

Funeraria and Modern Funeral Homes: Change, Modernity and Sustainability

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Abstract — Some people make a living out of the dead as the case with workers and owners of funeral homes. Since the 1950's, traditionally operated funeral homes or "Funeraria" which are family-owned have been existing in Iligan City, Philippines. With the advent of technology and modernity, "Funeraria" have to compete with modern funeral homes owned by corporations. These modern funeral homes created a competitive market on the business and culture of dealing with the dead that includes funeral, burial services and wake preparations. Modern funeral homes proffer a new kind of industry and a culture for family and community. It has also offered a venue for some politicians to get more support and gain acceptability by extending funeral services to the needy. The narratives of "Funeraria" owners and workers gathered through interview revealed challenges on the profitability of the industry and sustainability of livelihood, culture and family. The challenges in the narratives appear to have affected the city's political scenario, economic growth and social relations especially among family. To sustain Funeraria, local government of Iligan must extend support and protect it against corporate funeral homes, against politicking and eventual loss of culture and family. And, the academe must scholarly sustain discussion on family, culture, and modernity.

Keywords — Funeraria, Corporate funeral homes, Iligan City, Modernity, Sustainability.

I. INTRODUCTION

Death is an inescapable fate that most people would rather not talk or even think about. In this modern times, when death comes, family need a strong support network, that is a — funeral home, Cambridge dictionary defines funeral home as a business that provides interment and funeral services including preparation for wake which is far different from the funeral tradition and practices of the pre-colonial Philippines. Even the advent of Catholicism brought by the Spaniards which added more flavor to the funeral tradition and practices of the early Filipinos has not achieved the standardization of the funeral home industry. However, the standardization of the funeral home industry has never been achieved during the Spanish rule until the coming of Americans in the early 20th century. It was the Americans who heavily incorporated their funeral practices in the Philippines such as embalming and cremation. Certainly, today's funeral is not the same funeral years ago. This paper is a story of local funeral homes, from their founding years to their subsequent developments, how these funeral homes were challenged by the so-called 'corporate funeral homes, and how these social institutions created an impact on the social, political, and economic development of the city. Moreover, this study shows how sympathy works in times of someone's grief and sorrow, encourages local community to be educated about future generations responsibility in keeping one's heritage despite cultural shift and raises awareness of the community in

sustaining its socio-politico-economic balance. This study connects the narratives of the said local funeral home owners along with its stories of struggles and successes amidst technology advancement and urbanization. Excluded, however are discussions on funeral practices based on ethnic, traditional and superstitious beliefs. The findings would serve as a guide to policy makers and scholars in helping the society in sustaining its needs.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The funeral home industry, as a social institution, it also works on the balance and order society's social, political and economic needs. Literature tackles important roles and functions of funeral dating back to the ancient times, the transition of traditional funeral customs and practices into a profession, how it emerged as a growing commercial hub and how it shaped the contemporary funeral industry and the growing criticisms and issues concerning the funeral dynamics. Paul Pettit (2002) said that funeral customs is as old as human culture itself, pre-dating from modern Homo sapiens dated to at least 300,000 years ago. Michael Kerrigan (2007) supported the claim that death varies by examining death and burial in varied cultures, societies and ages. Death is universal, but just like every culture it has found ways of living life and the effects that it has on the people left behind differently. Kerrigan linked rituals surrounding deaths, from the drama of medieval French royal funerals to the live burials of the Dinka in the Sudan, and the 5000 strong terracotta army in Imperial China.

In the Pre-Hispanic Philippines, William Henry Scott (1992) stated that "Pigafetta (Ferdinand Magellan's chronicler) attended a funeral in which he observed a widow lay on the cadaver, mouth to mouth, while this mournful ritual was performed". Lily Rose Tope and Detch Mercado (2002) states that early Filipinos had do rituals to honour the dead. The location of burials, position of body and decoration manifests their sincerity in the funeral practice. During the Pre-Hispanic period, the early Filipinos already believed. That if a person dies, one should pay tribute or give respect to the dead to ensure a peaceful transition into the afterlife. However, due to cultural diversity from different parts of the Philippines, there had been distinct variations to the concept of funeral practices in every tribe (Loyola, et.al. 2017). According to William Henry Scott (1992), the Manobos, bury their dead in trees, on one hand, the Ifugaos let their dead sit on a chair before burying. The Apayaos, or Isnegs of the Cordillera, wrap their dead in an 'ikamen' (mat) that will be carried on the shoulders of the immediate male family members. William Henry Scott (1994) also mentioned an indigenous funeral practice in Visayas that seeks to appease the ancestor's spirits by using a coconut shell of water that is set upon the dying person's stomach while

performing a ritual known as paguli, an effort to call back the departed soul. This indicates a strong sense of indigenous practice that one should follow to ensure a peaceful transition into the afterlife.

