Binondo. If one wanted to purchase carbonated drinks or **bebidas gaseosas**, one had to pass by two streets located in Binondo. Artisanal products such as those churned out by chocolate-makers in Manila can only be purchased in both Intramuros and Binondo, while the more common bakery goods were more accessible as bakeries were distributed in areas outside of Manila such as Marikina, Paranaque, Pandacan and Pasig. On the other hand, dairy products, commodities that were supposedly supplied in Manila by people from Tondo (Bowring 1963), were both sold in two streets along Intramuros.

6. **Distribution of sectoral and sub-sectoral activities: Sales, food, manufacturing and recreation**

6.1 **Sales**

In his description of Philippine life in urban and rural landscapes during the early 1900s, Le Roy (1968) mentioned that only Manila, presumably Intramuros and its surrounding districts, were the only places wherein some form of urban living was possible. From the point of view of urban studies and planning, cities or urbanized areas are based on economies whose activities and jobs were divorced from the production and extraction of products from water and land resources (Serote 2009). While business tax information from the **Contribucion Industrial** reflect the existence of urban-based activities in Manila Province during the 1890s, it is clear that majority of Manila-based enterprises were involved in tertiary sector activities such as the provision of personal services and the sale of commodities (See Figure 3.).

Enterprises in Manila City’s three main settlements of the BSIQS cluster – Binondo, Sta. Cruz and Intramuros - were predominantly part of the sales subsector with shares ranging from 51-60% of the total commercial establishments in these districts. While their percentage shares are much lower, the districts of Pandacan (46%) and Dilao (32%) had a significant number of enterprises which sold commodities (See Figure 3.).

Sales-related businesses in Manila Province’s other towns had proportionally less proprietorships and companies that were into sales, with only three towns proving to be exceptions to this trend. Two of these are Navotas (94%) and Tambobong (83%), communities north of Manila where almost all tax-paying commercial establishments are **tiendas de sari-sari**, or small neighborhood retail stores. The other notable exception is Pasig, a settlement east of Manila’s commercial center wherein roughly half (52%) of all its fixed and mobile businesses sold some kind of commodity to the public (See Figures 3 and 5.).

6.2 **Food establishments**

Urban areas are generally places where prepared or processed food items are readily sold. Foreigners who visited Manila in the 1800s and early 20th century recount how ambulant vendors (Reed 1967) and eating places such as noodle houses operated by the Chinese called **panciterias** (Mallat 2012) were some of the people and establishments that offered different types of food and drink to Manila’s inhabitants. However, the archival documents that were studied provided few food businesses as they commonly account for less than 5% of all activities in the settlements that were studied. When these types of businesses were identified, most were located along the BSIQS (See Figure 3.). This is especially true for Intramuros
where 14% or 22 establishments that provided a variety of food services such as noodle houses, ambulant vendors selling alcoholic beverages, canteens, a shop that sold fruits, restaurants and a coffee and pastry shop (See Figures 3 and 6.).

6.3 Manufacturing

It has been argued by Foreman (1980) that the Philippine economy was primarily based on the export of agriculture-based raw materials. Thus, the share of manufacturing and industrial activities, save for the processing of cigars, made up a very small part of the country's commerce. The data indicates there are only 25 types of manufacturing enterprises that were distributed in 8 Manila-based districts and 4 pueblos of Manila Province. The Tondo district was the only settlement of Manila with a significant proportion of its enterprises (37%) falling under the manufacturing sector (See Figure 7.). With respect to the towns of Manila Province, only San Pedro de Makati (86%) and San Felipe Nery (63%) have factories making up a clear majority of its businesses (See Figures 3 and 7).

