

## CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

### Section 1. Interview of Residents

A total of fifty-six respondents participated in the survey over three consecutive weeks during the month of July 1999. In the following sections, responses are discussed according to the following categories: function, value of places and structures, and symbolic meaning of the town center.

For each category, the first three highest frequencies with a response rate of 28 or more participants, or a frequency response of not lower than 28 are analyzed. Moreover, responses that are lower than 28 in frequency and number of respondents were not analyzed (see Appendix E).

**Table 1. Profile of Respondents**

		Male N=16	Female N=40	Total N=56	Mean
Age	21-40 yrs. old	9 (56%)	16 (40%)	25 (45%)	42.73
	41-60 yrs. old	7 (44%)	22 (55%)	29 (52%)	
	61 yrs. old and above	0	2 (5%)	2 (4%)	
Length of Residence	0-10 yrs.	2 (13%)	0	2 (4%)	NA
	11-20 yrs.	0	3 (8%)	3 (5%)	
	21- 30 yrs.	6% (1)	1 (3%)	2 (4%)	
	30 or more	13 (81%)	36 (90%)	49 (88%)	
Education	Elementary	1 (6%)	6 (15%)	7 (13%)	NA
	High School	9 (56%)	14 (35%)	23 (41%)	
	College	6 (38%)	20 (50%)	26 (46%)	
Profession	Professional	1 (6%)	10 (23%)	11 (20%)	NA
	Businessperson	2 (13%)	15 (39%)	17 (30%)	
	Skilled worker	12 (15%)	2 (5%)	14 (25%)	
	Unskilled worker	1 (6%)	4 (10%)	5 (9%)	
	Housewife	0	9 (23%)	9 (16%)	
Income	less Pp10,000 (\$ 263)	12 (75%)	23 (58%)	35 (63%)	NA
	Pp10,001-20,000 (\$264-526)	4 (25%)	4 (10%)	8 (14%)	
	Pp 20,001-30,000 (\$527-789)	0	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	
	Pp 30,001-40,000 (\$790-1,053)	0	2 (5%)	2 (4%)	
	Greater than Pp 50,000	0	3 (8%)	3 (5%)	
	(\$1,054 or more)	0	0	0	
	No income	0	7 (18%)	7 (13%)	

Table 1 presents the demographics of the respondents. The average age of the respondents is 42.73, with ages ranging from 21-60. The participants' length of residency ranged from 1 to 30 years or more, with eighty-eight percent (n=56) having lived in Biñan for 30 years or more. This indicates that most respondents within a two-mile radius of the town center are long term residents. More female respondents attained the college level than the male participant. Forty-six percent of the total respondents achieved college education. This may indicate that females have more perseverance to achieve tertiary education. Males on the other hand, may be subjected to work earlier and abandon further education as the need arises in a patriarchal society. Thirty percent of the businesspersons were female and the twenty percent were male skilled workers. Perhaps the higher educational attainment of females can explain why female were more business oriented than males. Sixty three percent of the respondents' income level approximates Pp 10,000 (\$263) or less indicating that the majority of the sample belong to the low-income group. According to the family income survey from NEDA, Pp 10,000 or less falls under the low-income group (<http://localweb.neda.gov.ph>).

### 1.1 Function

While the notion of use and diversity of activities in public spaces helps shape and define central places into plazas or squares, only a few studies related to daily life rituals explore function, which facilitates the social morphology in public spaces. By identifying specific uses and types of activities that take place, one can possibly determine the factors that facilitate social grouping in public spaces. The available time and the specific time to do the activity system affects the users' social opportunities in specific places.

Respondents were asked several close-ended and open-ended questions regarding frequency of visits, purposes of visits, amount of time spent on the specific activity, and the type of events they liked. The stated purposes of visits for each place in the town center are identified as the primary activities and other spin-off activities are labeled as associated activities.

**Table 2. Town Center Visits (n=56)**

	Responses	No. of Responses
Visited the Town Center	Yes	56 (100%)
	No	0
Mode of Transportation	Walk	18 (35%)
	Public transportation	17 (33%)
	Drive	13 (25%)
	No answer	5 (2%)
	Walk & public transportation	3 (5%)
Coming from	Home	51 (91%)
	Work	3 (5%)
	Home & work	2 (4%)
Day visited	Everyday	22 (40%)
	Weekdays	17 (30%)
	Weekend	13 (23%)
	Weekend & weekdays	4 (7%)

Table 2 shows that all the respondents (n=56) have visited the town center. The highest frequency of past month visits to the town center is one to seven times per month. “Walking” and taking “public transportation” as the mode transportation comprise the first two highest frequencies of thirty-five and thirty-three percent of the responses. The two highest preferences may indicate that the respondents find it more convenient to either walk or take the public transportation. An overwhelming ninety-one percent come from their homes indicating that the visit to the town center is the main purpose for this journey outside the house. For the highest frequency of visits, forty percent are usually done everyday, demonstrating that the task that requires everyday visits is to buy fresh food in the public market as shown in the purpose of visits to the town center in Table 4.

In Table 3, the responses (n=56) demonstrate the three highest frequencies of places visited at the town center during the past month (ranging from one to seven times per month for each place) are the *parish church*, which accounts for seventy-five percent, the *retail shops* at sixty-six percent, and the *public market* at seventy-seven percent.

**Table 3. Summary of Past Month Visit to the Town Center (n=56)**

Location	Past month visit 1-7x/mo.
	Frequency
Parish Church	42 (75%)
Retail shops	37 (66%)
Public Market	32 (57%)
Municipal Hall	28 (50%)
Basketball Court	12 (21%)
Post Office	7 (13%)
Street Retail	18 (32%)

### 1.1.1 Primary Activities

Table 4 shows the purpose of visit to the public market shows that “*bumibili ng sariwang pagkain at iba pang pangangailangan*” (buying of fresh food and other necessities) at ninety-six percent (n=52).

**Table 4. Summary of Primary Activities and Time Spent on Activity**

Location	Purpose of Visit	Frequency	Time of Day (morning)	Time Spent on Activity	No. of Responses	n
Public Market	Buy fresh food other necessities	96% (50)	71% (50)	1 hr. or more	63% (33)	54
Parish Church	Pray,visit,ask assistance, give thanks	81% (44)	54% (30)	30 min. or less	57% (31)	37
Municipal Hall	Government related obligations	89% (33)	81% (37)	30 min. or less	84% (31)	52
Retail shops	Buy food in general (goods)	71% (29)	34% (14)	30 min. or less	68% (28)	41
Street Retail	Buy necessities (food/goods)	74% (20)	33% (9)	30 min. or less	85% (17)	27
Basketball Court	Watch basketball	21% (7)	NA	NA	NA	34
Post Office	Mail letters	18% (6)	NA	NA	NA	34
Others	Do not visit Post Office & Basketball Court;	79% (27)	NA	NA	NA	34
	Do not buy from Street Vendors	26% (7)	NA	NA	NA	27

This activity was done by seventy-one percent of the respondents in the morning due to the scheduled arrival of fresh meat, fish and vegetables. In addition, the necessity to cook family meals for lunch and dinner for the family, and cooler weather conditions in the morning are the primary reasons for morning shopping.

With regard to the parish church, as the respondents indicated, “*magdasal, humingi ng tulong at pasasalamat*” (pray, ask for assistance or give thanks) is the activity accounting for eighty-one percent (n=54) of the responses. Another eighty-nine percent (n=37) of the respondents stated their purpose of visits to the municipal hall as government related obligations such as “*magbayad ng amilyar ng lupa, income tax at cedula*” (pay property tax, income tax and residence certificate).

The retail shops account for seventy-one percent (n=29) of reasons to visit the town center, buying food/goods in general such as *mga de lata, bigas, gamit sa bahay at gamot* (dry goods, household items and medicine) is the primary activity.

These primary activities were done in the morning at the parish church, public market municipal hall, and retail shops. It took the participants thirty minutes or less to accomplish these activities. Short morning visits to the parish church would usually be done before doing their marketing. At the municipal hall, the likelihood of government employees’ presence, cooler weather conditions, and the respondents’ availability of time were the stated reasons why these tasks were done in the morning. The activities related to religious obligations and consumption of goods for daily use are the most important primary activities.