Kristine Fitzpatrick (2013) on Spanish settlement stated that when the Filipinos adopted Catholicism from the Spaniards this definitely create a change in their indigenous funeral practices. Catholic influence affected the indigenous traditions and customs of early Filipinos which they put high regards in the funeral process believing if it was not accomplished properly, the dead would return to the land of the living. This social acceptance served as a starting point of the infusion of Catholic culture into the funeral practices among the Filipinos which later evolved in the years to come as added by Michael Angelo Dakudao (1992). Accordingly, in the early 19th century with the establishment of Catholic churches in the center of cities, it became standard practice to establish cemeteries separately from churches mainly due to cholera epidemics and public health. Where early on, the dead were buried both inside and directly adjacent to the outside of the churches however only Filipino with enough wealth and influence could be allowed to be buried within the church. This move of the Spanish government was in lieu to offer sacred space for the departed loved ones, a solemn place that must be respected. Up until the 21st century, many if not all, of these religious practices have now become widespread and openly accepted in Philippine society. Hence from the ancient times, funeral had been playing significant roles in every individual yet varies in different context considering place, time and people. The professionalization of funeral is always associated with the practice of embalming which involves restoration, sanitation and preservation of dead bodies.

Beginning in the twentieth century, American influence started to take place in the Philippines. In relation to funeral, the Philippine culture has borrowed heavily from the Americans although Chinese influence has been incorporated also due to the exposure of Chinese settlers in the country. However, the main concept of funeral in the Philippines is patterned from the practice of visitation in American wakes, where they host the deceased's body clothed and beautified in a funeral home for display and presentation (Hays, 2018). The making of *Funeraria* began with the mandatory process of civil registration in 1920 where birth and deaths are recorded. Two years after, the Bureau of Census and Statistics was created to oversee all civil registration in the Philippines. However, it was only in 1940 that most registrations began to be recorded. The following year, Bureau of the Census and Statistics (BCS) was changed to National Statistics Office (NSO) when Commonwealth Act (C.A.) No. 591 was passed on August 19, 1940. Executive Order No. 314 transferred to the BCS the powers, functions, duties, personnel, appropriations, property and records of other statistical agencies. Among these were the functions of the Division of Labor and Statistics of the Department of Labor and of the Section of Vital Statistics of the Bureau of Health, Department of Instruction and including General Civil Registry Division (NSO, 2017).

With the creation of General Civil Registry Division, the process of civil registration was standardized where death also has to be recorded and registered. Civil registration provides the basis for individual legal identity and also allows the country to identify the most pressing health issues that are main causes of deaths. Death registers include dead's personal

information, cause of death, and even signature of the doctor. It is a way to track mortality rates and further systematized the process for death claims and records thus making it the only way to count all Filipino citizens through civil registration. When civil registration became mandatory, this resulted to the creation of the Committee of Examiners for Undertakers and Embalmers of the Philippines (CEUE) by the Department of Health. This ensures proper regulation of embalming as a profession within the standards of practice. This made the funeral business a trend in the country, extending to Visayas and Mindanao. Josephine Hipolito, Head Secretariat of the Department of Health's CEUE said that embalmers have been required to get license since 1950s (Santos, 2018).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This is a narrative inquiry. Twenty (20) informants were chosen purposively consisting of owners/directors, *Funeraria* employees and embalmers, candle makers, graveyard makers, florists and old residents of Iligan. Using a semi-structured questionnaire, they were personally interviewed. Data obtained from the oral interviews were transcribed, translated and analyzed. Primary data consisting of the responses of the informants were supported and validated using available secondary sources. Reading materials on funeral practices were also looked into. Framework was raised to explain how funeral industry as a social institution gives relevance to the social, political and economic growth of the city and how change and development affects the funeral industry. The essence emphasized the need to create balance to sustain culture, family and the industry of *Funeraria*.