Both artisans and factories that did produce goods in Manila and its surrounding towns were said to have catered mainly to the needs of the said area's inhabitants (Foreman 1980). While the manufacture of tobacco and cigarettes were scattered in the Manila districts of Binondo, Sta. Cruz, Dilao and Tondo as well as the capital of Intramuros, only the pueblo of Pasig produced tobacco-based commodities in the Province of Manila (see Figure 8).
6.4 Gambling and recreation

Much has been written and recounted about the Filipino’s penchant for gambling, which was considered a cultural practice in the country long before the arrival of the Spaniards (Bankoff 1991). It was even described as a societal condition that had reached plague-like proportions by the 1800s (Bowring 1963). Given the great interest in games of chance among the colony's inhabitants, the authorities made it a policy to legalize certain games (Bankoff 1991). With respect to the data gathered from the Contribucion Industrial bundles, tables used for the card game *panguingue* and billiards were issued permits to would be operators. The number of tables issued licenses for *panguingue* was quite numerous that more than one out of every 10 documented business tax transactions in the bundles that were reviewed involved the payment of taxes for the privilege of operating a *panguingue* table. In terms of sheer numbers, a significant number of *panguingue* and billiards tables that were issued licenses were located in the BSIQS region, but such businesses accounted for less than 8% of all recorded legal enterprises in the said economic region.

A closer inspection of Figure 3 indicates that the share of legal gambling to the total number of business taxes issued within a particular settlement tends to be much greater when the said pueblo or district is farther away from the BSIQS. This is more apparent for those communities to the east of the said cluster. Such is the case for San Pedro de Makati (14%), San Felipe Nery (19%), and Pasig (12%). Of all the Provincia de Manila settlements, the pueblo of Marikina seems to be an extreme case as 64% of all its documented enterprises involved the playing games of chance for recreational purposes. It should also be emphasized that of all business categories that have become the focus of this paper, the recreational sector has the widest geographic distribution. While *panguingue* and billiards businesses are still concentrated in the BSIQS region, a significant number of registered recreational establishments were also identified up to the northwestern, southern and eastern fringes of Manila Province (See Figures 3 and 9.).

7. Service specialization in particular localities in Manila Province.

It is a common notion that certain communities or places may exhibit a tendency over time to specialize in the production or provision of a particular commodity or service. During the 1800s, particular places in the Province of Manila was said to be known for certain goods and activities. Escolta Street along Binondo was known as the main commercial district (Wickberg 1965) where the “finest American and European shops are to be found” (Foreman 1980, 347). On the other hand, Rosario Street in the same district was known as a place where textiles (Reed 1967) and other products that catered to the needs and wants of the common people were sold (De Viana 2001).

At the district and town level, Sta. Cruz was touted as a gold and silverworks area (Reed 1967), while Tondo was said to be Manila’s main source of dairy products (Bowring 1963) and
where cigarettes and woven goods were produced (Reed 1967). The Malate area, which is along the southern fringe of Ciudad de Manila, was popular for its sinamay textiles, while the whole city itself had businesses that produced coaches that served as alternatives to those imported from Europe, Hong Kong and Singapore (Corpuz 1997; Mallat 2012). Finally, two towns of Manila Province - Pasig and Marikina - were said to be good sources of rough pottery and leather shoes, respectively (Foreman 1980).

The business tax data gathered demonstrates that, in addition to verifying place-based specializations that were noted in nineteenth century and early twentieth century reports, a thorough investigation of archival data serves to provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of what Manila's districts and nearby pueblos actually produced or marketed. In the case of Binondo, while it is commonly described as a host to a variety of business activities (De Viana 2001), the archival material that was analyzed indicates the area’s role as the center of the imported and local textile trade. Such establishments made up 32% of all tax-paying proprietorships and companies in the said area. Rather than only being known as a place with artisanal shops that produced gold and silver works (Foreman 1980), Sta. Cruz may well have been the center of the trading and selling of a more basic commodity - cordwood. Clay-based products were indeed produced in the towns of Manila Province, but instead of Pasig (Foreman 1980), the towns of San Pedro de Makati, San Felipe Nery and Pandacan (now a part of modern-day Manila) were the sites of factories that produced clay tiles, bricks and vases. Moreover, there were indeed weaving shops in the Province of Manila, with a few of these located in Caloocan pueblo, but not a single weaving establishment found in the reviewed Contribucion Industrial bundles was located in Manila’s Tondo district (Reed 1967).

