

Confronting the Country's Fault Lines: Insights of Legal Advocates on Social Issues and Discontentment

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a qualitative research method employing the Transcendental Phenomenology Approach. It is largely developed by Husserl and is a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology seeking to understand the perspectives of the legal advocates on major national issues in the Philippines. The research was conducted in a community-based environment located in Barangay Punta, Tisa, and Labangon, with informants situated across urban centers and rural localities, ensuring perspectives from both institutional and grassroots contexts.

This study explores the evolving role of legal advocates in the Philippines as they confront pressing national and global issues, ranging from human rights and governance to socio-economic and environmental challenges. Anchored in H.L.A. Hart's Legal Positivism Theory and supported by Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance and Social Comparison theories, the research highlights how advocacy operates at the intersection of law, morality, and social mobilization. Using literature reviews, case studies, and interviews with 10 informants drawn from legal practitioners, the findings reveal that legal victories alone are insufficient unless reinforced by grassroots organizing, policy reforms, and international cooperation.

The study extracted significant statements relevant to the research phenomenon from the informants' transcripts. These statements were then formatted into a cluster, developing twelve (12) emergent themes. These themes addressed the sub-problems and are summarized as follows: (a) Perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines, (b) Perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues, (c) Views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues, (d) Legal community's assessment of the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues, (e) Effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country, and (f). Perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy-making.

The findings of this study may contribute to a deeper understanding of the legal community's views and inform future legal education, policy development, and advocacy efforts. The study found that legal advocacy in the Philippines is most effective when legal victories are tied to grassroots mobilization, policy reforms, and international cooperation. Filipino advocates influence both local and global law, as seen in maritime disputes and migrant labor protections, but challenges remain in ensuring judicial independence amid political interference and limited resources. Human rights advocacy is crucial, with NGOs defending activists against red-tagging and repression, while governance issues such as corruption and weak enforcement highlight the need for stronger institutions. Socio-economic inequality persists, particularly for farmers and overseas workers affected by policies like the Rice Tariffication Law, and environmental justice emerges as a vital concern linking disaster resilience to social equity. Overall, the findings emphasize that durable change requires holistic advocacy that bridges legal precedent with community realities and strengthens enforcement to safeguard democracy.

Keywords: Legal advocacy, Human rights, Judicial independence, Governance, Socio-economic inequality, Environmental justice, Red-tagging, Grassroots mobilization, International law, and Democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Looking at the role of legal advocates who confront the most entrenched issues in society, from systemic rights abuses to authoritarian overreach. The goal is to figure out why this work matters so much for social stability. When comparing what's happening in different regions, it's obvious that shutting people out of the legal system breeds resentment and chips away at democracy. This research breaks down how global networks and international courts are trying to intervene, and highlights some key takeaways for the people who actually fund and shape these legal efforts (Rights, 2021).

The research uses a mix of literature reviews and case studies to see how strategic litigation and advocacy work in practice. By looking at these together, you can see how courtroom battles, grassroots organizing, and international pressure interact. The findings suggest that legal wins are rarely a 'silver bullet.' Instead, durable change only sticks when it's tied to local mobilization and policy reform. It's a reminder that we need to stop thinking of legal tools as isolated solutions and start focusing more on the structural fixes that are currently being overlooked (ICJ, 2025).

This research points to a major shift in how we should handle advocacy. Legal teams need to realize that precedent-setting cases only go so far; they have to be linked to the people on the ground if they're ever going to stick. We also need donors to rethink their approach instead of just funding short-term projects, they should be investing in the local actors who are there for the long haul. And honestly, international bodies need to get better at enforcement. A court decision is meaningless if there's no mechanism to back it up. If we're going to use the law to rebuild trust, it has to be part of a coordinated, all-in effort, not just a stand-alone legal challenge (Camins, 2023).

Legal advocates globally are confronting the systemic issues of inequality and authoritarianism that leave marginalized communities without a voice. Because this exclusion destabilizes democracies, activists are increasingly turning to international courts and global networks to demand accountability. By pushing for cross-border reforms, these groups are demonstrating that the law can be a unifying force that transcends national boundaries (Vet & Sundstrom, 2024).

International law is often dominated by the most powerful countries, leaving smaller and developing nations at a disadvantage because they lack the same legal resources. That's what makes organizations like the Independent International Legal Advocates (IILA) so valuable. Instead of just talking about change, they actively work with these countries, providing them with practical training and support to help them stand up for themselves. This approach helps prevent the most influential nations from always calling the shots and moves us closer to a world where justice isn't defined solely by the richest states (Stewart, 2024).

Filipino legal advocates do more than just handle local matters; they're also influencing international law. They take on big global challenges such as climate change, cybersecurity, and geopolitical conflicts. Our legal experts are key to interpreting international laws for the local context, ensuring that global principles make sense for our specific situation. China Sea case we had against China; that arbitration set a major new standard in international maritime law. It really showed how our own legal efforts here can actually influence global legal rules. Plus, Filipino legal experts are constantly working with colleagues in other countries. They're fighting for better protections for our migrant workers and pushing for international labor agreements that genuinely safeguard Filipinos working abroad. All these efforts truly highlight how our national legal concerns are deeply linked to larger global challenges, solidifying the Philippines' influence in shaping international legal norms (Casis & Benosa, 2017).

When national issues pop up, often find legal advocates right here in the Philippines heading straight into communities. They use local laws to tackle problems that genuinely affect people's daily lives. At this community level, they focus on things like protecting human rights, ensuring our environment stays healthy, and defending labor rights. They always do this with a strong eye on what our Constitution promises and what the existing laws lay out. For example, cities like Baguio have led the way with their own human rights initiatives, even passing

ordinances to shield activists from red-tagging and political persecution. These local efforts really highlight where national legal protections might be falling short, which then pushes legal professionals to advocate for broader reforms that align with our constitutional principles. Similarly, local governments are vital in making sure environmental laws are followed, with legal advocates working hand-in-hand with policymakers to ensure compliance with both national and international environmental standards (Go, 2023).

Beyond just governance, lawyers in the Philippines are also stepping up to tackle socio-economic issues that hit our most marginalized communities hard. For instance, labor rights, especially for our overseas Filipino workers, are still a huge concern. Local legal advocates are really pushing for stronger protections for them through both diplomatic talks and international agreements. Also find ongoing discussions about autonomy and decentralization shaping the legal world here, as local governments want more say in how policies are put into practice to deal with challenges unique to their regions. This blend of local and national legal concerns really highlights how the role of legal advocates in the Philippines is changing. They're making sure our legal systems stay responsive, not just to what's happening on the ground in our communities, but also to the bigger national priorities (Tiongco, 2021).

As student researchers, we set out to understand the role of legal advocates in the Philippines and how they navigate the country's most pressing national issues. These advocates rely on their knowledge of the Constitution, laws, and case history to influence policy, raise public awareness, and push for essential reforms. Our goal is to examine how they interpret and address major concerns like human rights, judicial integrity, governance, and socio-economic policies. By listening to these perspectives, we hope to gain a much clearer look at the ethical dilemmas and legal hurdles currently affecting our communities. We need to understand how legal advocates are adapting to these new challenges. Filling these research gaps would give us a much clearer picture of the role of legal professionals play in shaping laws both here and abroad.

Theoretical Background

This study is mainly anchored in the Legal Positivism Theory by Herbert Lionel Adolphus Hart (1961). Supported by Cognitive Theory by Leon Festinger (1957) and Social Comparison Theory by Leon Festinger (1954).

In his seminal work *The Concept of Law*, H.L.A. Hart masterfully defends legal positivism by establishing a clear, necessary separation between legal validity and morality. From a positivist standpoint, a law's legitimacy does not hinge on its ethical righteousness, but rather on its adherence to established institutional processes. Hart's brilliant breakthrough was demonstrating that an effective legal system relies on a dual-layer architecture: primary rules that regulate human conduct, and secondary rules that govern how those primary rules are created, amended, and adjudicated. This elegant distinction is vital because it transforms a chaotic set of customs into a unified, systemic structure capable of maintaining institutional order and legal clarity (Hart, 1961).