IV. ILIGAN CITY'S FUNERARIA: BRIEF HISTORY

Jose G. Halili Jr., a carpenter established the first funeral home in 1950 - *Funeraria* Halili. Dr. Pacifico Mendoza, helped and sponsored Halili's education on embalming and license. It was originally situated along Mercado St. Iligan City (today's Quezon Avenue). The house was two-storey wood-made. Mr. Halili began offering embalming services in their house since the Department of Health was not yet strict in sanitary rules. Later on, he began making coffins while his wife Caridad Halili made funeral flowers using crepe papers for an additional source of income. It operated for years, however, when the big fire hit their place on May 23, 1957 they permanently transferred to Juan Luna Street. Given that they just recovered from the big fire and financial loss, the *Funeraria* was not that lavish when it was re-established. There, Mr. Halili offers embalming and coffin-making facilities. He also started making 'karo' which served as a mortuary hearse at that time that could be rented for about 250 pesos. Hearses were wooden or metal framework which stood over the coffin and supported pall (mortcloth) a cloth that covers a casket or coffin at funerals. Interestingly, these 'karo' were made out of wood to carry a coffin or casket or urn from church or funeral home to cemetery decorated with flowers made of crepe papers. Throughout the years of service, it began to boom. Accordingly, Mr. Jose G. Halili, Jr. is not a pure Iliganon who came from Sta. Maria, Bulacan and only a seventh grader, but his genuine personality outshines. His generosity caused *Funeraria* Halili to boom. With Dr. Mendoza's affluence to the masses, politicians, he referred many indigent Iliganon to Mr. Halili which to help him grow the funeral business. Aside from his pro-poor funeral services, Chinese elites in Iligan would choose to be served by this *Funeraria*. *Funeraria* Halili was able to upgrade its

mortuary hearses. From 'karo' to American funeral cars such as Rambler, Transwagon and later Ford. From 1960s to 70s, their funeral business became known not just in Iligan but all over Lanao del Norte. The death of his wife however affected the management of the *Funeraria*. In late 1997 when Mr. Jose Halili Jr. died, his son Gerardo took over the *Funeraria* and named it Halili Mortuary. His brother Reynaldo and Alfonso also work with him in managing the funeral business. From then, Halili Mortuary had been experiencing a decrease in market value. As the *Funeraria* saw its declining times, it was opened for lease in early 2000, where San Guillermo Funeral Homes presently operates.

Country's biggest industries attracted in-migrants seeking employment opportunities in Iligan (Salgado, 1989). Resulting rapid urbanization and population growth, couple Alberto and Elena Mansueto both licensed embalmers took the chance on venturing commercial opportunities in the city. Mrs. Elena Crespo (Mansueto) and family were originally from Paco, Manila and migrated to Iligan by mid-1950s. They rented a home located at the old Boy Scout Building (present-UNITOP) where they open a small *Funeraria* upon following directions of the authorities. Their *Funeraria* was not known until the 'Great Fire' hit them in 1957 letting them temporarily transfer to Mariano Badelles Sr. Street (where PhilAm Life Building is situated). Given their financial loss from the big fire and flash floods, they opened a *Funeraria* that is made of wood, one-storey and offer embalming services and casket-making. This is to sustain the needs of their family. They co-exist with Halili Mortuary and later Gamalinda Memorial Home. Mrs. Mansueto is certain that Halili Mortuary is more influential since they were the first to open in Iligan. Mansueto Funeral Homes became known only in 1970s at the height of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) insurgency. Mrs. Elena Mansueto recalled a truckload of 30 soldiers delivered to them from an ambush or encounter in Lanao. From then, Mansueto Funeral Homes was able to upgrade its facilities such as chapel from wood-made house into concrete, bought funeral car, and hire helpers including assistant embalmers, carpenters and tailor. In 2000, as advised by the Department of Health, Mrs. Mansueto no longer accepts funeral services due to her age. The third funeraria is Gamalinda originally owned by Ms. Longina Gamalinda-Kovacs from Tarlac. The *Funeraria* was built along Consunji Street, managed by her father Homer Arevalo Gamalinda in 1970s. Gamalinda Funeral Home in Iligan was patterned from that of Tarlac since it has a name already. However in 1990, when Mr. Homer Gamalinda died, no one who would manage the business. The remaining children decided to open the lot for lease, where it was shortly occupied by Archangel Funeral Home. Due to financial issues and mismanagement, the *Funeraria* was closed. Today, the lot of the Gamalindas of Iligan is occupied by Infinity Suites. Meanwhile, Homer's cousin and relatives adopted the brand Gamalinda Funeral Home which has branches extending to Ozamis City, and Zamboanga provinces in Dipolog City and Pagadian City.