Places of high activity would naturally attract a significant number of people and goods. As such, urban living depend greatly on transport services, which in 19th century cities came in the form of horse-drawn carriages (Hartshorn 1992). Mallat (2012) reported the common use of horse-drawn vehicles in his account of Manila, while Foreman (1980) described the high number of carriages that regularly clogged city roads. Le Roy (1968) likewise mentioned the existence of such vehicles-for-hire services in Manila. These descriptions, in turn, lend support to a contention by a fellow western visitor who took note of the great demand for horses in Manila (Bowring 1963) and the fact that it was indeed a center of carriage-construction in the 1800s (Corpuz 1997). While a good number of carriages for rent were located in Binondo, it is interesting to note that two districts that are adjacent to Manila's commercial cluster, Tondo, north of the BSIQS, and Sampaloc, were the settlements whose businessespeople specialized in the wheeled transportation business (See Figure 10.). While the seeming development of these two districts as sources of transportation services cannot be fully explained, it would not be difficult to imagine that the demand for trips to and from its neighboring commercial hubs may have induced the former's residents to develop a transport sector.

The significance of transport vehicles, save for the town of Caloocan, seem to be limited to the City of Manila. One possible reason for this is that transportation services were only feasible in a place of high demand such as Manila's more urbanized areas. Another factor would be the marked demand of the elite for faster and more comfortable transportation, and the carriages and wagons mentioned in historical accounts primarily catered to the needs of the rich (Corpuz 1997) who incidentally resided within and around the city’s commercial hub. On the other hand, the common people who resided farther from the central business district would usually walk towards their destinations (Bowring 1963). Furthermore, it has also been mentioned by Reed (1967) that wheeled transports could only navigate areas that had roads, which may somewhat explain the concentration of carriages (carruajes) and carts in a few portions of the city.

Figure 10. Distribution of water- and wheel-based transport.

8. Distribution of Chinese enterprises

The Chinese have been cited as being responsible for physically creating Manila (Reed 1967), and they have been the main contributors to its commercial life long before the arrival of the Spanish (Wickberg 1965). Since the Chinese primarily arrived in Manila for economic reasons, it is but natural that they locate themselves only in places that had a demand for their goods or services.

After most of them were expelled from the country after the British Occupation of Manila ended in 1764, the Spanish government changed its policy and began encouraging the Chinese to come back, even allowing them to go in any part of
the country and engage in any profession. Naturally, the predominantly Chinese males who migrated to the Philippines stayed in Manila. By 1894, a few years removed from the Philippine Revolution, nearly half of all the Chinese who moved to the country resided in Manila and its suburbs (Wickberg 1965). Four years later, in 1898, 60% of Binondo residents were said to have been Chinese (Chu 2012).

Of the 1,439 businesses that were identified, only roughly 30% were clearly owned and operated by a Chinese national, all of whom were male. The data on the business taxes that were studied do not usually identify the payee's ethnicity. For this study, a person was considered of Chinese ethnicity if the individual's name: a) is clearly Chinese (e.g. Dy Yaolan), b) indicates a Hispanized first name but a last name that is associated with conventional Chinese surnames (e.g. Jose Toco), and, in rare cases, 3) is Hispanized but the signature used by the said individual employed Chinese characters. Most individuals who were designated as being ethnic Chinese fell under the first aforementioned category.

The data that was collected for this study can only allow the researchers to determine the likely share of pure ethnic Chinese individuals. It cannot, however, account for the participation of Chinese mestizos who were known to drop their Chinese-sounding surnames for Hispanized ones or for having last names that combine different Chinese names (e.g. Ongengco) (Wickberg 1965). As such, those individuals, apart from corporations or companies, who cannot be classified as Chinese, are lumped together, irrespective of ethnicity as non-Chinese despite the fact that many Chinese immigrants married into the local population and settlements like Tambobong (Malabon), Pasig and Sta. Cruz were said to be Chinese mestizo towns in the late 1800s.