The low frequencies of visits to the basketball court, post office, and street retail, account for a less than fifty percent from the total sample (n = 29 to 20). This may reflect that the use of these places is not immediate needs of their everyday rituals.

#### 1.1.2 Associated Activities

Table 5 shows that only the parish church and public market facilitate associated activities. Religious related activities such as *nagtitirik ng kandila, humahalik sa santo at bumabati o nakikipagusap sa kakilala* (candle lighting, paying respect to religious images, and acknowledging/talking to friends) at the parish church account for thirty-one percent (n=33) of the responses while “*nagtitingin-tingin; nakikipagusap sa mga kakilala at suki*” (browsing and talking to friends and patrons) at the public market accounts for sixty-five percent (n=17) of the responses.

**Table 5. Summary of Associated Activities**

Location	Associated Activities	No. of Responses	n
Church	Religious related activity	72% (31)	43
Public Market	Browsing, talking to friends	65% (11)	17
Municipal hall	none	76% (25)	43
Street Retail	None	80% (20)	25
Retail shops	None	68% (19)	28
Basketball Court and Post Office	None	88% (15)	15
Others (Municipal Hall)	Community service	3% (1)	33
Others (Parish Church)	Consumption;	2% (1)	43

These results show a more favorable social environment in the parish church and public market. This may reflect a lack of restrictions for different user groups who can experience these places (Jacobs 1993). Both places are containers accommodating any type of social class because they provide the daily basic needs.

The municipal hall, street retail, retail shops, basketball court and post office do not account for any associated activities. These places did not facilitate other spin-off activities, perhaps due to unpleasant social environment, uncomfortable condition of the place, and density of use that are likewise mentioned in the negative association of places (see Table 10). It can also be inferred that the direct intention of their use did not allow for associated activities to occur.

### 1.1.3. Regular and Desired Events at the Town Center

The functions of plazas for social, political and religious events and performances are the town focal points. Respondents were asked about the type of events or performances that they liked. From their responses, the most preferred regular events held at the Biñan town center are religious related events such as *“fiestas, parades, processions and Christmas programs”*; these events account for thirty-nine percent (n=41) as shown in Table 5. Other desired events currently not held in the town center are entertainment shows like *“paputok at toro (fiesta ng intsik), peria, mga bulag na tumutugtog”* (fireworks during Chinese New Year, fairs, performances by the disabled); these events account for forty-four percent (n=32) of the responses. Sixty-three

percent (n=41) of the respondents indicated that they did not dislike any regular events currently held in the town center.

**Table 6. Summary of Regular and Other Desired Events (n=36)**

Events held at the Town Center	Religious related events processions; Christmas or	16 (39%)
Other Desired events held at the Town Center	Entertainment shows Fireworks, beauty contest, dragon dance disabled performers, fairs	21 (44%)

The most preferred entertainment events indicate the influence and assimilation of religion into the way of life of the participants. However, the desired events not currently held at the town center may reveal the need for more entertaining and recreational type events that are non-religious, socially engaging and informal.

#### 1.1.4 Summary of Places and Visits with Children

Table 7 shows the summary of places and visits in the town center respondents take with their children. A total of thirty-six respondents have children between the age of seven to twelve years old. Only forty-two percent (n=15) brought their children to the town center in the past month. They visited the parish church, the public market, and the plaza (basketball court).

**Table 7. Summary of Places and Visits in the Town Center with their Children**

Categories	Responses	No of Responses	n
Children age 7-12 yrs.old	Yes	36 (68%)	53
	No	17(32%)	
Places at Town Center	Do not bring	9 (33%)	27
	TC-church, market,plaza	15 (56%)	
	Other shops outside TC	3 (11%)	
No.of times brought to town center	sometimes	3 (38%)	8
	2x or less	2 (25%)	
	3-4x	2 (25%)	
	5 or more	1 (13%)	
Places outside Town center	Malls/supermarkets outside Biñan	15 (42%)	36
	Malls in Biñan	21 (58%)	

Fifty-eight percent (n=21) of the respondents who did not bring their children to the town center brought them to the malls in Biñan located outside the town center. Concerns about safety

and poor environmental quality due to traffic congestion and lack of sanitation in the public market were the common reasons why children were brought to places outside the town center.

## 1.2 Value of place

Value, defined as the supposed worth, usefulness, or importance of an idea, and place in effect, is the basis for decisions about behavior. Values are also associated with preference motivation and dissatisfaction that can be identified through the constant interaction with the elements of the built environment. Respondents were asked open-ended questions about why each place at the town center was preferred to another, and what places or structures they wanted to retain in the town center. Ranking of the most important structures or places was asked.

**Table 8. Summary of Place Preference**

Location	Reasons for Preference	No. of Responses	n
Church	Accessibility, location, and attachment to place	44 (98%)	45
Public Market	Accessibility, location, convenience	23 (46%)	50
Retail shops	Accessibility; convenience	20 (63%)	32
Street Retail	Accessibility; convenience, cheap goods, and variety of goods	14 (78%)	18

Table 8 shows an overwhelming response of *madaling puntahan, malapit puntahan at nakagawiang o nakasanayan puntahan* (accessibility, proximity of location and attachment to place) at the parish church accounts for its being the most preferred place, ninety-eight percent (n=45). The predominantly Roman Catholic town population, wherein beliefs and religious practices are interwoven into their lifestyle or habits, explains the high value assigned to the parish church. In addition to this, the church is seen as a “place” of attachment and belonging because it serves as a setting for social grouping which abides in a common belief or religious practice.

Similarly, places with the second and third highest frequency of *madaling puntahan, malapit puntahan, madali at maginhawang puntahan* (accessibility, proximity of location and convenience) are at the public market and retail shops, which account for forty-six percent (n=50) and sixty-three percent (n=32) of the responses respectively. This demonstrates the importance of the public market’s location and proximity to the users, because there is a constant



need to buy fresh food for the daily preparation of home cooked meals for the family. Likewise, the adjacent retail shops provide other daily necessities such as dry goods, household products, medicines, and so forth. As Tuan and Rapoport (1977; 1977) asserted, accessibility and proximity of location is essential to the built environment in order to serve its specific functions or use.

**Table 9. Summary of Structures to Retain**

Location	Structures to Retain	No. of Responses	n
Parish Church	Interior parts Icons, statues, religious accessories, church furniture	31 (60%)	52
Rizal Monument	Retain all parts	28 (58%)	48
Municipal Hall	Offices Mayor's and Treasurer's offices (air-conditioned) and Tax office	25 (46%)	54
Public Market	Cheap goods, variety of goods sold	17 (40%)	43
Street Retail	Desires-No vendors	11 (55%)	20
Basketball Court	Desires-Wants plaza open	10 (45%)	22
Retail shops	Drugstore and supermarkets	9 (32%)	28
Post Office	Build new one or transfer to another place	6 (21%)	28

In terms of preferred structured to be retained, Table 9 shows that the first highest preference are the interior parts of the church such as *mga imahen, at mga muebles sa simbahan* (icons, statues, church furniture and other religious accessories); this accounts for sixty percent (n= 52) of the responses. Because of the more personal nature of the visit to the parish church, reverence to religious objects are deemed important. For instance, individual weekday visitations are more common for the respondents to attain the peace and privacy. This preference for “icons, statues, church furniture, and other religious objects’ to the church as a structure, is because the respondents are more in close personal contact to these individual entities.

The second highest frequency of *maiwan lahat* (retain all parts) is at the Rizal monument which accounts for fifty-eight percent (n=48) of the responses. This preference attributes to the aesthetic quality of the monument as compared to the aesthetic condition of the other structures in the town center. In addition to this, the high quality maintenance of the monument implies its importance and symbolic significance to the town.

The third preference for municipal offices such as “the mayor’s, treasurer’s and tax offices” account for forty-six percent (n=54) of the responses. This preference is reflective of how the respondents value its institutional function at a central location.