In 1998, at the wake of the flood that devastated parts of Lanao del Norte, 47-year-old entrepreneur Mr. Danilo C. Capin provided free funeral service to hundreds of dead, including those unclaimed bodies. His father works at Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapel (Corporate Funeral home) as an embalmer. In 1979, he applied to work as a part-time janitor, carpenter and embalming aide in the same funeral home where his father

worked for many years. As a young worker in one of the biggest funeral parlors in the city, he witnessed how helpless bereaved families were and how they would pawn their property just to give their dead a decent burial. Capin began setting up his own *Funeraria* in 1995, rented a two-story, 150-square meter structure in the town of Linamon, with an embalming room upstairs and a 'chapel' for wakes and a carpentry shop on the ground floor. At the outset, he decided to cater to the low-income market—those who can hardly afford the cost of dying. During the early days, he would sometimes provide service for free just so word would get around there was a low-priced funeral establishment in the area. This is the reason why he was known in the municipality and all over Lanao area. In 2000, Capin pledged a partnership with a local politician Rep. Vicente Belmonte of Iligan City for coffin and embalming services to Belmonte's constituents for a nominal fee. The present Capin Funeral Homes is a two-story building, with five chapels or viewing rooms.

In 2005, other emerging *Funeraria* was set to take foothold at Brgy. Acmac, Iligan City. Mr. Alfredo Entera Jr., a licensed embalmer from Cebu, who at the age of 17 used to work in a *Funeraria* in Cebu where the owner offered him to study embalming at Clark Air Base. American-taught, and trained, he was able to acquire enough knowledge of the modern techniques in embalming and funeral dynamics. In 1989, he started schooling and by 1999 he got his license. For a long time, he served in Cosmopolitan Cebu. In 2005, Mr. Entera decided to transfer in Iligan city together with his family. With a little budget on hand, he established his own *Funeraria* and was named 'Mary Venus Funeral Home' to commemorate his sister 'Mary Venus' who passed away.

For many years beginning the 19th century most funeral homes have been small, family-owned businesses that were passed down to successive generations. In the late 1960s, a consolidation of the industry began with large companies acquiring modern and technological trends. There was also change in value systems alongside with systemic socio-cultural evaluation in which it has resulted in what they call "customized send offs" (Lynch, 2004). It is for this reason that the competition fuels funeral industry to change. As the industry becomes more competitive combined with the advent of media and pop culture on perceptions of death, a new model began to emerge—Corporate Funeral Homes. This is what Garry Laderman (2003) proved that the funeral corporations had expanded rapidly in the 1900s. Jessica Mitford (1978) provided an investigative exposé which she described the funeral industry as prohibitively expensive, overly sentimental, and highly commercialized. She accused funeral directors of greed and exploitation, citing what she perceived as callousness and the provision of unnecessary services. Funeral industry came into being from primordial practices and customs to an emerging commercial hub.

V. ILIGAN'S CORPORATE FUNERAL HOMES

While most of the funeral homes are still family owned and operated, a growing number owned by large corporations are now taking into the scene- Corporate Funeral Homes. In the late 1970s, corporate funerals began invading locally, such as St. Peter's Chapel and Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapels. As affirmed by Henry Giroux (2003), "Corporate culture becomes an all-encompassing horizon for producing market identities, values, and practices." This cultural view of consumerism