As reflected in Figure 11, save for Tambobong (65%) and Navotas (92%) where the number of Chinese owned businesses was clearly superior compared to the share of non-Chinese owned establishments, majority of the towns of Manila province had more non-Chinese owned enterprises. Of the eleven Provincia de Manila towns, only Marikina (36%), Pasig (35%) and Pandacan (30%) were areas wherein at least two-fifths of all their registered businesses were in the hands of the Chinese. It should be noted that of these places, Pasig was considered as a Chinese-mestizo pueblo, a category that Wickberg (1965) also assigned to Malabon and Sta. Cruz.

For the City of Manila, particularly in the BSIQS group, nearly half of all businesses were owned by male Chinese migrants, wherein 65% of Sta. Cruz businesses were Chinese-controlled and nearly half (49%) of Intramuros-based commercial establishments were under the names of Chinese males. On the other hand, Binondo, which until the present is considered by Filipinos as a predominantly Chinese area, only a third of businesses were under the names of Chinese individuals.

The researchers believe that the seeming low percentage share of the Chinese does not in any way debunk or diminish the contentions of Wickberg (1965), Reed (1967), and De Viana (2001), among others, that the said ethnic group had much control over Philippine commerce during the 1800s. For one, it is very much possible that certain names that the researchers encountered may in fact have been Chinese persons, and the only way to confirm this would be to cross check such names with voluminous documents on specific Chinese individuals who were recorded to have officially moved into the country during the late Spanish period. The Contribucion Industrial is also by no means the only source of information regarding individual businesses in the Philippines and the ethnicity of the people who owned them. Lastly, even if they are treated as a “special kind of Filipino”, the half-Chinese businessmen and women who may be part of the list of non-Chinese could definitely have been considered as Chinese as it can be argued that their commercial business sense is predominantly the result of the influence of the Chinese forefathers as they, like their Chinese counterparts, have been described as also having the tendency to migrate to areas with economic opportunities (Wickberg 1965).

The influence of the Chinese on Philippine business life remains unquestioned, but it would be advisable that future researchers revisit Contribucion Industrial and other archival documents that may provide a more nuanced picture of the extent of both Chinese and Chinese-mestizo business presence in the nineteenth century Philippines.

9. Women in business

Women in the Philippines have traditionally enjoyed a status that is more or less similar to that of men. Although their
standing in society was affected by the restrictions imposed by the secular and religious institutions brought about by Spanish colonization, the female members of Philippine society continued to be an “active and enterprising” player in the country’s social and economic life (Camagay 1995, 119).

Even foreigners who visited the Philippines in the 1800s have held Filipino women in high regard. This is especially evident in their observations of their enterprising nature and acumen in business. Foreman (1980, 173) described them as being "more clever and discerning than the other sex, over whom they exercise great influence", while Le Roy (1968, 27) remarked that both women form the high and lower socioeconomic strata "possessed...more character, and often too, of more enterprise, than the men."

Despite these glowing descriptions of the ability of women to engage in commerce, the percentage share of female-owned enterprises in the districts or towns that are part of this study did not exceed 36% as can be observed in Figure 12. In the City of Manila, Sampaloc (36%), Dilao (35%), Binondo (33%) and Tondo (32%) had comparatively significant female presence in business. They also had a significant presence in the brick and tile-producing center of San Pedro de Makati as well as in Pasig, as they operate nearly three out of every 10 businesses in both towns. While there were many female merchants in Binondo, they had very little presence in the nearby commercial centers of Sta. Cruz (5%) and Intramuros (9%) as well as in the districts of Quiapo (14%) and Pandacan (8.7%).

**Figure 12. Distribution and percentage share of male and female-owned businesses in the Province of Manila.**

There seems to be a trend wherein districts and towns with a low Chinese presence tend to have proprietorships that are handled by women, while places where the Chinese are very dominant tends to have an insignificant female presence in business. While it would be difficult to determine if there is a correlation between the share of Chinese and female managed commercial enterprises in an area, such a study can and should be explored in the future.