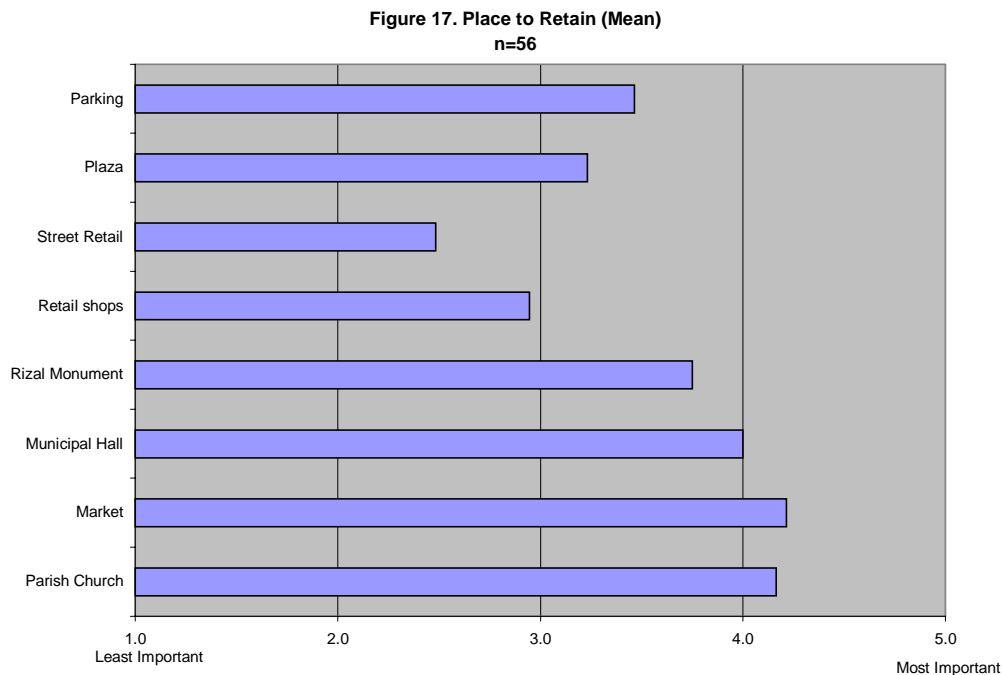


Figure 17 shows the public market (4.2), the parish church (4.1), and the municipal hall (4.0) are the first three most important ranked structures the respondents wanted to retain. This ranking strongly indicates the hierarchy of needs: first is the necessity for food, second is religious obligation, and third is acknowledgement to be governed by an authority.

### 1.3 Symbolic Meaning

Symbolic meanings are meanings associated with an object or a phenomenon, or classes of objects or phenomenon. People, elements, and artifact in the built environment communicate symbolic meaning that stands for, denotes or represents some idea, whether spiritual or laic, that is immaterial or abstract (Lang 1994).

The respondents were asked to articulate what word/s came to mind when looking at the photograph of each place and they were asked to rank a bipolar adjective list describing the characteristics of the town center.

### 1.3.1 Symbolic Associations

Table 10 shows that the highest frequency of *masikip; magulo; madumi; walang kayusan; masikip* (crowded; disorganized; dirty; chaotic; congested). Fifty three percent (n=43) account for the negative associational meanings of the town center. These negative associations with the town center correspond to the high density of street vendors, the disorganized physical structuring of the space, and the poor environmental quality resulting from a lack of sanitation and drainage. The perception of chaos and congestion is explained by an overload of activities within the small space in the town center.

Table 10a shows the first highest frequency of positive words are associated with the parish church: *misa, magdasal, pananampalataya, maganda, naalala ang pagkabata* (mass, pray, faith, holy, religious obligations; beautiful, peace of mind, pleasing, and memory of childhood). These words which specifically describe the parish church, account for seventy-two percent (n=52) of the responses. The positive association with Catholicism as a religious value serves as the guiding principle to lead and achieve a good and meaning life. Religious value also serves as the norm and social influence due to its traditional image and role in education and providing social services. The parish church is also associated with the experience and memory of the place in the respondents' childhood days. Moreover, the readers define 'beautiful' in relation to the aesthetic quality of the structure.

The second highest frequency of negative words *walang disiplina ang mga vendors; mahirap; pangit; walang kaayusan* (vendors had no discipline, ugly, difficult, and no structure and order) that describe the public market. These words account for seventy-one percent (n=52) of the responses. These negative words are perceived associations to political practices.

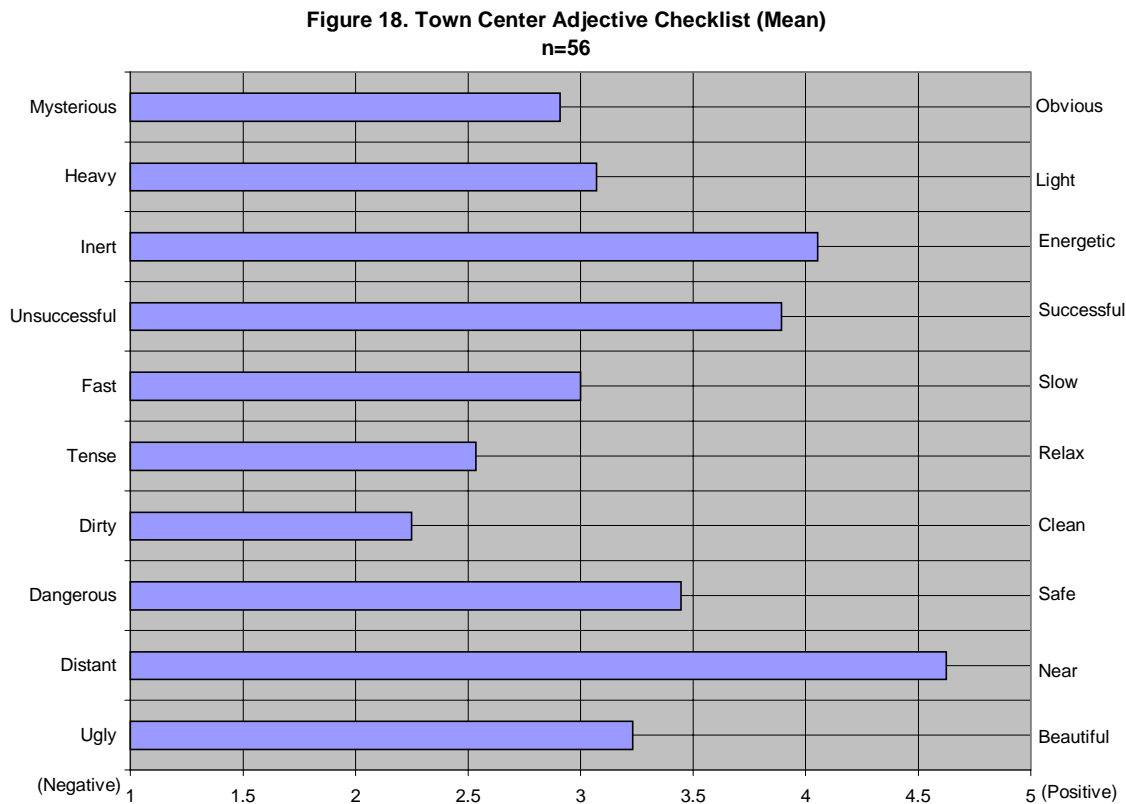
**Table 10. Summary of Symbolic Association**

**(Town Center) n=43**

Location	Town Center
Positive	beautiful; organized; great improvement; clean; center of trade; feeling of lightedness;
No.	13 (31%)
Negative	crowded;disorganized; dirty;chaotic;congested; corrupt officials
Frequency	25 (58%)

**Table 10a. Summary of Symbolic Association for each Place**

Location	Parish Church	Municipal Hall	Public Market	Retail Shops	Street Retail	Rizal Monument	Basketball Court
Positive	attend mass; pray; faith; memory of childhood; beautiful;pleasing ; holy; religious obligation; peace;church structure	Important for the town; beautiful, orderly; center of governance; administrativ e change;	Variety of goods; orderly; people and vendors activity; food; cost; news source; business	Nice; orderly; pleasing; cleanliness;  commercial place; cheaper goods;  hometown; accessible;	Looks pleasing;  urge to buy;  livelihood; sympathy	Rizal's heroism;  history; model;  beautiful; very refreshing; memory of childhood;  Landmark-town or regional	looks better than before; happy/fun place;  entertaining
No of Responses	39 (72%)	19 (53%)	15 (29%)	9 (39%)	7 (35%)	43 (93%)	9 (39%)
Negative	Ugly; dirty;  noisy; no impact;  prostitution;  place to sleep;	Corruption; nepotism; unproductive employees; illegal transactions	Vendors no discipline; corrupt; illegal; dirty, Difficult; ugly;  no structure and order	consumerism;  expensive	Too many vendors; very crowded, dirty; rubbish	Retain nothing; none	Confinement; heavy; dark; waste of space;  dislike/bad impression; dirty; poor ventilation;  congested;  tight; crowded w/ vendors; inappropriate location;
No. of Responses	6(11%)	12 (33%)	37 (71%)	14 (54%)	13 (65%)	3 (7%)	14 (61%)
n	54	36	52	26	20	46	23



Respondents were asked to rank the bipolar adjective characteristics of Biñan town center. The adjectives may also reflect the value and symbolic associations of the town center. Adjectives on the left side are negative and the ones on the right side are positive.