The true cornerstone of Hart's theory is the "rule of recognition," which serves as the ultimate benchmark for a law's validity. By arguing that a law's legitimacy depends entirely on meeting these established systemic criteria rather than its alignment with morality Hart introduces a highly sophisticated and objective approach to jurisprudence. This focus on institutional structures over subjective ethics is precisely what makes his positivism so practical; it ensures that the legal system remains stable, allowing laws to be interpreted and enforced with genuine consistency and predictability (Hart, 1961).

What makes Hart's legal positivism so compelling is his rejection of the idea that law stems from some objective moral truth; rather, he frames it as a highly functional, human-made institution. The real brilliance of his model lies in the interplay between primary and secondary rules. While primary rules simply dictate standard societal behavior, secondary rules provide the necessary framework for creating, adapting, and enforcing those very regulations. This structural division is vital because it gives the legal system the flexibility to evolve alongside shifting societal needs without sacrificing its baseline consistency and predictability (Hart, 1994).

The enduring strength of Hart's legal positivism lies in the unmatched clarity and institutional stability it brings to jurisprudence. By anchoring legal validity strictly in formal procedures and recognized rules, his framework

eliminates the ambiguity of subjective moral debates, ensuring uniform application across the board. This predictability is indispensable for the survival of intricate legal systems, where explicit, standardized rules serve as the bedrock for administrative efficiency and objective dispute resolution (Hart, 1994).

One of the most compelling arguments for legal positivism is its inherent adaptability to shifting societal demands. By uncoupling the legal framework from exhausting moral debates, the state can amend and update legislation based on purely pragmatic requirements. This utilitarian influence is highly evident in modern, codified statutory systems, which prioritize structured, systematic enforcement. In the end, the core advantages of this model lie in its structural precision, its strict boundary between law and ethics, and its administrative efficiency allowing the entire legal apparatus to function seamlessly without being paralyzed by subjective moral disputes (Hart, 1961).

Leon Festinger's groundbreaking 1957 formulation of Cognitive Dissonance Theory provides a vital framework for understanding human behavior by exposing the psychological discomfort that occurs when our beliefs, attitudes, or actions conflict. Festinger's brilliant insight is that this psychological tension serves as a powerful motivator; it actively drives individuals to eliminate the contradiction. To restore internal equilibrium, people will dynamically alter their convictions, rationalizations, or behaviors. Ultimately, the theory underscores an essential truth about human psychology: we possess an innate drive for internal consistency, and we will actively deploy cognitive strategies to resolve psychological friction and alleviate distress (Festinger, 1957).

The enduring value of Festinger's theory lies in its accurate mapping of the human drive for internal alignment between cognition and behavior. When psychological dissonance disrupts this harmony, creating an internal tug-of-war, individuals are naturally compelled to mitigate the resulting stress. This corrective process often manifests in various ways: individuals might shift their underlying beliefs, formulate new rationalizations for their conduct, or selectively seek out information that validates their perspective. Because of its profound predictive power, this framework has generated extensive empirical research across diverse fields, including clinical psychology, consumer marketing, and behavioral economics offering an indispensable tool for deciphering how people navigate complex decision-making and rationalize conflicting realities (Festinger, 1957).

Cognitive Dissonance Theory remains a cornerstone of social psychology precisely because it offers such a profound explanation of how individuals navigate the psychological distress of conflicting thoughts and actions. Festinger formulated this enduring framework after observing the powerful human tendency to rationalize decisions, even when confronted with undeniable counter-evidence. He compellingly argued that the resulting dissonance acts as an intense psychological driver, actively compelling individuals to realign their attitudes or alter their behaviors to escape the discomfort (McLeod, 2023).

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The extensive body of empirical research surrounding this theory continuously validates its profound impact on human decision-making, attitudinal shifts, and self-perception. A classic illustration of this mechanism occurs during post-choice justification: when an individual faces a difficult decision between two equally appealing alternatives, they will systematically exaggerate the benefits of their selected option while minimizing the merits of the rejected one. This psychological realignment is highly adaptive, allowing the individual to preserve internal consistency and insulate themselves against post-decisional regret (Verma, 2021).

Cognitive Dissonance Theory is well-supported because it helps us understand basic psychological processes behind how we make decisions and change our behavior. It gives us a way to grasp why people feel uncomfortable when they encounter contradictions and how they go about sorting out those conflicts. The theory has been backed up by lots of experiments, including Festinger's famous study where people who were paid less to lie about enjoying a tedious task actually ended up changing their attitude about it more than those

who were paid a lot (Kamiya, 2023).

Festinger's 1954 Social Comparison Theory offers a brilliant framework for understanding how we evaluate our own abilities, beliefs, and traits relative to others. His core insight is that human beings possess an innate drive for self-evaluation, which becomes especially vital when objective standards are missing. In the end, this comparative mechanism serves as an essential tool for mapping our self-concept, recognizing personal strengths, and defining our place within the social hierarchy (Cherry, 2024).

Festinger also pointed out two main ways we compare ourselves. There's upward comparison, which is when we look at folks, we consider more skilled or successful than us. Surprisingly, this can actually be a good thing because it often pushes us to get better. Then there's a downward comparison, where we compare ourselves to people, we see as less capable. This can give our self-esteem a real boost by reminding us of our own strengths. Ultimately, these kinds of comparisons significantly shape how we view ourselves, what drives us, and even how we behave in social situations, influencing how we engage with the world around us and make choices (Cherry 2024).

Social Comparison Theory provides a vital framework for understanding how individuals mitigate self-doubt by utilizing others as benchmarks for their own capabilities and convictions. In the absence of objective metrics, this comparative process becomes an essential tool that directly shapes self-evaluation, decision-making, and psychological well-being. A clear practical example of this is seen in academic settings, where a student evaluates their performance against peers not just to gauge their current standing, but to strategically map out their future goals (VerPlanck, 2025).

This theory really brings home just how much other people influence us. We often end up changing our beliefs or even how we act simply because of how we compare ourselves to others. That's a big reason why you see group conformity everyone's basically looking for approval and wants to fit in with what's considered normal. And let's be honest, all that constant comparing, especially with the perfectly crafted lives we see on social media these days, can unfortunately cause a lot of anxiety and unhappiness. We're just always measuring ourselves against these often-unrealistic images of success (Kayala, Madhu, & Werkun, 2023).

Festinger's theory is solid because it really helps us make sense of fundamental human behavior in social settings. It's just natural for people to want to evaluate themselves, and comparing themselves to others offers a practical way to do that. The theory is backed up by psychological research that shows we constantly compare ourselves to understand our abilities, figure out what we want to achieve, and manage our feelings (Cherry, 2024).

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 10368 (Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013) – Provides compensation for victims of human rights violations during the Martial Law era. Republic Act No. 10368, also known as the Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013, plays a crucial role in addressing some of the Philippines' most pressing issues by seeking justice for those who suffered under the Marcos regime (Philippines C., 2013).

This law stands as living proof of the suffering endured under Martial Law, refusing to let anyone sugarcoat or rewrite the brutality of that era. It keeps alive the fight for accountability, sending a clear message that those in power can't escape justice for their crimes a truth that still hits home today as new reports surface of unchecked abuses and violence.

More than just legal action, it offers real healing, giving survivors both financial support and the dignity of being seen, acknowledging how deeply state violence has wounded them. Now, with the Marcos family once again holding power, this law takes on even greater meaning it becomes our shield against historical amnesia and a warning against sliding back into dictatorship.

In 1987 Constitution, Article III (Bill of Rights) – Guarantees fundamental rights such as due process, freedom of speech, and protection against unlawful detention. It establishes protections against government overreach and ensures civil liberties (Philippines S. C., 1986).

The Bill of Rights, found in Article III of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, is essentially the foundation of our

individual freedoms. It's meant to prevent the government from overstepping its authority. You can think of it as your personal protection. It ensures crucial rights like a fair legal process (due process) before anyone loses their life, freedom, or possessions. Plus, everyone gets equal treatment under the law, no matter who they are. It explicitly bans discrimination and unfair legal distinctions.