analysed that local funeral home struggle to compete and maintain their identity against the dominant popularity of Corporate Funeral Homes. St. Peter Life Plan, Inc. (SPLPI) was founded by Francisco M. Bautista on October 23, 1970. It is a Pre-Need Death Care Company that offers affordable traditional memorial life plans to all sectors of society. In 1975, it expanded into a Memorial Services Company that provides innovative professional and traditional memorial services (e.i. E-Burol, E-Libing, St. Peter's Gate) to the Filipino public for the next thirty years. Mr. Gerry Halili accordingly, attributes St. Peter Life marketing strategy with their excellent marketing specialist and agents that offers 'Pre-Need Life Insurance' something new to the funeral industry. He further explained that these corporates wanted to 'tie-up' with the local funeral homes however, Halili refused due to its capitalistic ideals. Accordingly, these corporates had a sixty percent for the corporates and forty by the local funeral home. Mrs. Mansueto revealed that SPLPI was able to enter the local funeral arena when she tied-up with their *Funeraria*. Their *Funeraria* provided the embalming services but the insurances and other matters were catered by the corporate. Halili and Mansueto believed that these corporates were just futuristic in its goals. They knew that Iligan will soon become a progressive city and they strategically planned everything even the location they are in and trained agents for a good marketing strategy and branding to attract both the public and local funeral homes. Until such time SPLPI was able to improve and install its grandiose facilities, soon have expanded with more than two hundred eighty (280) St. Peter Chapels nationwide. Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes take its roots from the heart of down-town Cebu pioneered by Mr. Renato Dychangco Sr. in 1951 in a time when horse carriages, then known as "kalesas" were still in use. It was only in 1981, when it had reached Iligan (Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapel). According to Cathleen A. Dychangco, Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes started only as a coffin business until the demand for memorial homes made them decide to venture into a full service boasting its lavish chapels and state-of-the-art funeral home and memorial services company that focuses on premium products, facilities and quality customer service and value. From then, Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapel Iligan offer services like personalized packages, funeral service, cremains to diamonds and memorialization. On one hand, Mr. Alfredo Entera who has worked and supported by the owners of Cosmopolitan Cebu for a long time, argued that despite its grandiose facilities, local funeral homes, can also compete.

The internet has made businesses increased and so funeral service. In order to enhance service, most funeral homes now have their own website, which enables funeral homes to easily display their products and services, and, in turn, offer consumers best services. Jason Phillips (2017) argued that the contemporary approach to memorialization is therefore a fitting indication of a contemporary ideology which resists death and embraces control and choice with regard to the business of dying. Many funeral homes can help families create memorial videos shown at funeral service and are a special keepsake to treasure forever. Funeral parlors in the Philippines are increasingly taking advantage of the latest technologies to launch services into the virtual world. The transmission of live audio and video allows family and friends separated by distance to be a part of the celebration. Because memorial services often take place shortly after a person's death, it may be impossible for all family members and friends, especially those living far

away, to attend these functions. Just like St. Peter Chapel, they offer an "e-Burol" service which enables relatives and friends who cannot go to the wake to view the remains while they are anywhere in the world through this website (Lowe, 2018). In addition to the live broadcast, the funeral webcast will also be available for playback after the funeral service for a period of one month. St. Peter's Life Plan and Chapels also aimed to make memorials that are more accessible to a globally-dispersed population through the use of social media. Funeral parlors' websites are designed to include the ability to share online obituaries and other services on Facebook. Live webcasts of funeral services and wakes have also become add-on services catering mostly to the large population of Filipinos working overseas or emigrants who may not have the financial means or time to fly back home at short notice in the event of a loved one's sudden death (Visconti, 2018). Nevertheless, as Lex Berko (2018) said, funeral webcasting still feels like a respectful alternative to attending in-person, a way to say goodbye from afar when distance, health, or whatever else conspires to keep you in place.