Figure 18 shows the ranking of the bipolar adjective list for the town center. The first highest positive adjective ranking of “near,” accounts for the mean result of 4.6. The bipolar adjective ‘far – near’ are qualities that describes location of the town center. This indicates the positive association to proximity, accessibility, and location of the town center to their place of residence, which is also demonstrated for each place at the town center (see Table 8).

The second highest adjective ranking of “energetic,” accounts for the mean ranking of 4.1. The bipolar adjective ‘inert – energetic’ describes activity. This positive association demonstrates that the activities witnessed at the town center were seen as dynamic and vigorous

due to the different layers of uses, the variety of products, and the turnover of different vendors at certain times of the day.

The third highest adjective ranking of “successful,” accounts for the mean ranking of 3.9. The bipolar adjective ‘unsuccessful – successful’ are qualities that describes activity of the place. The positive association of “successful” is the result of the activities that generate financial returns to the town, entrepreneurs and the adequate provision of the essential needs of the town residents. Moreover, ‘successful’ is perceived due to the 24-hour continuous commercial and trading activities that is frequently mentioned in the interview.

The lowest adjective ranking of “dirty” accounts for the mean ranking of 2.3. This bipolar adjective “dirty – clean” are qualities that describe the environmental quality of the town center. The negative association of the town center is a result the continuous commercial and trading activity related to the public market. This shows that the function of the public market greatly influences the symbolic association to the town center. Similar descriptions were discussed in the symbolic associations of the public market in Table 10a.

**Table 11. Summary of Town Center Problems (n=52)**

Problems	No. of Responses
crowded, small space, muddy, dirty, disorder	30 (58%)
rubbish	8 (15%)

Table 11 shows the problems at the town center. The highest frequency of problems that of: *masikip, maliit ang lugar, maputik, madumi, walang kaayusan* (crowded, small space, messy, dirty, disorder) account for fifty eight percent (N=52) of the responses. These problems support the negative association discussed in Table 10.

Only the parish church and the Rizal monument garnered positive associations, while the public market received negative descriptions. The association of these structures is related to the aesthetic and environmental quality of their surroundings. In comparison, the public market is

immensely different from the parish church and Rizal monument. The church and the monument were in fairly good condition in terms of maintenance (i.e. regular painting and landscaping) and cleanliness. On the other hand, the public market structure is not as well maintained and the problems with the proper sanitation and garbage disposal exacerbate this filthy condition. Similar negative impressions are attributed to the town center as a whole because it has a stronger affiliation with the commercial and trading activities of the public market and the daytime/nighttime vendors than the retail shops, parish church and the municipal hall.

#### 1.4 Association of variable

The primary task for this test is to assess whether there is an association between symbolic association to the built form and the independent variable (gender). Since seventy-one percent (n=56) of the respondents are female and most users of the town center that was observed were female, the Chi square correlation test between each place at the town center and gender was selected (see Table 12). The chi square test revealed no correlation with any of the places at the town center even at the five-percent level of significance. This also shows that gender is not an appropriate indicator to test the correlation of symbolic meaning.

**Table 12. Chi-2 Test-symbolic meaning**

Location	Value
Church	1.459
Municipal Building	5.991
Public Market	1.373
Basketball Court	4.106
Rizal Monument	6.501
Retail Shops	0.615
Street Retail	2.11
Town Center	2.087

The results show that the most preferred places at the town center for function, place value and symbolic association are the parish church, the public market, the retail shops and the municipal hall. The most prominent activities occurring in these places are related to religion, the provision for food/goods and government services. Even the types of events in the town center indicate a strong affiliation to religious activities. As stated earlier, the town center is a public



space, which is shaped by the types of uses and diversity of activities. It is interesting to note that a low percentage of children brought to the town center showed that aside from the basketball court, there was the lack of areas that can socially accommodate activities for this age group.

Associated activities occur in only two places: the parish church and the public market. The temporal aspect of these prime activities show that “morning” is the most preferred time by the respondents where only a short amount of time would be spent for the primary activities. The public market is the only place when more time is spent on the activity.

Likewise, the parish church, the public market/retail shops, and the municipal hall, are the outstanding choices for valued places. Because these structures have provided the basic necessities for everyday ritual, they have acquired their value over time. Even though the Rizal monument does not provide for the basic necessities for everyday ritual, it still has its designated value and symbolic meaning because the structures serve as a town reminder of the regional affinity towards the national hero.

Although the symbolic associations with the town center are mostly negative aspects, there is a strong cause-effect relationship between these negative associations and commercial/trading activities in the town center. Specifically, these negative adjectives are due to the trading activities occurring in the public market. On the other hand, the parish church and the Rizal monument are the specific places that acquired the highest positive associations because of the fairly good aesthetic condition of the structures and clean surroundings.

## **Section 2. Interview with Key Informants**

The following key informants were interviewed (see Appendix F) within the three-week time frame of the residents’ interview: the Mayor of the municipality of Biñan, the municipal engineer, a local architect, and a businessperson. Interviews were conducted in the morning or afternoon.

The government officials were asked about urban design guidelines and master planning for the town center, that covers private and public development; and about current problems of the town center. Responses from government officials revealed that there were no documents or urban design guidelines for the town center of Biñan. According to the local government officials, renovations or improvements of public structures are undertaken through a piece-meal, and spot-zoning approach. This is evident in the ongoing refurbishment of the public market that had been started by the previous administration. However, there was an overriding concern by the local government to organize the space, structure the activities, preserve the old Spanish ancestral houses, and the preserve the image of the town center as the only 24 hour trading hub in the province of Laguna. Other than compliance to building code standards, private property development at the town center is not bound by any urban design guidelines. Furthermore, the local government officials emphasized that private property development is beyond their control.

The Cavite-Laguna (CALA) Urban Development and Environment Project: Cluster Land Management and Development Strategy by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) addressed issues and opportunities brought about by the incessant growth and urbanization in this sub-region. The strategies and framework suggested sustainable and integrated spatial structuring of the sub-region resulting in the pilot clustering of municipalities, one of which is Biñan. It is hoped that the CALA project will eventually become an ordinance to be followed by any town administrator.

Other plans for the future include the relocation of the municipal hall to another area outside the town center to provide more room for the public market. Plans for converting the basketball court to an open plaza again because it resulted in a limited use by the public. On the other hand, they take pride in the Rizal monument because it is voted as the second most beautiful monument in the country. Rubbish and environmental cleanliness are mentioned as the most prominent problem at the town center.

The architect, a private practitioner and active member of a civic club in Biñan was asked about the important structures or places that are important to retain at the town center. Another question dealt with the necessary future improvements for the town center.

According to the architect, the plaza (which was converted to a basketball court), and the old houses (i.e. Alberto, Ocampo, and the demolished Yaptinchay residences) which can serve as landmarks for Biñan are the most important structures to be retained. The plaza has to be restored so it can be “used again for promenading.” The *Los Maduros Club*<sup>1</sup> initiated efforts to start “greening the town plaza” because it is now considered “a concrete jungle.” In this sense, the town center needs to be decongested. By relocating the municipal building and the courthouse to another area, the town center can provide more room for the wholesale and retail trading of the public market. In order to maintain the physical character of the town center, those directly involved in the mitigation of the built environment should “show by example.” This means that the players involved should strive to continuously restore or preserve our historical heritage.