Then there's the big one: freedom of speech. This right lets you express your opinions, get involved in public talks, and even challenge what the government does, all without being silenced. But remember, there are sensible limits you can't just spread damaging lies (libel) or stir up violence. When you combine all these rights, they're the foundation that keeps our democracy sturdy, protecting your personal freedoms while making sure things stay organized.

The Rice Tariffication Law (also known as Republic Act No. 11203) completely changed how rice is imported into the Philippines. Previously, the government tightly controlled rice imports. Now, private companies can import as much rice as they wish, provided they pay the necessary import tax, or "tariff." The main goal was to keep our rice supply steady and prices stable by boosting competition and cutting down on government interference (Congress, 2019).

A big part of this law is the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF). This fund gets all the money from those import taxes, and it's meant to help our own farmers. It helps farmers get better machinery, superior rice varieties, financial aid, and education. While the aim was to lower rice prices for everyone, the law has drawn considerable criticism.

A lot of our local farmers are struggling significantly, finding it hard to compete with less expensive imported rice. This means the policy remains a hot topic, as leaders try to balance economic liberalization with the needs of local agriculture.

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 (you might also hear it called Republic Act No. 11479) was put in place to give the Philippine government more power to fight terrorism. It basically updated the rules for how they can find, stop, and punish terrorist acts, replacing an older law from 2007. This new law expanded what counts as "terrorism," now including things that cause a lot of damage to important infrastructure, public safety, or national security. It also gives authorities the ability to watch people, arrest them without a warrant, and hold them for longer if they're suspected of being involved in terrorism (Congress, 2020).

One of the most talked-about and controversial parts of this law is that a group called the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) can label individuals or groups as terrorists without needing a court's approval. This has raised a lot of worries that the law could be abused and might violate people's basic freedoms. Critics are worried that because the law defines terrorism and 'incitement' so vaguely, it could easily be used to silence people who disagree with the government, shut down activists, and violate human rights. Because of these fears, several groups have even asked the Supreme Court to rule on whether the law is truly constitutional, especially concerning how it might affect our freedom of speech and our right to a fair legal process.

Despite all this criticism, those who support the law say it's essential for dealing with new security threats and making sure the Philippines' anti-terrorism policies match international standards. The law does say there are safeguards to prevent abuse and that human rights must be respected when it's put into practice. However, there's still a lot of debate about how it's actually being used and what its true impact on civil liberties will be.

The article describes national concerns as matters vital to public well-being, national security, and socio-economic progress. It identifies the 1987 Philippine Constitution as the foundational legal document, especially Article II (Declaration of Principles and State Policies), which prioritizes sovereignty, democracy, and compliance with international law. Key laws like the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and Environmental Protection Laws are analyzed, showing how legal frameworks influence governance. The functions of government bodies such as the Office of the President, Congress, and Judiciary are reviewed in relation to policy enforcement. Additionally, the article discusses public engagement methods, including judicial review and legislative advocacy, underscoring the role of legal activism in influencing national debates (Citizen, 2025)

The article '10 NGOs Advocating for Human Rights in the Philippines' explores how various groups are battling human rights violations, political repression, and social injustices here in the Philippines. It highlights the worsening human rights situation and emphasizes the critical role these NGOs play in driving major, widespread changes (Careers, 2021).

For instance, Amnesty International Philippines is leading global efforts to raise awareness and advocate for stronger human rights policies. Meanwhile, the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) provides support to families whose loved ones have been forcibly disappeared. Karapatan keeps track of state-sponsored violence and political repression, bringing abuses to light. Meanwhile, the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) steps in to offer legal aid to those who've been victims of extrajudicial killings or unlawful detention. The Gabriela Women's Party is a strong advocate for gender justice, actively fighting against the violence and economic discrimination that women face. Finally, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) monitors political prisoners, advocating for them to get fair trials and humane treatment. And then there's Human Rights Watch (HRW) – Philippines, which is an international group that impartially investigates human rights abuses and publishes reports to influence policy changes. All these NGOs combined serve as vital protectors of human rights. They work by pursuing legal cases, running public awareness campaigns, and organizing communities to demand accountability and safeguard vulnerable groups.

Even though the Philippine Constitution says our judges should be independent, that independence often faces hurdles because of political influence and not enough money or resources. Lawyers are always pointing out how important it is to have clear, fair ways of appointing judges, for the courts to manage their own money, and to have systems in place that guarantee impartiality. Our court system plays a huge role in tackling national issues, but it really needs reforms to become truly independent and trusted (Citizen, 2025).

In the Philippines, the idea of judicial independence is central to our Constitution. It means our courts are meant to work without anyone from the outside, especially the President or Congress, telling them what to do. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, specifically in Article VIII, makes sure this happens by promising judges their positions for life (called tenure security), letting the courts manage their own finances (known as fiscal autonomy), and establishing a fair system for appointing judges through the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC). Legal experts judge how independent our judiciary is by looking at things like how transparent judicial appointments are, whether the courts can actually challenge government actions, and how much politics gets involved in court decisions. Even though our courts are incredibly important for tackling big national issues like human rights and how the government is run, they still face challenges. But the courts still face problems. Things like politics getting too involved, not enough money, and people not fully trusting them continue to impact how well they can do their work. To maintain a truly fair and unbiased judicial system, it's crucial to reinforce the rules that protect it and make sure it's financially independent (Edna, 2010).

The Philippine Bar Association plays a huge role in the legal discussions happening in the country. They really push for judges to be independent, they speak up on all sorts of legal matters, and they organize places for people to talk about important policies. It's basically a hub where lawyers can help shape how the country is run and contribute to creating new laws and improving our court system. By encouraging ethical behavior and helping lawyers develop their skills, the PBA makes the legal profession more reputable and ensures that legal conversations always stay focused on what's fair and just (Benosa, 2017).

Philippine sovereignty is really shaped by international rules, especially something called the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This agreement helps figure out where our ocean borders are and who has rights to different parts of the sea. A major win for the Philippines came in 2016, when the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) sided with us regarding the West Philippine Sea. This decision essentially said that China's huge Nine-Dash Line claim was invalid. However, even with that ruling, actually enforcing it is still a big challenge because of all the geopolitical tensions in the region. Law experts believe that keeping our national interests' safe means we should really focus on talking things out with other countries, making defense deals, and cooperating with our neighbors. So, the Philippines keeps handling these tricky land and sea disputes using legal methods and talking with other nations (Yeager- Malkin, 2023).

The intersection of disaster, governance, and inequality the study, Floods, Fault Lines, Futures. She cleverly

reframes "fault lines" as social constructs that expose the most vulnerable to state neglect. For legal professionals, this means the fight for disaster resilience is actually a fight for social justice. Insists that until our development policies address these overlapping vulnerabilities, we are only addressing half the problem (Parajas, 2025).

The ongoing criminalization of Filipino activists highlights a broader trend of systemic repression. As civic spaces shrink, legal advocates have stepped up to challenge the state's use of fabricated evidence and extrajudicial tactics. These legal confrontations serve as a barometer for social discontent, revealing a fundamental breakdown in the relationship between the state and civil society. The report emphasizes a chilling detail: the "defenders are being defended," as lawyers themselves face retaliation for their work. This environment has transformed legal advocacy into a double-edged sword both a protective measure for human rights and a direct confrontation with state power (Monitor, 2024).

In the Philippines, "red-tagging" has become a go-to tactic for the state to delegitimize Indigenous leaders. By labeling activists as rebels, the government isn't just inciting intimidation it's deepening the cracks in the country's social fabric. We see the lethal consequences of this in tragedies like the 2021 Dumagat killings, where those standing up against state-backed projects paid the ultimate price. This has forced legal defenders into a dual role: they aren't just lawyers; they are the last line of defense for land rights and truth. Ultimately, the persistence of these tactics shows that the current discontent in these communities isn't random it's built into the very structure of Philippine governance (Watch, 2023).