10. Specializations of women and the Chinese

Practically all businesses that were identified in the study are more likely to be owned by a male merchant. It is only in two types of economic activities, _panguingue_ tables and wheeled transports, wherein the gap between male versus female-owned businesses was not very significant. Mallat (2012) noted that _panguingue_ was a game of chance that women tended to gravitate towards as compared to men. A study of police reports that recorded male and female participation in two card games - _monte_ and _panguingue_ - shows that apprehended parties playing _monte_ were usually men, while those arrested for playing _panguingue_ in unlicensed tables or engaging such an activity during prohibited hours tend to be females (Lagman 2013). This seeming interest of women in _panguingue_ is also reflected in their share of licenses for its playing tables that were issued by the government in the Province of Manila in 1896 as 47% of all permits were given to women. It should be noted that there is no single business wherein the difference between the number of male and female merchants was that slight.

Next to the operation of _panguingue_ tables, women also tend to be part of the transportation business. For every 10 wheeled transports, four were under the names of females. It should be noted that those who owned such enterprises had to pay annual taxes of only P13.20 and P8, respectively, amounts that are much lower than those imposed on other establishments. As such, females who did business in Manila Province during the period of study were more or less confined to less profitable endeavors as compared to others groups such as the Chinese who seemed to gravitate towards economic activities that were assessed higher taxes by the state probably because there was more profit from them.

The Chinese were said to have controlled the Philippines' retail trade (Wickberg 1965) and the information gathered from the _Contribucion Industrial_ bundles that were studied support such a contention. There were 394 stores that sold goods which were under the names of Chinese men. When compared to their counterparts, Chinese traders were dominant in four types of businesses: _sari-sari_ stores, shops that sold European and cotton textiles, establishments that marketed shoes and proprietorships that had cordwood as one of its commodities on sale. For instance 89% of all small general merchandise stores were Chinese-owned. These were the same type of stores that provided for the everyday needs of the lower classes in urban areas and were said to have served as the initial enterprise that the Chinese used to penetrate the economies of communities (Wickberg 1965). With respect to textile shops, only two out of the 60 such registered businesses were owned by non-Chinese.

Chinese migrants also had under their names nearly all
cordwood stores (97%) and shoe establishments (83%).

11. Observations

The 1439 business tax entries of Manila Province's Contribucion Industrial yield insights on the nature of commercial establishments in the said region. The predominance and concentration of varied types of wholesale and retail trade in the communities of Binondo, Sta. Cruz, Intramuros, Quiapo and San Nicolas demonstrate that the said cluster was indeed the business center of Manila and its surrounding areas and, perhaps, even that of the whole country. These documentary evidences also lend support to the accounts made by Western observers, while providing a fresh view with respect to the economic characteristics and commodity specializations of Manila Province's districts and towns. Intramuros, in terms of commercial activity, may not have been as lifeless as it has been described in nineteenth century descriptions. While there is no denying that many luxury goods could be had in Sta. Cruz, it also provided the most basic of needs such as cordwood. Sampaloc and Dilao, districts near the BSIQS cluster served as the centers of horse-drawn transportation, while the towns of San Pedro de Makati, San Felipe Nery and Pandacan specialized in the manufacture of clay based construction materials.

Given the limited personal information that the Contribucion Industrial provided, the Chinese who owned businesses in Manila Province had a surprisingly low share of the total number of establishments in the region. This, however, does not take into account Chinese who have already taken Hispanic names. It also should be pointed out that there is a high possibility that many of the individuals who were classified as non-Chinese may have been Chinese mestizos, who, although were classified by the Spanish authorities as Filipinos, owe much of their business acumen to their Chinese ancestors (Wickberg 1965).

References
Primary source
Contribucion Industrial de Manila, SDS -15399 to 15403. The Philippine National Archives, Manila.

Secondary sources
Agoncillo, Teodoro. 1900. “Ancestral City,” in Cordero-Fernando, Gilda (ed.), Turn of the Century, Quezon City: GCF Books, pp. 49-63
De Gamoneda, Francisco J. and Montes, Ramon (imp. lit.). 1898. Plano de Manila y sus Arrabales, original scale 1:10,000. Retrieved 15 August 2013 from University of Texas at Austin Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/manila_and_su burbs_1898.jpg
Reed, Robert.1967. Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines: A
Study of the Impact of Church and State, Manila: The University of Manila.

Serote, Ernesto M. 2009. Rationalizing the Local Planning System, Quezon City, Philippines: Department of Interior and Local Government.