On the other hand, the interview with the businessperson revealed inconclusive results. Questions were asked on why this location was chosen; and what does the supermarket business do to contribute to the community. Most responses were related to the business aspect between the market, consumers, and other entrepreneurs. This may be the result of ambiguous questions by the researcher. The response for the selection of location showed that accessibility and the “strategic” location at the town center prompted business decisions. According to the businessperson, the contribution of the supermarket in the community is the competitive price. Certain responses showed the concern of uplifting the image of Biñan as a commercial center.

The results of the key informant interviews revealed a consistent concern regarding the image of town center as an active trading and commercial place that is synonymous to the image of Biñan as a town. This shows the association to the idea that the town center is the center of

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<sup>1</sup> Los Maduros is a civic and social club consisting of mostly professional members residing in Binan.

business and trade in which the local government officials, businessperson, and architect take pride. Furthermore, the awareness and concern to preserve the historical elements such as the ancestral houses that can upgrade the physical character of the town center revealed how they value this image. Efforts to initiate the conversion of the basketball court to the old open plaza were mentioned by the local government officials and the architect, indicating the value for open space and flexibility of use by the public. “Accessibility and strategic location” arise as an economic value for entrepreneurs to provide goods and competitive prices for the community. However, there is a consensus to relocate the municipal building to another location outside the town center indicating that the municipal hall is not an essential structure to enhance the image of the town center.

Even though concerns and aspirations for the town center are in the mind of the key players, the method and process to achieve these objectives is very vague through development implementation. Even though the CALA Urban Development and Environment Project provides the general framework for economic, social, infrastructure, transportation, environmental management, land use, and institutional strategies for the pilot clusters municipalities, a more comprehensive urban design guideline for the town is lacking. Also, an emphasis on government and private cooperation to achieve a sustainable development is imperative since a large amount of land belongs to the private sectors.

### **Section 3. Site Observation and Behavior Mapping Analysis**

Site observation and mapping behavior were done for two consecutive weeks from July 15-26, 1999. The time of observations and mapping behavior were from 9:00-10:00 am; 5:00-6:00 pm; and 1:00-2:00 am of the following day. The method of observation was done by walking slowly and recording activities starting from section one: the basketball court and retail shops; section two: the retail shops, parish church and municipal hall, and section three: the public market and retail shops opposite the market (see Appendix H).

The weather remained sunny in the day but occasional rain would break at certain times in the afternoons and evenings. Summaries for each period of observation are a composite of individual observations during the two-week period.

### 3.1. Summary of observations from 9:00 – 10:00 am

The morning observations showed street vendors selling men's and women's accessories occupied the northern and eastern sidewalk of Mercury Drugstore 1 (retail shop) (see Figure 19). The basketball court was open but not heavily used during this period. Only a few boys would usually hang around the court. The side street on the north side of the basketball court was designated for tricycle parking while the north side was for *jeepneys*<sup>2</sup>. Fruit vendors occupied the corner of A. Malvar Street. The Rizal monument was empty and no activity was observed during this hour. Vendors selling beverage and footwear lined the front of the retail shops on the south side of the monument while vendors outside the church patio sold religious items, baby clothes and footwear. All street vendors displayed their products in makeshift bullcarts, covered carts, and knockdown tables with colorful parasols. Observations on weekends showed that there were more activity in the church because of Sunday mass and a wedding ceremony. More family groups were observed attending mass during weekends. On weekdays church activity was limited to short visitation by a majority of middle aged women. Household vendors occupied the municipal building frontage. Many people were observed going in and out of the municipal hall.

Street vendors selling fresh food items and dry goods, occupied the frontage of the public market everyday. However, it was observed that a larger number of street vendors were present during weekends. On weekdays, users were mostly casually dressed middle aged men and women. On weekends, a number of children were observed with their parents. Opposite the market were three layers of vendor activity. The first layer nearest to the retail shops consisted of food stalls. The second layer, consisted of beverage vendors, and the third, were fruit vendors. Vehicular passage on the street was not allowed until noon. People carrying goods were walking on both westward and eastward direction occupied the street. Town criers announced interments and wedding dates during the weekends.

High pedestrian flow came from the southern side of Gen. Capinpin and J. Gonzales streets, as well as, from the northern and southern directions of A. Bonifacio Street. There were no congregation areas in the town center for casual users. This may be due to the high activity and density during this time of the day and the urgency to return home to do their daily chores.

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<sup>2</sup> Jeepneys are locally assembled public passenger vehicles. They originated from converting WWII jeeps for public use.



### 3.2 Summary of observations from 5:00 – 6:00 pm

Young boys played on the basketball court and some chatted in groups of two and three. The northern street was still used as a tricycle parking and terminal for the San Jose destination (see Figure 20). Food stalls selling snacks lined the east and south side of the basketball court. Congregation areas were the west-end corner and the south-end corner outside the basketball court. The same vendors occupied Mercury drugstore 1 as in the morning.

The church had two layers of vendor activity. The first layer nearest the church included the same religious item vendors and the second, were footwear and children's clothes vendors.

Similarly, the retail shops facing Rizal monument had two layers of vendors; the food and beverage vendors and the fruit vendors. Congregation was concentrated at the entrance of Ligaya theater which is used as the temporary police station.

Food vendors occupied the front of the market as well. Opposite the market are the same food stalls. Similar types of vendor carts in the morning observations were present in the afternoon. The pedestrian flow was high on the westward and eastward direction. A variety of user types such as office workers, students, and casual users were observed walking along this route. Vehicular activity increased at this hour, and pedestrian activity is more dispersed in different areas of the town center.





### 3.3. Summary of observations from 1:00 – 2:00 am

Wholesale trading of vegetables and fruits was the main activity at this hour. The space heavily used for this activity was the street on the north side of the basketball court, which showed a high pedestrian flow on the map (see Figure 21). Wholesalers came in *jeepneys* loaded with goods and parked in designated areas along the east-side of Gen. Capinpin and A. Malvar Streets. Business transactions between the wholesalers and the first retailers occurred in the parking areas before any goods were unloaded. After the negotiations the vegetable retailers hired teenage boys with bull carts to unload the goods and proceed to their designated areas beside the basketball court. Vendors pay a certain fee for electricity and use of these spaces. Most retailers were female in their late 20s to 40s. Goods were sold in improvised bull carts called *kariton*. Each vendor had cots for resting or sleeping and a parasol to provide shelter in case inclement weather. Fruit retailers were located along the thirty meters stretch of A. Malvar Street.

Male adolescent groups utilized the basketball court for basketball games, while middle-aged groups of three to five males spent their time talking. No female users were seen inside the basketball court. Boys usually used the Rizal monument (7-12 years old) for playing games and as a congregation space. Groups of two or three sat on the steps spending their time talking while another group played.

Female vendors in their mid 30s to late 40s sold sweets and tidbits in front of the church while footwear was sold in front of the municipal building. The frontage of market was used for tricycles going to the lakeside barrios. The market was inactive but the food stalls opposite the market catered mostly to drivers, vegetable/fruit traders and retail vendors.

Social activities such as talking, taking leisurely walks, and buying tidbits by groups of two or more people were more often seen during this time. The pacing of activity appeared to be slower and relaxed.