The systemic barriers preventing poor Filipinos from getting quality legal help are a long-standing crisis. Recently, Justice Marvic Leonen challenged the legal profession to go deeper, arguing that basic legal aid is a band-aid if we don't address the underlying political and economic injustices. This perspective shifts the focus toward the structural "fault lines" that define our society. After all, public discontent isn't random; it grows when the justice system is seen as a tool for the elite rather than a shield for the vulnerable. Legal advocates, therefore, have a dual role: they must navigate the current system while simultaneously pushing for its transformation. As the editorial suggests, true legal empowerment is about more than winning cases it's about fixing a broken status quo (Bulletin, 2024).

The Supreme Court's recent focus on "social change lawyering" is more than just a new set of workshops; it's a long-overdue institutional pivot. By drafting rules that support legal empowerment, the Court is essentially admitting that our justice system has deep, structural cracks. For too long, "access to justice" has been a buzzword, but this initiative encourages lawyers to actually ground their practice in the realities of the communities they serve. This isn't just about winning cases in a vacuum it's about embedding social justice directly into the judicial DNA. It suggests that the path to calming social unrest isn't just through a judge's gavel, but through reforms that actually let people participate in their own legal defense (Philippines, 2024).

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) keeps pointing out a harsh truth: for many Filipinos, justice is a luxury they simply can't afford. Between the high costs of litigation and the sheer physical challenge of traveling across our islands to reach a courthouse, the system is essentially rigged against the poor. These aren't just inconveniences; they are "fault lines" that divide our society into those who can buy a defense and those who can't. While advocates have rolled out some great programs to level the playing field, the gap is still massive. When people see the law as a tool for the elite rather than a shield for the public, they lose faith in the system. Real advocacy here isn't just about winning a case it's about tearing down the walls that keep people from the courtroom in the first place (Philippines T. I., 2025).

Social justice in the Philippines isn't just about what's written in the law books; it's shaped by our cultural DNA. In bayanihan and pakikisama, we find a framework for advocacy that looks very different from the models used in the West. Legal defenders often lean into these values of solidarity to challenge inequality from the ground up. However, friction arises when these organic, community-led efforts clash with rigid state structures. This is why we see such vibrant grassroots movements they are an expression of collective action that the formal system often fails to account for. Ultimately, being a legal advocate in this context means being a bridge between ancient cultural heritage and modern political struggle (TaasNooPilipino, 2017).

Justice Leonen's message at the National Presentation on Access to Justice was a wake-up call for the legal

community. He challenged lawyers to stop defending an unjust system and start pushing for "transformative change." It's an acknowledgment that our society is built on structural cracks fault lines that only get wider if we ignore them. This shift toward "cause-oriented" law is reflected in how marginalized communities are now using legal tools to resist systemic abuse. Instead of seeing social unrest as a problem to be suppressed, Leonen views it as the necessary catalyst for real reform. In his eyes, being a lawyer isn't about maintaining the peace; it's about the moral duty to fight for a better version of our country (Leonen, 2024).

Recent reviews of Philippine legal reforms show some progress in transparency and accountability, but let's be honest the real test isn't the policy on paper; it's whether the average citizen actually feels a difference. These changes are a direct response to a public that is tired of being ignored, yet they also expose the deep "fault lines" in how our government actually functions. This is where legal advocates become indispensable. Without them pushing from the outside, these reforms risk becoming just another layer of bureaucracy. People get cynical when they see "reform" used as a political PR tool rather than a path to genuine fairness. At the end of the day, fixing the system is as much a political fight as it is a technical one (Services, 2024).

The constant tug-of-war between national authority and local autonomy remains one of the most persistent challenges in Philippine governance. We see these "fault lines" rip open whenever local communities feel like they've been sidelined in decisions that affect their own backyards. For legal advocates, the job is to step in and ensure that the spirit of autonomy as promised by our Constitution isn't just a paper tiger. This tension is at its sharpest in regions with deep cultural roots and long histories of being ignored by the center. In the end, we need legal reforms that can actually strike a balance: respecting our national sovereignty while giving real power to local self-determination. It's a delicate act of reconciling our diverse identities within a single, unified legal system (Atienza & Go, 2023).

Looking at the state of human rights in the Philippines, it's clear that some of our most vulnerable citizens are bearing the brunt of restrictive policies. Rural farmers and indigenous groups are currently stuck in a cycle of instability caused by militarization, surveillance, and basic blockades on food and movement. In our view, this isn't just about 'civil liberties' on paper it's about the very real displacement and poverty that these policies create. It's a pattern we keep seeing: the more a community is squeezed by state control, the more likely they are to reach a breaking point (Programme, 2000).

The review of indigenous rights jurisprudence shows a frustrating contradiction. On paper, the law is on the side of indigenous peoples, but in practice, the courts often turn into arenas where development policies collide with ancestral claims. We've noticed a pattern here: the law is being used as a double-edged sword. It has the potential to defend self-determination, but too often, it's used to justify displacement. This isn't just a legal issue it's a clear reflection of the social divide between how the state views development and how indigenous communities protect their land (Philippines S. M., 2024).

Seen that the biggest challenge for legal advocates here is bridging the divide between formal laws and real-world justice. In the Philippines, it's not uncommon for a law meant to support marginalized groups to accidentally create new barriers because it doesn't account for local traditions or indigenous backgrounds. For our research team, this isn't just an abstract legal issue it's a call to action. Believing that legal systems need to evolve and become much more inclusive if they're ever going to stop deepening the divides in our country (Law, 2025).

The Gabriela Women's Party is a political and advocacy group wholeheartedly committed to women's rights, ensuring gender equality, and promoting economic justice. They actively fight against violence targeting women, offer support to those affected by human trafficking, and advocate for fair labor policies. Through their efforts in passing laws and organizing within communities, the GWP strives to empower women and bring about positive societal changes (Party, 1999)

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 has really thrown a wrench into how legal advocates do their work here in the Philippines. Many legal pros are worried about people's rights being violated, largely because the law has such a broad definition of what 'terrorism' is and lets authorities hold suspects for a long time. Advocacy groups have actually challenged the law in court, pointing out the risks of it being used to suppress political opposition and

silence people who speak out. While the Supreme Court did manage to remove some parts of the law, there are still major concerns about the Anti-Terrorism Council's power and the fact that they can label people as terrorists without a judge overseeing it. Legal debates are still ongoing as professionals keep pushing for changes to ensure fair legal processes (due process) and to protect everyone's civil liberties (Supreme Court of the Philippines, 2025).

Environmental law in the Philippines is basically built on important rules about things like managing waste, preventing water pollution, and keeping our air clean. Groups like the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) are at the forefront, using legal tactics, helping create new guidelines, and empowering local communities to protect our environment. However, actually making sure these laws are followed is still tough. That means we need ongoing legal efforts to truly boost our environmental protections (Cente, 1990).

Lawyers and legal experts in the Philippines see corruption as a deep-seated problem that really harms how our country is governed and how much the public trusts the system. Even though we have laws like RA 3019 and RA 6713 that are supposed to hold people accountable, actually enforcing them is still pretty weak. Experts are pushing for a more complete approach to governance, highlighting the need for big changes in both our institutions and our culture to truly strengthen anti-corruption efforts. Things like vote-buying and political patronage (where favors are given based on connections) just make corruption even worse. To fix this, we really need stricter rules for transparency and better oversight of finances (Angustia, 2025).

Legal advocates have long warned that our justice system is failing to reach the people who need it most. Despite the constitutional right to free legal aid, we've found that only a tiny fraction of Filipinos actually get access to professional support. This leaves the majority to navigate the law on their own, often leaning on family or friends for advice that just isn't sufficient. This isn't just a logistical problem; it's a reflection of the systemic divide in the Philippines, where poverty acts as a barrier that prevents meaningful participation in the legal process (UNDP, 2000).

Lately, the Supreme Court of the Philippines has been making real moves to bring 'developmental' and 'social change' lawyering into the mainstream. They aren't just talking about it they're running workshops and updating rules specifically to help lawyers tackle systemic issues like poverty and human rights abuses. For us, this is a clear sign that the Court is acknowledging a new reality: being a lawyer in the Philippines today means more than just winning a case in court; it means using legal tools to build solutions directly within our communities (Matters, 2024).

