

CULTURAL FACETS OF COCKFIGHTING

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<https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2022.0454>

ABSTRACT

Cultural Education, as it discovers the different manifestations of culture, has its ultimate goal of providing an insight on the cycle, or for some, whirlwind that engulfs the society. With a geographical landscape as unique as the Philippines, the diversity of cultural heritage that is definitive of its national cultural identity is a fortress.

This study is an in-depth investigatory paper on the cultural facets of the age-old gaming of the Filipino alpha: “sabong” or cockfighting. Through generations, the Filipino men have been patronizing, if not, addicted to this game. But for it to sustain through hundreds of years, one must ask; is it a mere game or gambling, or is it a culture shaped by whose lives were affected during its continuance?

Key Words: Diversity, Age-old gaming, Gambling, Patronizing, Cultural identity.

1.INTRODUCTION

Cultural facets of cockfighting could vary in terms of the environment where it thrives, develops, and is sustained. Essentially, to highlight the cultural aspect of Cockfighting, this study explored the fundamental basis of its practice, the environment where it began and continue to exist, and the extent of its impact on the lives of those engaged in it.

On the other hand, critics of the cockfight speak of a shocking, cruel, inhuman blood sport, which relates to unproductive betting passions.

Maybe the cockfight would receive more approval in the public if the injuries of the cocks were minimized. In an attempt to reduce the cock injuries, Thailand tries to go in such a way with new regulations. In this cockpit, cocks get "box-gloves" and the fighting time is restricted on several rounds with pauses. A cock is declared as loser if it runs away, gives up three times its fighting position or shows injuries. The success of the takeover of the new arrangements in Thailand should be examined. If there are positive results a transfer of regulations to the other countries with cockfighting tradition should be discussed.

This study endeavored to uncover some consequences on the realities of the positive cultural aspects of cockfighting which can be taught in school. Even though the links be men,

gambling, and cockfighting can be drawn by money, Cockfighting, on the other hand, may be seen beyond gambling. There is an anthropological link where it presents itself as a cultural phenomenon that weaves men and cockerels together. Through this study, the mind of the students will be enlightened that it does not focus on gambling alone but rather perceive cockfighting as sports and recreation, and economic pursuit as part of the cultural traditions among Filipinos. These also aimed to identify what cultural aspects are associated with cockfighting.

What continues to be forbidden are the “tupadas” or occasional cockfights in the barrios—mostly referred to as backyard fights—which are common during barrio fiestas, during funeral wakes, weddings, and other occasions. Through generations, Filipino men patronize, if not become addicted to this game. But for it to sustain through more than a century, one must be curious to learn that Cockfighting is not a mere form of gambling which this study purports to bring to the fore that Filipinos seem unmindful of their cultural significance. Hence, its implicit contribution to the nurturing of social cohesion is taken for granted.

The history of cockfighting in the Philippines can be traced from manuscripts, novels, and articles that date back from the Spanish time. Although not having originally originated from the Philippines, the Filipinos have localized the elements involved in it, from "kristo", "tart", "tupada", "derby", “llamador”, “doctor”, etc., are just a few examples of how our local "sabungeros" transformed cockfighting into something that is truly Filipino. The "tupada" or the small-scale fight would then frequent the wakes, weddings, during Good Friday and almost all occasions especially in the rural areas.

2. METHODOLOGY

This basic ethnographic research includes immersion and long-term study of the observed culture of cockfighting. This is the essential portion of ethnography that comprises primary research. The researcher spent an extended period in and among the observed group of people involved in cockfighting learning their routines and customs. The researcher observed and, in some instances, tried cockfighting as participant/observer. This allows the researcher to understand cultural practices through experience as well as observation

This study employed secondary data analysis, fieldwork, observing activities of interest, recording field notes and observations, participating in activities during observations (participant observation), and carrying out various forms of informal and semi-structured ethnographic interviewing.

The researcher started from the Barangay San Agustin in Malabon the place where the study was conducted up to the operator of the cockpit arena. The researcher went to cockfight arena and talked with the respondents needed in his interview. In cases where the respondents manifested readiness for an interview with their due permission, at that moment, the interviews were conducted right away. Others preferred to set an appointment and a day for an interview. All

interviews were done in the house of their respondents and mostly were scheduled in the afternoon and weekdays. An average of thirty minutes was noted to finish the interview for most of the respondents. Respondent were asked to recommend and help the researcher in identifying the next respondents.