From 1950, local funeral homes, Halili Mortuary, Mansueto Funeral Homes and Gamalinda Memorial Homes as the pioneering *Funeraria* in the city, had gone into series of developments, both ups and downs. However, in 1970s, with the rise of corporate funerals and the growing trends in technology, the shift of people's demands on how they deal death has also affected the local funeral homes. It was the start of a great challenge on how to compete with the giants. There are also other factors that challenged the local funeral home owners aside from the rise of the Corporates. First, came the time that they could not cope up with the expenses probably because most people tend to go over to the corporates than the typical local *Funeraria*. Second, since it is family-owned business, siblings fight each other as to who would continue the business. Third, ageing, like Mrs. Elena Mansueto, although she could still perform (embalming) but the Department of Health did not permit her due to age. And last, the absence of who could continue the business. Despite the fall of these pioneers, remaining local *Funeraria*, Capin Funeral Homes and Mary Venus Funeral homes continues to compete with giant Corporate Funerals. Today, the funeral industry's impact from its founding years in 1950 to the community remains of great importance to the city's social, political and economic growth. Another turning point due to American influence is the practice of cremation (Matthews Cremation Division, 2018). However, in the Philippines, especially in Iligan, many Iliganon do not practice cremation as they believe that the body must remain intact in order to fulfil and prepare for the resurrection of the dead. Mr. Capin estimated that they have likely five cremations in a span of a year which means that cremation is still not fully accepted in the community.

VI. RELEVANCE OF FUNERAL INDUSTRY TO ILIGAN

Funeral practice had transformed into an industry that offers services for the dead and affect societies as well. To French structural-functionalism Emile Durkheim, society is in a state of equilibrium and that the various social institutions (e.g., family, economy, and politics) function on behalf of each other (as cited by Leming et al. n.d). Meaning, this approach looks at the positive aspects and the balance in family, economy, and politics that death brings. Structural-functional theory explains how all parts of society need to function well in order to keep things in balance and in order. In societies, death brings

"togetherness". In the case of Iligan, Gerardo Halili said that the funeral industry has always been providing a helping hand to every Iliganon from all walks of life regardless of religion, social position to offer their dearly departed a decent funeral service and to the bereaved families and communities as well. Funeral home indeed brings togetherness and consolation (Leming et al.n.d).

Moreover, funeral industry in 1950 also ignited the mandatory civil registration providing the basis of legal identity and to track all births and deaths, to identify most pressing reasons of health issues and causes of deaths. Before standardization of funeral industry dead bodies were buried in different ways resulting to health and sanitation problems. The funeral industry prompted a proper disposal of the dead. As pointed put by Dr. Jeff Chancellor on Presidential Decree No. 856 (Code on Sanitation of the Philippines), the funeral industry does a significant role in sanitation. In 1970s, at the height of MNLF and Barracuda-ILAGA insurgencies in Lanao areas, the funeral industry has been at the forefront of extending assistance to conflict-affected communities. Mansueto Funeral Homes, in particular, catered most to the dead soldiers such as the death of soldiers at Pantar Bridge who were brought down to Iligan for funeral arrangements (Lanto,2018). In an interview with Salgado, there were also workers of National Power Corporation (NPC) and their sub-contractors who were served. And on December 12, 1987, when Philippine Airlines Flight 443 crashed at Mount Gurain, near Iligan-Maria Cristina Airport News Straits Times (1987) reported that over 15 people confirmed dead including an Australian national were also brought to Mansueto funeral homes. Typhoon Sendong (Washi) in December 2011 which resulted to mass deaths also witness the role of funeral industry as well as the Marawi Siege in 2017. As Clifton D. Bryan and Dennis L. Peck (2009) said, despite the morbidity of the funeral industry it played a significant role in disinfection and protection of public health. Thus, the impact of death is not only limited to the dead only but to the society as a whole.

VII. LOCAL POLITICS, ECONOMY AND ILIGAN FUNERAL INDUSTRY

Funeral home industry affects the political scenario of Iligan city. The local funeral homes, Capin and Mary Venus have become a privileged market for political ascension and platforms of local politicians. Danilo Capin's *Funeraria* implements former Congressman Vicente 'Varf' Belmonte's Priority Development Assistance Funds (PDAF)-funded projects, "MagtamVarfyayong sa Kasubo" (Together at Sorrow) and "MagtamVarfyayong sa Transportasyon" (Transportation Services Assistance). It aims to help indigent Iliganon for funeral assistance, free coffins, flowers, and services for funeral procession, tents for wakes and other discounted funeral facilities like lights. In 2016, the then Mayor Celso G. Regencia also launched a funeral assistance program to the indigent Iliganon especially in embalming, transportation and coffin. This is made possible with Mayor Regencia's tie-up with Alfredo Entera of Mary Venus funeral homes to help poor Iliganon. Indeed, a closer link between politics and funeral industry. While the local politicians are given the chance in making them serviceable to the people, the funeral industry likewise managed to sustain their market. But as to how far will this noble service be allowed by law so as not to put color to the right to elect public officials freely is something that should be looked into. This may also probably explain why there is

loyalty to a certain political leader and the continuity of his power.