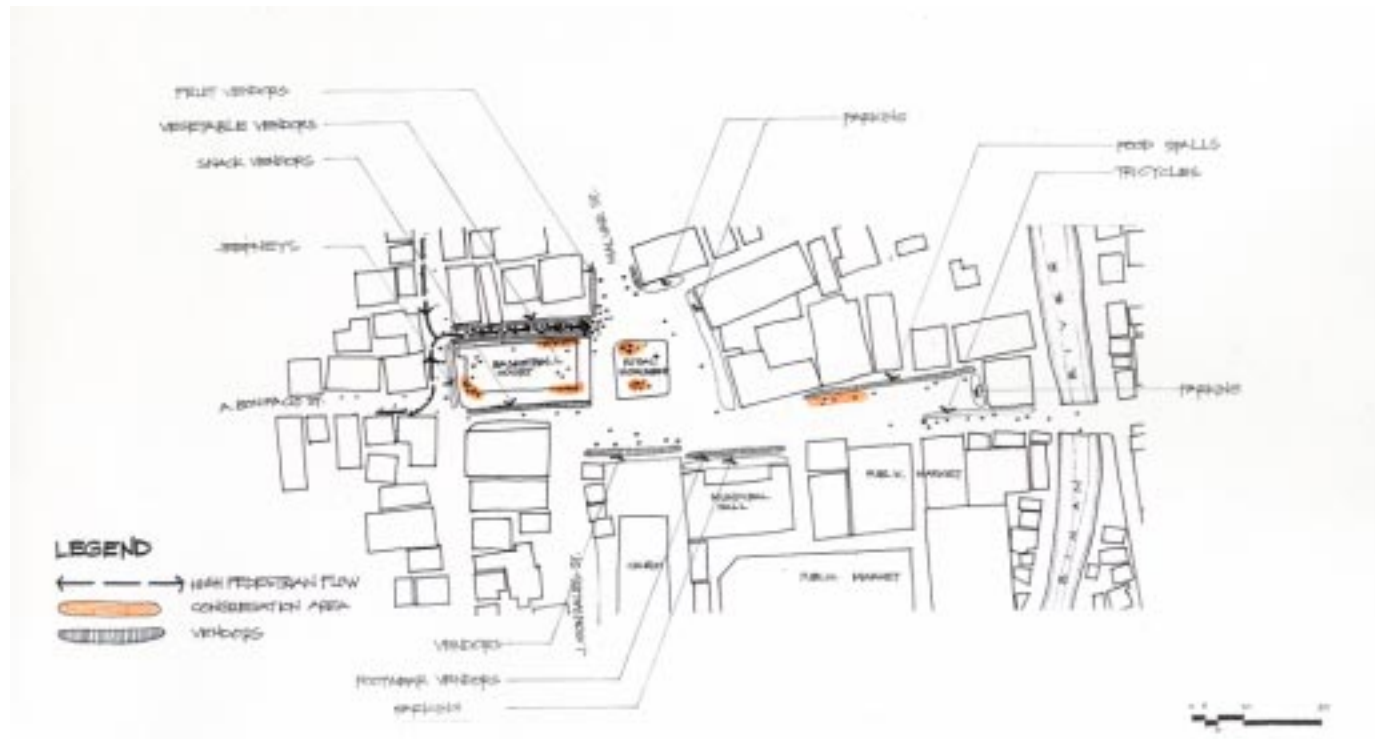


Figure 21. Summary of Site Observations Made on  
Fri., Sat., & Mon. at 1:00 – 2:00 am  
7/15 – 26/ 1999

In summary, the observations and mapping behavior revealed that the temporal and spatial use in the town center indicated the different layers of activities, variety of good and product, and the social time at different times of the day all coincides with the everyday ritual of the town residents. The allocation of available time and specific time to do the activity system affects rhythm of social time (contact with groups) and social. For instance, the public market comes alive only in the morning and late afternoon. Both times was the ritual for food preparation in most households. Likewise, the products sold by vendors during the same time are food items, fresh produce such as fruits, and household products that are daily (common) necessities. It was observed that the morning is a tenser period where most users are rushing to either go home, go to work, and school. In the afternoon, a different set of vendors sells clothing products such as children's/infants clothes, footwear, and other dry goods perhaps due to the less hectic schedule of users. The landscape of street vendor carts and parasols added to the color and vitality of the town center.

Pedestrian traffic was high from the west side of A. Bonifacio Street to the east-side towards bridge. Since majority of the transportation terminal such as buses, *jeepneys* and tricycles are situated on the south side of the town center explaining the source of pedestrian influx.

Figure 22 shows congregation areas at the basketball court, Ligaya Theater, Rizal monument and the entrance of the municipal building were observed to have different user types. The municipal hall and Ligaya theater were usually used as hang outs for middle-aged and older men. Young boys and adolescents utilized the basketball court and Rizal monument because these are the only spaces that can allocate recreational needs.



## **Sction 4. Morphological Data**

For the purposes of the study, the urban morphology of the town center entails the analysis of plan, function, and shape of lot subdivisions, lot ownership, building footprints, relationship of lots and buildings, and land uses of maps from 1911 to 1999. Information on land ownership and land uses were based on tax declarations for the municipality of Biñan (see Appendix G).

### 4.1 Maps of 1911

The lot subdivision of 1911 (see Figure 23) is the basis of the 1948, 1967, 1985, 1997 and 1999 maps. The municipality is currently using this map as the basis of more detailed and up to date lot subdivision plan for the town center and other adjacent areas. The town center comprises the following lot numbers; the church (102), the municipal building and market (100), the plaza or basketball court (1), the Rizal monument (3), the retail shops that are on private lots 41, 34, 3175, 40, 91 4A, 4B, 5, 2, and 77. The peripheral lots were included in the discussion due to its context in relation to the town center.

### 4.2 Maps of 1948, 1965 and 1967

In 1948 and 1969 lot subdivisions (see Figure 24), the town center did not show any significant changes from the 1911 map. The church property lot 102, the government property lot 1, 100 & 3, and retail shops (private lots 41, 34, 3175, 40, 91 4A, 4B, 5, 2, and 77) remained within family ownership. The tax declaration showed no record of lot transferred to the next of kin.

The urban fabric around the town center was still very young in 1948. A mixture of a coarse and very fine grain is indicative of the type of structures. The finer grain are residential houses while the coarser grain are commercial and institutional structures. Most of the large structures around the town center where institutional and religious structures are located on the southeast section of the maps. Other than the church, the large parcel of land enabled a mix of

structures such as the market, a small public school and municipal building. Social, cultural and political functions were held in the *glorietta* (bandstand) opposite the Rizal monument (#3).

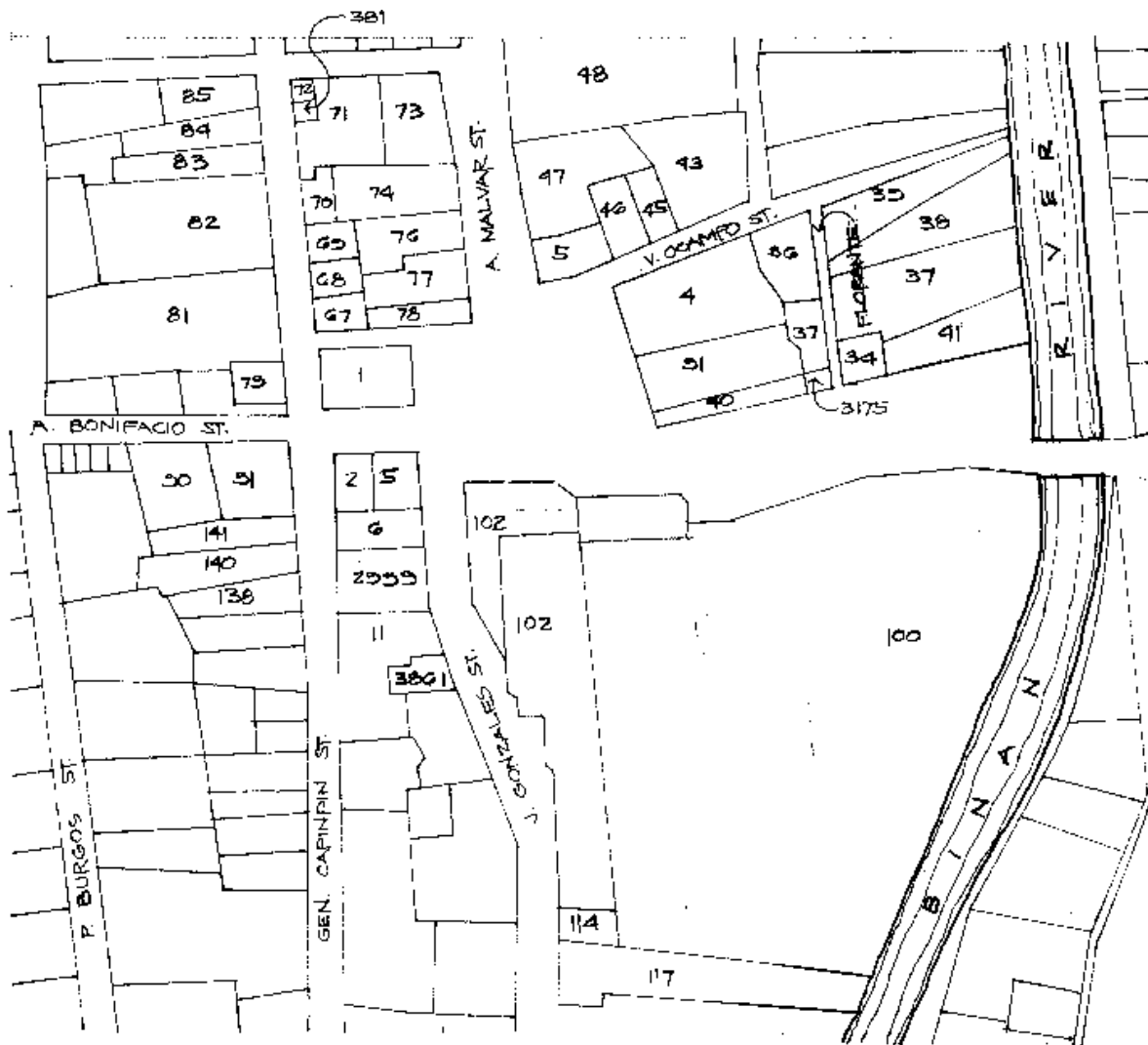
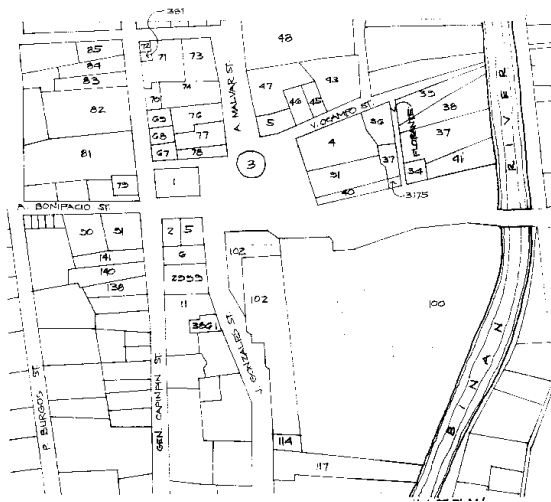