At first, the researcher simply talked to a cock enthusiast, a friend of his. He talked about his experience in cockfighting as a habit. The researcher said that lie was doing a study about cockfighting. The story)telling started and the study began.

They came with the researcher to the cockpit arena just to observe and later talked about the involved spectators inside, casually and with curiosity. Afterward the researcher set the interview with different people the cockpit area. The respondents included out of school youth, businessman from middle class, the unemployed and even students who were there. There were women but they were inside as workers, vendors but not as bettors.

The next time the researcher went to the cockpit arena, he brought necessary materials for documentation of what really was happening inside the arena, i.e. notebook, camera, recorder and other paraphernalia needed for the study.

The researcher was not satisfied with the answers; hence, a house lo house interviews were conducted to make the study a genuine one and finally to fulfill answer the queries of the study.



2.1. Participant of the Study

This study is direct and straight-forward in nature; thus, it is essential that the respondents of the study are characters that thrive from within the core of the cockfighting world. This study

included the respondents of a set of male and female cockfighting enthusiasts who were into cockfighting for 10 years, a breeders or raisers, a set of women respondents who participate around Cockfighting (Cockpit Attendants, "Aristos", cock- vitamins sellers and vendors inside the (Cockpit arena) and sabong operators or in charge of cockpit arena.

This study made use of purposive sampling. It is a purposive sampling technique that aims to achieve a sample whose units (e.g., people, cases, etc.) share the same (or very similar) characteristics or traits (e.g., a group of people that are similar in terms of age, gender, background, occupation, etc.). Although the study aims to gather answers from 100% of the all the target respondents the researcher is to shift to purposive sampling with consideration of the number of willing respondents to respond to each of the questions in the interview.

2.2. Presentation of the Study

This study was divided into eight chapters. Chapter I introduced the study made on cockfighting. It presented the objectives of the study, its significance, the delimitation of study and the methodology of research applied to gather the pertinent ethnographic data. A review of pertinent literature was presented in Chapter II. A summary of anthropological study on the nature of cockfighting in the Philippines and other countries was presented. The review was vital to put in proper perspectives the context the cultural facets of cockfighting. In Chapter III the profile of Sabungero, their character, the effect of their past time to the family and to the community were described the persons who were involved in the area and how they contributed to the community. This Chapter also discussed the terms used called "inside the arena". Gearing ready for the scene was next to be discussed, what were the preparation, training and conditioning as well as feeding the fighter cocks. It was imperative to pinpoint what were expected to happen in every cockfight that amazed both the bettors and mere spectators during and after the scene as viewed by the researcher as a newcomer. What made them decide to make cockfighting really a past time and not a gambling or vice. There is also needed to define the perception of cock fighting in the community, since the study focuses on the moral values and how it benefits the country.



2.3. Research Instrument



As the researcher, the instrument used is qualitative study, an interview guide was used to guide the researcher in obtaining pertinent data that would give qualitative results and interpretation in which only the researcher analyzed and formulated conclusion from. thus, the empirical way of analyzing data had been used io minimal hence, credibility of the variables tested would lie not on numbers but on intricate questions or open-ended interviews which the respondents answered.

The first part of the interview guide dealt with the nature of cockfighting in terms of raising of cocks, derby scene and after the derby.

The second part dealt with the perception of respondents in cockfighting in terms of sports and recreation, cultural tradition, social value, and economic pursuit.

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure



The data obtained from the participant observation and field inspection were recorded in a field journal. It is noteworthy to mention that the researcher opted to become a participant in some

“Tupadas” or occasionally big derby fights just to get familiarized with persons involved, and bettors in the cockpit arena. Observations then provided data coming from actual; interviews conducted. Each interview respondent had to be identified as recommended and these included the cockers, the organizers, the “Kristos”, the cock handlers, and bettors themselves.

All data gathered were recorded in the researcher’s journal; they were sorted and classified as part of the data gathering procedure. Furthermore, the details of the above discussions are presented as part of Research methodology.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. How may cockfighting be described in terms of breeding, raising, preparing the fowls and expenditures?