There is money in death. Funeral home industry opens door to more economic or job opportunities such as coffin-makers, embalmers, morticians and undertakers, funeral tailors, florists and epitaph makers. Tailoring shops were tapped for moth cloth or clothing necessary in funeral arrangements from coffin to wakes. The Chinese residents and elites in the city promoted the economic development of the *Funeraria*. Fifteen major industries boost urban growth and ballooning of population thus contributing to the success of the city's funeral industry (Salgado, 1989). In a span of a decade *Funeraria* Halili and Mansueto Funeral homes experienced a lucrative growth. Upgraded facilities in embalming, chapel, transportation and the establishment in totality boast the locality. With the economic development of Iligan, more and more corporate businesses are flocking the city. The advent of corporate funeral homes such as St. Peter Chapels and Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapels Inc. somehow changed the economic realm of the funeral industry yet maintains a friendly competition with the local ones. Corporate-owned funeral homes' edge is their modern facilities, especially in coffins and chapel. New innovative creations have been introduced such as plastic coffin, e-burrol that boosted other sectors including those IT-related. This at first glance may be considered a threat to the *Funeraria* industry. More upper middle class adopt modern funeral services for convenience and practicality. Sad thing is that these innovations and technology seem to compromise the culture of the Iliganon. The culture and tradition of *Funeraria* especially on the closeness and oneness of family seem to have decline. It is but proper to talk about the appropriateness of technology such that whatever modernity brings the tradition on family values remain and sustain. After all, *Funeraria* sustain the family and community bond.

Moreover, while we do not wish calamities to happen for the *Funeraria* to be sustained, it is a sad reality that natural and manmade calamities make *Funeraria* alive. The death toll in the 2017 Marawi siege was an economic gain to the *Funeraria*, the same gain they have during the typhoon Sendong. However, it is better if there are other ways to help sustain *Funeraria* so as to have balance in the lives of every Iliganon be it socio-political and economic.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Based on the study, there appears to be a need to discuss relevant funeral needs of the community and the impact of modernity and innovations brought by modern corporate funeral homes. Internet made funeral service a new culture. That is the current trend-business in death or consumerism brought by corporate funeral homes (Giroux, 2003). While there are economic rewards in the introduction of modern corporate homes, in silence the community is gradually losing its family's highly valued traditions. Common observation among the people is that they find the absence of one or more family members forgivable in merrymaking or festive moments but not in times of grief. They say, the only thing that binds family as one is the practice on wake and funeral. It makes family strong, united and sustained amidst change and modernity. After all, family keeps culture and society. With the advent of modern corporate funeral homes, technology allows conveyance of bereavement thru social media and video messaging. Thus the tradition of actual presence during wake is

relaxed. Here if not checked, closer family relations may become less significant. This study appreciates this along with how funeral traditions evolve and how modernity challenged the socio-political economic needs of the community vis a vis culture and family. While we cannot escape change and modernity, ways on how to balance and keep things in harmony with high valued traditions must be looked into. This is the idea of sustaining the community through a balance between an appropriate technology and family traditions. The narratives of the *Funeraria* on challenges and modern changes indicate an almost dying culture. The academe can be a forum for its scholarly and academic discussion. Moreover, socio-economists can explore more about *Funeraria* as being identified with the people, the masses who could hardly afford modern amenities. These small businessmen must be protected against the powerful corporations to assure they continue to serve the majority needy. This majority can be of help in sustaining the culture, identity and heritage of the Iliganon. Considering that there is money in death, economists as well as local government officials must consider measures that will keep in harmony and balance both the *Funeraria* and the cosmopolitan funeral homes. As Trompette (2013) closely links politics and funeral markets, this study on *Funeraria* can also be of help to policy makers in preventing politicians in taking advantage of the vulnerability of people in times of need and to maintain and assure democracy and the freedom to choose leaders remains. Indeed, funeral industry plays a significant role from public health, to the dead and to the society as a whole (Bryan and Peck, 2009). This study is an eye-opener to the community on how can funeral industry and culture be sustained amidst modernity.

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