Figure 23. 1911 Key Map



LOTS (1948 & 1967)



LOTS & BUILDINGS (1948)



BUILDING FOOTPRINT (1948)



LAND USE (1948 & 1965)

BUILDING HEIGHT

LAND USE



LOTS & BUILDINGS (1948)

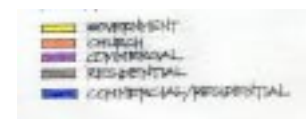


Figure 24. MAPS OF 1948, 1965,  
& 1967



The coarser grain around the town center originating from the northeast to the southwest of the map were mostly larger lots with ancestral houses. The proximity of the more affluent residents to the church and *munisipio* (municipal hall) revealed that the ownership of private lots still belong to the more privileged group as it was decreed by the Law of Indies during the Spanish period. Possibilities of commercial activity at the ground level of these ancestral houses could have occurred since these lower bases were used as storage for grains and carriages. The finer grain of the urban fabric at the periphery of the center was a mixture of single and two-story residential structures made of wood and *nipa*. Some were generally square or rectangular in shape following the lot width and depth.

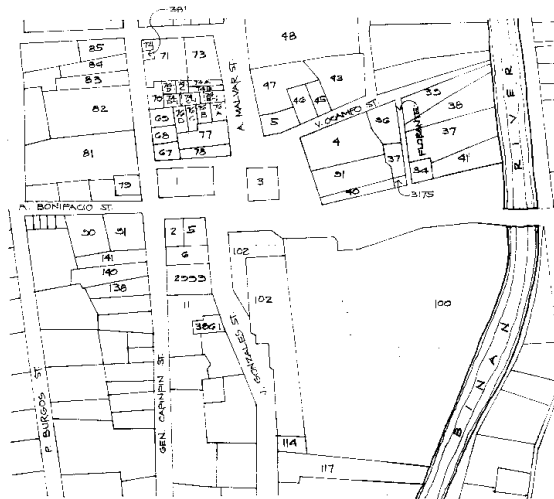
Within the 1948 and 1969 fabric of land uses, the town center and Bonifacio Street were mostly for commercial use. However, lots # 6, 2999 and 11 and 3861 changed from commercial into a commercial/residential use. Peripheral lots along J. Gonzales, Malvar, and Gen. Capinpin Streets were residential uses.

#### 4.3. Maps of 1979

Only lots 73, 74 and 76 (see Figure 25) showed transfer of ownership to their offspring as indicated by an alphabetical annex to the lot numbers (see Table 12). The rest of the lot subdivisions and ownership remained the same from the 1949 and 1969 maps.

The fabric of land uses in 1979 were similar to the 1969 map except for lots 71, 72, 381, 73, 74, and 76 which were changed from residential to commercial/ residential uses. No other information on building footprints and building height was available to the researcher.

The fabric of land uses remained the same as in 1979. Although lots along Gen. Malvar, Gen. Capinpin were residential, the ground level of residences was converted to commercial use due to the rising demand for commercial space (1983 Inception Report).



LOTS



LAND USE

# LEGEND

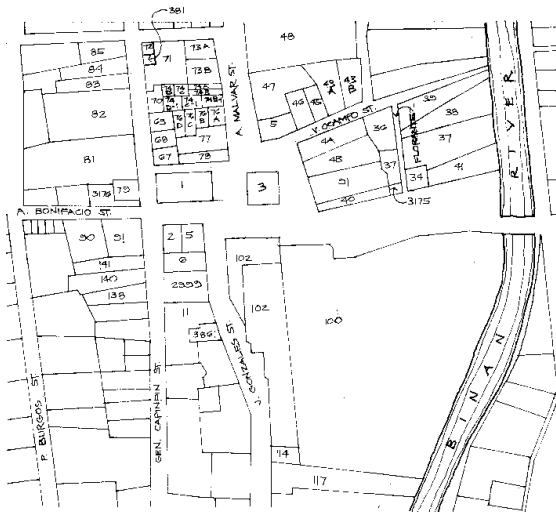


Figure 25. MAPS OF 1979

#### 4.4. Maps of 1985 and 1987

Looking forward almost twenty years showed an increase of development within and around the town center. Lot subdivision and ownership remained the same since the 1979 map (see Figure 26). An extensive growth was reflected in the density of building footprints. Most commercial building on both sides of A. Bonifacio Street occupied the entire lot. They were usually rectangular in shape following the lot shape. The coarser grain on the southeast section of the map where the market and municipal building are located showed larger structures. During this period, the large block of the market and the extensions of adjacent smaller structure indicated population increase; migration and continued trading activity with other municipalities predicated growing commercial activity. The new building configuration of the church reflects a 1960's fire that destroyed the original church. The structures around the town center fabric gave more definition to the streets. For instance, more commercial structures were built on lots 37, 3175, 34 and 71. The plaza remained an open space except for the small stage built on the west-end of the property. Likewise, the Rizal monument remained in the same location but reflected a larger and more defined area unlike the one shown in the 1948 map. The building height was predominantly two stories except for the parish church, which is about three to four stories high. Structures on lots 4A, 4B, 91 and 40 that were encroaching on two lots indicate that relatives or members of the same family probably own them.

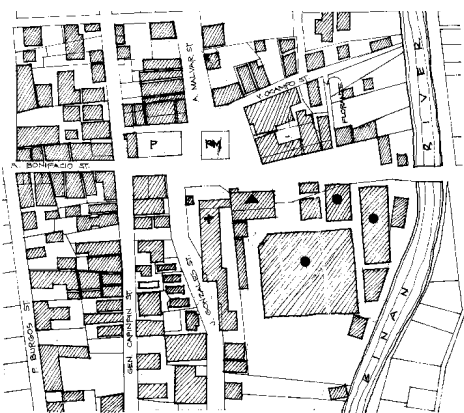
The 1948 undeveloped lots are residences and building development in the 1985 and 1987 maps. These structures occupied most of the lot area and had no setbacks or service alleys. They were evident along Bonifacio, Gen. Capinpin, J. Gonzales and A. Malvar Streets. It also demonstrated an increased land value in this area. The finer grain of the urban fabric on the periphery of the town center from the northeast to the southwest quadrant were mostly residential houses built between 1948 to the 1970s. This showed the growing population density of the town due to migration and birth rate, which in turn increased the commercial and trading activity in the town center.