Successful breeder will always refer to the victories of his breeding lines. Some had to go to the province and in different countries just to look for the good bloodlines of the cocks. Expensive vitamins were also given to fighting cocks to make sure the condition before the derby. Proper preparation is important. Raising the cocks requires more attention and careful handling especially in mock pairing and selection of contender cocks. Gamecocks should undergo proper training, feeding, and breeding.



2. How are the “sultada” taking place?

During the games, betting is a manner of confidence and honor. Regardless of game results, respect and sportsmanship should be observed. Prior to the fight, gamecocks are being paired (uIutan) according to several factors such as breed, wingspan, beak size, gameness, weight, and size. The dead Cock is mostly handed over to the winner as a trophy or consumption. To the rich, death is accepted with a shrug, and “on the next fight”. Most of them agreed loser Cock are handed over to the winner as a trophy as a traditional practice. For as long as Filipino traditional sports would give

every result of the game, not tie, but win or lose the tradition of cockfighting will continue. Winners give to the “Kristos” after taking the prize of bet, mostly a tip of ten percent and losers are free.



3.How is Cockfighting perceived as

It is perceived that in sports and recreation, cockfight players stated they usually go to cockfighting area during weekend, especially on Sunday. Some of them claimed that after Sunday mass, they go to cockpit arena together with her family is their recreation. However, majority of the respondents revealed that they go to cockfighting with their Kumpadres and colleagues. Also, most respondent use their free time to witness cockfighting to relax or recover from problems which are family related. Economically, cockfighting is beneficial to our country. Owner and players stated that they do not participate in cockfighting to earn money. They participate for pleasure and recreation. Cockfighting highly attracts both foreign and local tourists. Since cockfighting were banned in other countries, foreigner will come and witness cockfighting when having a vacation in the Philippines.



4.What cultural aspect are associated with cockfighting?



In cultural aspects of cockfighting, traditionally, respondents agreed that cockfighting should be part of national heritage of the Philippines. Some suggested that to know the identity of a Filipino, one should know why they have chosen to play and to preserve cockfighting. Thus, the tradition has survived many generations and has evolved to become one of the most lucrative endeavors in Philippine way of life.

Cockfighting is described by the cockfight enthusiasts.

Successful breeder will always refer to the victories of his breeding lines in the pits. They all agreed that the winning should continue their bloodline. Some had gone to the province and in different countries just to look for the good bloodline of cocks. Expensive vitamins were also given to fighting cocks to make sure the condition before the derby. They believe that proper preparation of gamecocks is important. Gamecocks should undergo proper training, feeding, and breeding. During the games, betting is a manner of confidence and honor. Regardless, of game result respect and sportsmanship is as much. Prior to the fight, gamecocks are being paired (Ulután) according to several factors such as breed, wingspan, beak size, gameness, weight, and size.

The dead cock is mostly handed over to the winner as a trophy for consumption. To the rich, death is accepted with a shrug, and "on to the next fight." Most of them agreed loser cocks are handed over the winner as a trophy consumption as a traditional practice. For as long as Filipino traditional sports would give every result of the game, not he, but win or lose the tradition of Cockfighting will continue. Winners give to the "Kristo", after taking the prize of bet, mostly a tip of ten percent, and losers are free from that.

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4. CONCLUSION



Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

Based on the shared description from the players successful breeder will always refer to the victories of the breeding lines in the pits, have their own secret nutritional plan for the game cock. It is agreed as a set of beliefs, that before a fight the cock is mostly not allowed to have sex because this could weaken the fighting spirit and caging of cock in darkness, blowing of smoke of cigarettes in the eyes of cock and the spreading of chili on the anus will result in aggressiveness of the cocks. Cockfighting enthusiasts revealed that they have enjoyed every fight. \Whether win or lose, they continue to do this cockfighting.

Enthusiasts stated that they usually go to Cockfighting arena during weekends, usually do it on Sundays, used their free time to relax and recover front problems or faintly and a form of therapy. Some say Cockfighting is not just to earn money; they do this for pleasure and recreation and eyed that cockfighting is beneficial to the country's economy and greatly attracts tourist and would give jobs to the people around the cockfighting such as vendors, ddoctors of cocks, gaffers, bet collectors, bet callers, sweepers on the arena, electrician, janitor, security office, breeders, employees of the company, TV owners, pharmaceutical companies, etc.

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