The intimidation of legal advocates in the Philippines has become a major roadblock to true justice. By labeling lawyers as insurgents or hitting them with baseless charges, the state effectively shuts down critical voices. As student researchers, we've seen how this climate of fear undermines democratic institutions and prevents the public from trusting the system. It's clear to us that without immediate, concrete steps to protect these human rights defenders, the rule of law in the Philippines remains at risk (IACL-AIDC, 2025).

Procedural justice theory is basically about the idea that how you treat people in court matters just as much as the final verdict. Studies show that if people feel the process was transparent and they were treated with respect, they're much more likely to respect the outcome even if they lose. In the Philippines, this really highlights why we need to move away from rigid technicalities and focus on actual due process. Advocates are constantly pushing for these kinds of reforms because when people feel seen and heard, it helps heal the social frustration that comes from a broken system. It's a perfect match for the judiciary's current goal: making the law both fast and fair (Supreme Court of the Philippines, 2020).

Looking at the overlap between constitutional law and social progress, it's clear that our legal frameworks aren't set in stone. History teaches us that a constitution is really a living, breathing thing it's constantly being reshaped by our culture, our politics, and our collective struggles. In the Philippines, we've seen our fundamental rights tested time and again by everything from authoritarian regimes to deep-seated economic gaps. It's the legal advocates who keep these constitutional promises from becoming obsolete. By applying old principles to modern problems, they ensure the law does two things at once: it keeps society stable while acting as the engine that actually drives change.

At the end of the day, healing the deep-seated divisions in this country isn't going to happen through a single law or a single court case. It's going to take a messy, multidimensional effort that brings together legal advocates, community organizers, and government reformers. Advocates are already showing us the way proving that things like constitutional rights and fair court procedures aren't just legal theories; they're tools for real survival. Whether it's balancing the need for security with our basic rights or making the courts actually accessible to the poor, this work is about one thing: closing the gap between the law and the people. It reminds us that being a lawyer isn't just about winning a trial; it's about building a society where everyone actually has a seat at the table.

The work NGOs do in the Philippines is a perfect example of how everyday people can back up the law to actually protect human rights. Groups like Amnesty International Philippines, along with smaller grassroots organizations, are out there every day documenting abuses, calling out state misconduct, and getting the public to care. They prove that when the government fails to lead, collective action has to step in. Most legal advocates don't work in a vacuum; they team up with these NGOs to make their cases stronger and hold the system accountable. This partnership shows that fighting for a fairer country isn't just about what happens in a courtroom it's about a combined effort from every corner of society.

There's a real shift happening in our legal system, and it's coming from the top. The Supreme Court is finally embracing the idea that lawyering needs to be about more than just winning cases it has to be about social change. Just this past July, the Court started working on actual rules to make legal empowerment a permanent part of the system, rather than just an afterthought. This is a huge deal for advocates because it proves the judiciary knows the law has to reach out into the community to be effective. By moving past the old-school litigation model, the Court is trying to bridge that gap between rigid legal rules and what people actually need on the (Supreme Court of the Philippines, 2020).

The Philippines' social fault lines are most visible when you look at how marginalized groups especially indigenous peoples and rural farmers are treated. These communities aren't just dealing with general inequality; they're facing the direct consequences of militarization and restrictive policies. When you see communities living under constant surveillance, food blockades, or strict curfews, it's clear that their civil liberties aren't just being ignored they're being dismantled. For us, this explains why there's so much social unrest; it's a cycle of poverty and displacement that leaves these families with little choice but to resist.

The review of indigenous rights jurisprudence shows a frustrating contradiction. On paper, the law is on the side of indigenous peoples, but in practice, the courts often turn into arenas where development policies collide with ancestral claims. We've noticed a pattern here: the law is being used as a double-edged sword. It has the potential to defend self-determination, but too often, it's used to justify displacement. This isn't just a legal issue it's a clear reflection of the social divide between how the state views development and how indigenous communities protect their land.

To started looking at the 'fault lines' in our society, realizing that the law itself is often part of the problem. In the Philippines, there's a persistent friction between official legislation and the lived experiences of indigenous and marginalized communities. Noticing that when social legislation is applied without any regard for local context, it often winds up widening the divide rather than closing it. This points to a clear need for a more participatory approach to law one that actually listens to the people it affects rather than just applying a 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

As a we researcher eager to understand the perspectives of lawyers in Cebu City regarding the complex national issues surrounding the major national issues in the Philippines. The researchers have given the tools to really break down how these legal minds are looking at things like the government's authority, whether the process is fair, and how it all clashes with the Philippines' own sovereignty. The researcher is planning to dig into how these experts see things about the national issues in the Philippines

The researchers are using legal theories like legal positivism to help the future researchers understand where they're coming from. The researchers are pretty good at taking local legal views and putting them into the bigger picture of Philippine law, so the researchers can give a balanced and well-organized study. The researchers also

have a really organized way of finding sources, looking at legal arguments, and seeing how the law is actually applied, so the researcher can make sure this research is thorough and based on solid evidence. By connecting legal theory with what's happening on the ground, the researchers hope to give a clearer picture of how these lawyers see the major national issues in the Philippines.

The researchers are really trying to understand their perspectives. The researchers' role as students allows them to look at the data with fresh eyes in criminal law, law enforcement practices, and national legal frameworks gives the researcher a solid base to analyze the complexities of legal jurisdiction, procedural fairness, and how it all intersects with national sovereignty. This research will involve a thorough examination of legal principles, due process safeguards, and national accountability mechanisms to understand the viewpoints of lawyers, legal scholars, and those working within the justice system in Cebu City. The researcher's ability to connect local perspectives with broader national legal discussions will ensure a comprehensive exploration of the case's implications for justice, fairness, and institutional legitimacy.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

This study delves into the perspective of the Legal Advocates on major national issues in the Philippines.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of the informants of major national issues in the Philippines?
2. How does the legal community perceive its role in addressing current national issues in the Philippines?
3. What are the prevailing views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues?
4. How does the legal community assess the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues?
5. How have the recent national issues affected the practice of law and legal profession in the country?
6. What are the perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy making?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study will benefit the following people or institutions:

Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP). This research can help the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) better serve its members, promote the rule of law, and contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society in the Philippines.

Local Government Unit (LGU). This research can help the Local Government Unit (LGU) by engaging with legal advocates and understanding their perspectives, LGUs can become more effective, responsive, and accountable to the needs of their constituents.

Department of Justice (DOJ). This research helps the Department of Justice (DOJ) understand how national issues are viewed by legal professionals, especially regarding the major national issues in the Philippines. By knowing lawyers' perspectives, the DOJ can better navigate legal challenges that arise from these global rules, ensuring that the country's laws are respected.

Legal Community. This study offers lawyers right here in Cebu City a platform to voice their opinions on a

significant legal and political challenge. By doing so, it fosters a greater understanding among everyone about how our national laws and international laws interact. This kind of engagement sparks insightful conversations and further deepens the expertise of legal professionals in this field.

Researchers. This research gives lawyers right here in Cebu City a chance to share their thoughts on a really big legal and Government Issue. It helps them get a clearer picture of how Philippine laws work. This sharing of ideas leads to insightful discussions and ultimately makes the lawyers in this community even more skilled and knowledgeable.

Future Researchers. This study is like the starting point for learning more about how the Philippines' government laws work. It shares a view from here that can be compared to what people think in other parts of the world, and it helps us all understand this legal issue better over time.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study focuses on a qualitative research method employing the Transcendental Phenomenology Approach. It is largely developed by Husserl and is a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology seeking to understand the perspectives of the legal advocates on major national issues in the Philippines.

Research Environment

This study takes place of Barangay Punta Prinsesa, Labangon, and Tisa, Cebu City, where legal professionals like lawyers, judges, and experts discuss topics of national issues in the Philippines. The barangay's legal advocates, legal experts, and legal institutions are where these experts come together to share their thoughts.

Research Respondents

The respondents consisted of 10 informants coming from the three barangays: Punta Prinsesa, Labangon, and Tisa. These individuals were selected to provide insights based on their professional experiences and expertise within the legal field.