LOTS (1985)



BUILDING FOOTPRINT (1987)



LOTS & BUILDINGS (1987)



BUILDING HEIGHT (1987)



LAND USE (1985)

BUILDING HEIGHT

LAND USE

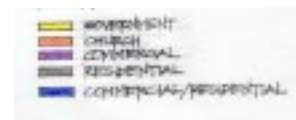


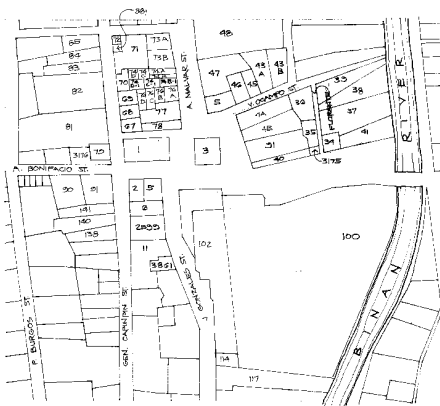
Figure 26. MAPS OF 1985 and 1987

#### 4.5. Maps of 1997 and 1999

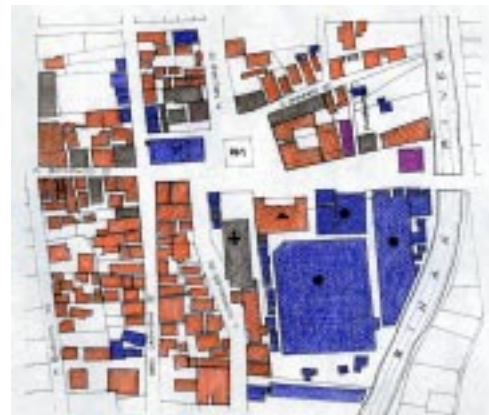
The order of the urban fabric was already apparent in the 1985 and 1987 maps particularly the way buildings lined the streets. The plaza with the stage was now covered by a roof structure. The coarse grain on the southeast, which is comprised of the market and its adjacent stalls, the church, the municipal building show a larger due to the renovations done in the between the 80s and 90s. The edge of the street leading to the Biñan River bridge is more defined by the structures. The finer grain on the West Side and north side of the market are additional stalls. The municipal building showed expansion in the front. The church configuration showed additions and renovation to its main structure and around the property. The coarser grain pattern of the urban fabric can be seen within the town center especially the block facing the market. These new commercial buildings built in the late 80s to the early 90s were in lot 41, the area fronting 41 and 34. Lots 5, 77, 68, 67, 76 and lots on the north side of Bonifacio Street showed the coarser grain because this section was transformed into a commercial spine since the 1970s. Although the general building height patterns were two-stories, three to four story structures are evident westward along the commercial spine of A. Bonifacio Street.

Private lots showed a finer grain in the urban fabric from the northeast to the southwest section. The newer structures are smaller and arranged closer to the existing structure/s within the lot.

Land use maps of 1997 and 1999 (see Figure 27) at the street level have changed overtime into a fully commercial function although the 1997 land use map showed otherwise. For instance, lots on the west-side of Gen. Capinpin Street were indicated as residential uses but the ground level of these residences were converted to commercial uses. These changes extended to the old residences and newer structures along Gen. Capinpin, J. Gonzales and A. Malvar Streets. A very minimal number of structures along these streets were used for residences. The same changes occurred on the east-side of A. Malvar Street. The observed land use map of 1999 done by the researcher supports this observation.



LOTS (1997)



BUILDING HEIGHT (1997)



BUILDING FOOTPRINT (1997)



LAND USE (1997)



BUILDING FOOTPRINT (1997)



OBSERVED LAND USE (1999)

BUILDING HEIGHT

LAND USE



Figure 27. MAPS OF 1997 and 1999



In summary, there was no drastic change in the land use, lot ownership, and lot subdivision in the town center. However, the successive transformation of the building density from 1949 to 1997 showed an overriding consideration of function and activities that are directly related to daily use. For instance, the location and repeated reconstruction of the three primary elements in the town center, the parish church, the municipal building, and the public market are the anchoring and defining elements supporting a typical Filipino lifestyle. The usual necessities of buying fresh food and other necessities like attending to religious obligation, and the functional and symbolic presence of a governing body were facilitated by the built environment in the town center. The demand to meet these functions and activities extended to Bonifacio, Gen. Capinpin, J. Gonzales and Malvar Streets. The relationship of buildings to the street extended the public life from the buildings to the streets, thus explaining the high intensity of street use by extended activities such as sidewalk vendors. From 1948 to 1997 the main elements of the Rizal monument remained unchanged.

The absence of a well-defined zoning policy had in some ways created an atmosphere of a slow and long-term process of change based on the dynamics of daily use and activities of the users rather than zoning controls. For example, despite the residential land use of lots # 81, 82, 84 and 141-138 along Gen. Capinpin Street and lots # 6 –3861 along J. Gonzales Street, the 1999 observed land use map showed for commercial purposes.

There was no change on the lot ownership, which had prevented lot consolidation. Individual private lots belong to different local town residents explaining the majority finer grain of building context from the southeast to the southwest section of the town center.

## **Section 5. Conclusions**

Using the triangulation method (i.e. survey, site observation, and morphological analysis) helped magnify certain characteristic highlights of how cultural values and symbolic meanings are related to the temporal, spatial use of the town center. The general information that arose from all three methods show the interconnectedness of the users' perception, the movers for

development (government officials), behavioral patterns, and the symbolic structure of the town center.

The most prominent socio-cultural activities that significantly affect the strategic positioning of temporal and spatial use, can be classified under three categories: religion, economics, and politics. In this sense, the symbolic meaning of the town center as a public space is an amplification of these three aspects found in the perceptions of the people, the framework for the town center's development, and observable activities occurring in specific infrastructures.

From interviews, site observation, and morphological analysis, the parish church, the public markets and retail shops, and the municipal halls are the most frequently visited and most valued structures in the town center. This is connected to the respondents' explanation that most town center activities, specifically daily rituals, are done in these specific structures. Other structures and related behaviors, such as the basketball court and entertainment shows provide temporal changes in the structure of the town center. Because of their temporality, they do not cause very significant changes and meaning.

Religion and its related physical structures, especially icons and statues which affect the residents in a more personal basis, is the most valued town center structure and activity. One regular town center activity that strengthens this notion is that most residents go to church at the beginning of the day. At the same time, very positive adjectives were used to describe this particular structure. The next significant structures in the town center are the public market and retail shops. These structures have produced contradictory, yet adjacent results. On the one hand that respondents describe these places specifically the public market with the most negative connotations and adjectives. However, these structures become particularly busy at certain portions of the day because they provide for the daily necessities of the town residents. Lastly, the municipal hall, as a town center structure, provides the residents a sense of acknowledgement and submission to authority, a place to be reminded of the political structure of the society, and probably in a more subtle sense, a strange reminder of the colonization of the culture.



One interesting structure in the town center that does not at all contain regular activities, is the Rizal monument. This structure however has been regularly included in discussions on values and symbolic meanings. This can be attributed to the notion that the residents take national pride in the monument. Its dynamic function reminds them that the national hero, Jose Rizal, is strongly affiliated with the sub-region. At the same time, it becomes a structural connection of the town center to the rest of the larger culture in the country because the Rizal monument decorates every plaza in most parts of the Philippines.

This study shows that different cultures, may have, different hierarchies of structures related to their particular hierarchy of needs, values, and symbolic meaning. For example, the conventional notion of the hierarchy of needs show that the basic necessities, food, clothing, and shelter, are the most immediate needs that a particular community would adhere to. This model becomes non sequitor because in this particular study, the town center of Biñan, Laguna, shows that religious needs and therefore, spiritual needs are positioned on the top of the hierarchy. Economic needs only fall next in the hierarchy of needs. Law and order come last in this ladder of necessities.

This study shows that the spatial and temporal use of the built form, the parish church, public market and retail shops, and municipal hall, reflects a particular set of Filipino cultural values, and symbolic associations for members of the community. These structures anchor the town center because of the functions they provide; in turn these specific functions weave together the social fabric of community life. One particular example is the notion of strong family ties which can be inferred from the daily rituals of going to the market, preparing food for the family, going to church to ask for blessings given to the family, and strong attachment to land ownership for the assurance of future family security.