Research Instrument

To ensure the collection of rich qualitative data, the study utilizes a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions, allowing respondents to express their legal perspectives in depth interview; individual discussion framework to facilitate comparative analysis among legal experts. This instrument will conclude the responses of each respondent's perspectives.

Research Procedures

The researchers first submitted a transmittal letter to the Dean of the Criminal Justice Department at the University of Cebu Main Campus. After receiving approval from both the dean and their research adviser, they formally requested permission to conduct the study. Once the request was granted, they proceeded with face-to-face interviews. Before each interview, informants were briefed and shown the approved letter to confirm the study's legitimacy. To ensure accuracy and reliability, the researchers used voice recordings during the interviews, explaining their purpose to the informants as part of their commitment to capturing truthful and precise data.

This study followed a qualitative approach, using interviews as the main tool for data collection. Before participating, informants signed an informed consent form confirming that they willingly shared their insights and were not pressured to do so.

Data Collection. The researchers will prepare a letter addressed to the Dean of the College of Criminal Justice at the University of Cebu- Main Campus. This is for his approval to conduct this study. Once approved, the researchers will identify respondents based on predetermined criteria. Surveys will be distributed either physically or online, covering the respondents' age, gender, year level, and frequency of perspectives, along with questions

on the legal perspectives. The completed surveys will be collected, tallied, and analyzed.

Data Analysis. All pertinent information has been collected, tabulated, and added up. Thematic analysis was applied to the data gathered from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Informant insights formed the basis of the analytical process. The researcher coded the responses to facilitate understanding and identification of key patterns. These responses were then categorized and arranged according to relevant subject areas. Interpretations drawn from significant statements were used to construct thematic clusters. From these clusters, the researcher developed emerging themes to address the study's subproblems.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers will set boundaries and honored the informants' choices. The researchers will give participants a consent form and valid reasons to participate before the study or interview ever began. By talking about the goals of the study, the researchers will develop a connection and mutual trust among respondents. However, the participants were also told that if they could prove to the researchers that they understood the subject, they could ask questions from them and if the respondent had clarifications, they would ask the researchers. To prevent disagreements, we will tell the participants that their participation in the research was completely voluntary and for their benefit.

Beneficence. Beneficence is a core ethical value that compels us to act in ways that improve the well-being of others. It's not just a good intention; it's a significant force shaping how laws are developed and interpreted, with the primary aim of safeguarding individuals and communities. This idea also means we need to make sure people are safe when we do research. At the same time, it helps everyone understand justice and the law better. Protects participants' safety while advancing public understanding of justice and law.

Non-maleficence. This research strives not only to include interviews for information but also the health of informants to minimize the risk of harm when conducting research or providing medical care. There should be consent in interviewing its purpose and both physical and mental stability. These considerations from researchers to informants follow ethical standards in conducting research.

Justice. Sampling ensured fair representation of genders, roles, ideologies, and legal affiliations.

Autonomy. This research refers to the independence and self-governance of research informants in making informed decisions about their involvement in a study. Respecting autonomy is a fundamental ethical principle in research that emphasizes the rights of individuals to make voluntary and informed choices regarding their participation in research activities. Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality, Respecting autonomy also involves safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of research participants. Researchers should ensure that participants' personal information and data are protected and not disclosed without their explicit consent.

Trustworthiness of research

The researchers will give participants a consent form and valid reasons to participate before the study ever began. By talking about the goals of the researchers' study, the researchers will develop a connection and mutual trust. However, the participants will be told that if they could prove to the researchers that they understood the subject, they could ask questions of them. To prevent disagreements, the researchers will tell the participants that their participation in the research was completely voluntary and that it was not required. All of the tools, procedures, and research techniques were used to ensure the study's credibility.

Credibility. Researchers would pose identical questions to informants and questions to get information. The advisor to the study team reviews the questionnaire that will be used. By providing a duplicate of their response, informants can verify transcripts and data gathering twice.

Reliability. The gathered data will be written down. To provide a precise and thorough outcome, the informants' responses will be examined and assessed.

Transferability. A "thick description" of the findings from various data-gathering methods can be used

to address transferability, which is the applicability of the findings to individuals or similar situations rather than to broader contexts. As a result, the findings and methods employed in this study can be applied to other issues involving other informants.

Confirmability. The study's conclusions are predicated on the instead of any researcher biases, consider the life and experiences of the informants.

Bracketing and Reflexivity. These are essential concepts in these qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Bracketing in this research refers to the process of setting aside personal beliefs, biases, and assumptions that researchers may have about a particular phenomenon or topic. This practice allows researchers to approach the study with an open mind and to prevent their preconceptions from influencing the data collection and analysis process. By bracketing, researchers aim to maintain objectivity and ensure that the findings are based on the participants' perspectives rather than the researchers' preconceived notions. Reflexivity in this research, on the other hand, involves the researcher's awareness of their role in the research process and how their background, experiences, and beliefs may influence the study. Reflexivity encourages researchers to critically reflect on their positionality, biases, and values, and to consider how these factors may shape the research outcomes. By practicing reflexivity, researchers can acknowledge and address their subjectivity, leading to a more transparent and credible research process.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined operationally as used in the study:

Legal community assess the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues. The legal community's assessment of the government's adherence to the rule of law involves legal professionals critically evaluating whether the Philippine government consistently acts within legal and constitutional boundaries when handling national issues. This goes beyond simply checking if laws exist; it studies whether the government applies laws transparently, respects human rights, and ensures accountability. Eventually, it is about discerning if the government upholds the fundamental principles of the rule of law, ensuring fair and independent justice for all.

Legal community perceive its role in addressing current national issues in the Philippines. The legal community's perceived role in addressing Philippine national issues examines how lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals view their responsibility to tackle critical concerns beyond typical legal work. This includes their understanding of advocating for human rights, promoting good governance, and ensuring justice for all. It explores how they leverage their legal expertise and the justice system to contribute to the nation's progress and the welfare of its people.

National issues affected the practice of law and legal profession in the country. National issues significantly impact the practice of law and the legal profession in the Philippines. This involves how major societal challenges like human rights concerns, political instability, or even new technologies directly reshape lawyers' work, their safety, and the public's trust in the justice system. Essentially, it explores how the country's broader landscape creates both opportunities and limitations for those in the legal field.

Perspectives of the informants of major national issues in the Philippines. Understanding the perspectives of people impacted by the Philippines' major national issues involves gathering varied viewpoints from government officials and experts to ordinary citizens on critical concerns like the economy, governance, and human rights. This process is crucial for gaining a comprehensive grasp of these problems, their origins, and potential solutions.

Prevailing views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues. The legal community's views on the effectiveness of current laws in the Philippines reflect their collective judgment on how well existing legislation and policies address major national issues. This includes evaluating whether these laws are clearly written, properly enforced, and genuinely impactful in areas like economic development, human rights, and social justice. In the end, it seeks to understand if the country's legal

framework effectively drives positive change and resolves pressing challenges.

Perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy making. The legal community's perspective on balancing human rights and national security centers on how legal professionals in the Philippines believe the government should reconcile these two vital concerns when making policies. They critically examine whether security measures disobey on civil liberties like free speech and due process. Essentially, this involves ensuring that policies effectively maintain national security without undermining fundamental human rights and democratic principles.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter deals with the presentation of analysis of data.

Presentation of Data

Each transcript was reviewed multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the informants' perspectives. From these readings, key statements that directly reflected the core of the research phenomenon were identified and extracted (refer to Appendix H for examples of these significant statements).

Emergent Themes

Formulated meanings were conducted from significant statements and arranged them into cluster themes (see Appendix I) for a sample of the formulated meanings. Cluster themes were then re-grouped, and which evolved into emergent themes (see Appendix J for sample of cluster themes which evolved into emergent themes).

As researchers, we carefully examined the key aspects of each sub- problem using the collected data. We thoroughly reviewed the transcripts multiple times to fully understand and accurately capture the informants' perspectives.

From the formulated core meanings, 20 cluster themes were identified and re-grouped and categorized to form 12 emergent themes. We have developed emergent themes from the common responses of the informants of the study, namely:

Perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines

1. Impunity vs. Institutional Reform.
2. Legal Frameworks vs. Political Will

II. Perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues

1. Democratic Principles under Siege
2. Lawyers as Guardians of Civic Space

III. Views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues

1. Digital Advocacy and Strategic Silence
2. Intergenerational Justice and Ethical Legacy

IV. Legal community's assessment of the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues

1. Crisis-Driven Governance vs. Preventive Justice

2. Legal Diplomacy in Sovereignty Defense

V. Effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country

1. Public Trust as a Barometer of Legal Effectiveness

2. Intersectionality in Legal Mobilization.

VI. Perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy-making

1. Constitutional Aspirations vs. Everyday Realities

2. Resilience and Reform from Within the Legal Community.

These are the themes draw out from the responses of the Perspective of the Legal Advocates in Tisa, Punta, and Labangon, Cebu City on Major National Issues in the Philippines.

I. Perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines

Impunity vs. Institutional Reform. This theme reflects Impunity allows powerful actors in the Philippines to escape accountability, fueling corruption and rights abuses. Institutional reform counters this by promoting transparency, legal safeguards, and civic participation. This tension shapes key national issues and determines whether governance deepens dysfunction or moves toward justice. Legal advocates see these issues as deeply damaging to public trust in both the legal and political systems. They point out how widespread problems like corruption, abuse of power, and selective justice undermine the rule of law.

Their reflections stress the urgent need for accountability and ethical leadership to rebuild faith in the justice system and ensure it serves all citizens fairly.

Informant 1 stated that corruption breaks the law and should be punished, but political dynasties referred to as “bans” block accountability and weaken checks and balances in government.

Ang korapsyon, klaro kaayo nga supak gyud na sa balaod unsa pa man kaha, diba? Supak na sa balaod mao nga kinahanglan gyud sila kasuhan. Ug ang atong gobyerno, gituohan unta nga molihok ubos sa sistema sa checks and balances. Pero sa tinuod lang, wala man gyud klarong checks and balances tungod sa gitawag nato’g ‘bans.’ Ug kung naay ‘bans,’ murag nagpasabot na siya og political family dynasties (IDI1:SS1). Corruption, well, it's very obvious that it's against the law what else could it be, right? It's against the law, so they have to be prosecuted. And then, our government is supposed to operate with a system of checks and balances. But there's really no checks and balances because of what we call ‘bans.’ And when there are ‘bans,’ I think that refers to political family dynasties.

The informant 2 thinks corrupt politicians easily escape punishment by using contractors, showing that current systems can't keep up with their schemes.

Pero sa akong tan-aw, dili ni epektibo kay makalusot ra man sila. Angayan nga makasabay ang balaod sa mga paagi sa mga kurakot nga politiko kay makamao sila'g lusot, pananglitan pinaagi sa mga contractors (IDI2:SS5). I, think it's not effective in that sense because they can get away with it. Like, I think it needs to catch up with the scheme of the corrupt politicians because, they have the way of getting out like through the contractors in that sense.

Informant 3 sees corruption as stealing national potential and hurting women most, while political dynasties block democracy by excluding new and marginalized voices.

Ang korupsiyon mao ang pinakadakong kawatan sa atong potensyal, nga direktang hinungdan sa mababang kalidad sa mga serbisyo publiko nga labing nakaapekto sa mga kababayan-an. Ang mga political dynasty

nagapugong sa demokrasya tungod kay ilang gipugngan ang bag-ong talento ug lain-laing representasyon, labi na gikan sa mga marginalized nga sektor (IDI3:SS2). Corruption is the main thief of our potential, directly resulting in poor social services that disproportionately affect women. Political Dynasties restrict democracy by blocking fresh talent and diverse representation, especially from marginalized groups.

1. Legal Frameworks vs. Political Will. The tension between legal frameworks and political will is central to many national issues in the Philippines. Laws exist to combat corruption, protect human rights, and safeguard the environment but enforcement is often weak or selective. Political leaders may ignore, delay, or manipulate legal processes to serve personal or partisan interests. This gap allows impunity, undermines reforms, and erodes public trust. Whether in mining, red-tagging, disaster response, or local governance, the law's potential is constrained by the will to act on it. Bridging this divide is key to meaningful, lasting change. Legal advocates in the Philippines see major national issues as rooted in poor law enforcement and political interference.

Informant 4 sees major national issues like corruption as systemic injustices that legal advocacy must confront. Their strong sense of responsibility to clients and communities reflects a belief that the law should protect the marginalized and hold power to account. For them, legal work is a way to challenge abuse and push for meaningful change.

Ang nagdasig kanako ug sa daghan nakong mga kauban mao ang tinguha nga makahimo og kausaban ug motuman sa pagmando sa balaod. Giduso kami sa pagbati sa responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad. Labaw pa sa dinalian nga panginahanglan sa kliyente, ang mga tigpanalipod lig-on nga naningkamot sa paghagit sa systemic injustices ug pagsiguro nga ang tawhanong katungod ug mga garantiya sa konstitusyon maabot sa tanan, labi na sa mga gipihig (IDI4:SS4). Legal advocates are motivated by a desire to make a difference and to uphold the rule of law. This is driven by a strong sense responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad, along with a deep commitment to challenging systemic injustices and ensuring fundamental human rights are accessible to all, especially the marginalized.

Informant 5 stated that legal advocates as key to solving national issues by using the law to protect rights, uphold justice, and ensure public welfare through constitutional means.

Ang role sa mga legal advocates sa pagtubag sa mga nasyonal nga isyu multi-faceted ug dako kaayo og kahinungdan sa pagpadagan sa usa ka hustong ug demokratikong sosyedad. Mahulagway nako ang ilang role isip mga magpanalipod sa rule of law, nga nagasiguro nga ang mga nasyonal nga isyu nga makaapekto sa kaayohan sa publiko, katungod, ug pamalaod matan-aw ug matubag sulod sa framework sa konstitusyon ug balaod (IDI5:SS1). The role of legal advocates in addressing national issues is multifaceted and deeply integral to the functioning of a just and democratic society. I would describe their role as defenders of the rule of law who ensure that national issues affecting public welfare, rights, and governance are examined and addressed within the framework of the constitution and statutes.

The informant 6 emphasized that political interference as a barrier to justice, making reform and transparency essential to protect rights and restore trust.

Kanunay nga naglisod ang legal nga sistema tungod sa politikal nga pag-apekto, nga nagbabag sa epektibong pagpapatuman sa balaod ug proteksyon sa katungod, hinungdan sa daghang tawag para sa reporma sa hudikatura ug mas dako nga transparency (IDI6:SS8). The legal system often struggles with political interference, hindering law enforcement and rights protection, leading to widespread calls for judicial reform and greater transparency.

Perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues

2. Democratic Principles under Siege. Legal advocates defend democratic principles by challenging abuses, exposing corruption, and protecting rights. Their work helps uphold the rule of law and empower marginalized communities amid threats to civic space and institutional integrity.

The informant 7 sees legal advocacy as a way to protect activism, ensuring protests are grounded in constitutional rights and offering real protection to those facing injustice.

Pagsiguro nga ang protesta ug kritisismo nahisubay sa mga katungod sa konstitusyon. Kita anaa sa atubangan nga linya, naghubad sa mga garantiya sa konstitusyon ngadto sa tinuod nga panalipod sa kalibutan alang sa mga kliyente nga nag-atubang sa inhustisya (IDI7:SS7). We provide the legal framework for activism, ensuring that protest and critique are grounded in constitutional rights. We are on the front lines, translating constitutional guarantees into real-world protection for clients facing injustice.

The informants 8 stated that legal advocacy as a way to hold officials accountable and shape jurisprudence, using key cases to strengthen the legal system and protect citizens' rights.

Pagpanalipod sa Accountability pinaagi sa pagpasaka og mga kaso sama sa plunder o mandamus batok sa mga opisyal nga nakalapas sa balaod; ug ikatulo, ang Pagporma sa Jurisprudence pinaagi sa pagdala og test cases sa Korte Suprema aron klaruhon ang mga balaod o ibasura ang mga polisiya nga dili konstitusyonal, nga nagpalig-on sa legal nga balangkas alang sa tanang mga lungsoranon (IDI8:SS8). Upholding Accountability through crucial cases like plunder or mandamus against errant officials; and Shaping Jurisprudence by bringing test cases to the Supreme Court to clarify laws or overturn unconstitutional policies, thereby reinforcing the legal framework for all citizens.

The informant 8 sees independent bodies like the Ombudsman and Sandiganbayan as vital for real accountability free from political pressure and empowered to prosecute powerful officials.

Ang pinakapektibong mekanismo sa accountability adunay garantiya nga independensya. Kini nagkinahanglan og tinuod nga independyenteng Ombudsman ug Sandiganbayan, nga kompletong insulated gikan sa politikal nga pressure ug andam sa pagpangusig sa mga high-ranking nga opisyal (DI8:SS19). The most effective mechanisms for accountability are those with guaranteed independence. This requires a truly independent Ombudsman and Sandiganbayan, fully insulated from political pressure and equipped to prosecute high-ranking officials.

Lawyers as Guardians of Civic Space. Lawyers as guardians of civic space play a vital role in addressing national issues in the Philippines. Amid threats like red-tagging, repression, and shrinking legal protections, they defend constitutional rights and ensure activism and dissent remain protected. By challenging abuses, representing vulnerable groups, and filing strategic cases, they help uphold democratic freedoms and keep civic space open. Their work connects legal advocacy with broader struggles for justice, transparency, and inclusive governance.

The informant 9 stated that sees rule of law as more than laws on paper it's about fair, consistent enforcement. They point out that political interference and selective justice often weaken accountability, especially in human rights and corruption cases.

Akong gi-assess ang pagtuman sa gobyerno sa rule of law pinaagi sa pagtan-aw kung unsa kini kaparehas ug matarong nga gipatuman sa pag-atubang sa mga nasodnong isyu. Bisan og lig-on ang legal nga balangkas sa Pilipinas, ang pagpatuman niini kasagaran maapektuhan sa politikal nga pagpanghilabot, pinili nga hustisya, ug kalangan sa mga institusyon. Ang mga kaso nga may kalabotan sa paglapas sa tawhanong katungod ug korapsyon nagpadayag sa kakulang sa accountability ug transparency (IDI9:SS8). I assess the government's commitment to the rule of law by examining how consistently and fairly laws are enforced in addressing national issues. While the legal framework in the Philippines is strong, implementation often suffers from political interference, selective justice, and institutional delays. Cases involving human rights violations and corruption frequently reveal gaps in accountability and transparency.

The Informant 9 emphasizes that just laws require clarity, transparency, and public input. For them, regular review and strong checks and balances are essential to prevent abuse and ensure laws serve society's real needs. They believe that only through inclusive and accountable legal systems can safety and freedom coexist.

Ikatulo, ang mga balaod kinahanglan klaro, transparent, ug regular nga marepaso aron malikayan ang abuso. Importante usab ang partisipasyon ug konsultasyon sa publiko aron masiguro nga ang mga balaod nagpakita sa

tinuod nga panginahanglan ug mga prinsipyo sa katilingban. Sa katapusan, kinahanglan adunay lig-on nga checks and balances aron mapanginlabotan ang mga opisyal sa ilang mga aksyon. Kini nga mga prinsipyo nagtabang aron ang kaluwasan ug kagawasan magtinabangay diha sa usa ka matinud-anon ug patas nga katilingban (IDI9:SS14). Third, laws must be clear, transparent, and subject to regular review to prevent abuse. Public participation and consultation are also important to ensure that laws reflect the needs and values of society. Lastly, strong checks and balances must be in place to hold authorities accountable. These principles help ensure that safety and freedom can exist together in a just society.

Informant 10 likely said when the rule of law is violated, lawyers and rights groups speak out, file cases, and fight back in court to uphold constitutional rights.

Kung malapas o maluyang ipatuman ang rule of law, ang komunidad sa mga abogado motubag pinaagi sa pagpanalipod sa mga katungod nga gisiguro sa Konstitusyon ug sa pagpangayo og accountability pinaagi sa legal nga aksyon. Nakita nako nga ang mga bar associations, mga tigpanalipod sa tawhanong katungod, ug mga independiyenteng legal experts magpagawas og mga pahayag sa publiko, mag-file og mga petisyon, ug mosukol sa mga dili makatarunganong buhat sa korte (IDI10:SS9). When the rule of law is undermined, the legal community responds by defending constitutional rights and demanding accountability through legal action. I've seen how bar associations, human rights defenders, and independent legal experts issue public statements, file petitions, and challenge unlawful acts in court.

II. Views of the Legal Community on the Effectiveness of Existing Laws and Policies Related to National Issues

1. Digital Advocacy and Strategic Silence. In the Philippines, digital advocacy empowers citizens and civil society to confront national issues like corruption, human rights violations, and disinformation by amplifying voices and mobilizing support online. However, this visibility also exposes activists to risks such as harassment and surveillance. In response, strategic silence becomes a protective tactic used to avoid retaliation, safeguard informants, and navigate politically sensitive contexts. Together, these approaches reflect how reformers balance visibility and caution to sustain civic engagement and push for systemic change.

The informant 1 criticizes weak institutional response, noting that complaints are often dismissed without investigation. They stress that accountability should be a government duty, not left to social media.

Maayo nalang gani nga naay social media karon, pero unta, kana nga mga responsibilidad naa gyud unta sa gobyerno. Sama ninyo, mga pulis kung naay mo-reklamo, makasulti ba gyud mo kung kini tinood nga reklamo o tungod lang sa personal nga kontra? Labi na og busy mo, unya moingon ang tawo, 'wala mi ebidensya,' dayon wala nay initiative. Sa ubang nasud, kung naay mo-reklamo, ang ahensya mismo ang mag-imbestiga (IDI1:SS5). It's a good thing that social media exists now, but supposedly, those responsibilities should already be in government. Like you, the police when someone files a complaint, can you really tell if it's just out of spite or if it's a genuine complaint? Especially if you're busy, and someone says, 'we don't have evidence,' then there's no initiative. In other countries, if someone files a complaint, the agency itself investigates. You won't even know that your government is already investigating your actions.

The informant 4 sees legal advocacy as a duty to clients and communities, driven by a commitment to challenge injustice and make rights accessible to all.

Ang nagdasig kanako ug sa daghan nakong mga kauban mao ang tinguha nga makahimo og kausaban ug motuman sa pagmando sa balaod. Giduso kami sa pagbati sa responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad. Labaw pa sa dinalian nga panginahanglan sa kliyente, ang mga tigpanalipod lig-on nga naningkamot sa paghagit sa systemic injustices ug pagsiguro nga ang tawhanong katungod ug mga garantiya sa konstitusyon maabot sa tanan, labi na sa mga gipihig (IDI4:SS4). Legal advocates are motivated by a desire to make a difference and to uphold the rule of law. This is driven by a strong sense responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad, along with a deep commitment to challenging systemic injustices and ensuring fundamental human rights are accessible to all, especially the marginalized.

Informant 5 stresses that laws only work when fairly enforced and legal actors are free from interference. They point to corruption, political pressure, and lack of resources as key barriers to justice.

Ang kalampusan sa usa ka balaod nagdepende kaayo sa patas ug epektibong pagpangpatuman sa mga institusyon sa gobyerno, kauban ang kakayahan sa mga legal nga propesyonal nga molihok nga walay kahadlok o interbensyon. Importante usab ang kahibalo sa publiko ug sayon nga access sa legal nga remedyo. Bisan pa niana, ang kapakyasan kasagaran tungod sa politikal nga pressure nga nagkompromiso sa rule of law, korapsyon, ug kakulang sa kapanguhaan (IDI15: SS11). The success of a law relies heavily on impartial and efficient enforcement by government institutions, coupled with the ability of legal practitioners to act free from fear or interference. Public awareness and easy access to legal remedies are also crucial. However, failure is commonly caused by political pressure that compromises the rule of law, corruption, and resource constraints.

Intergenerational Justice and Ethical Legacy. Legal advocates in the Philippines view intergenerational justice and ethical legacy as core principles in addressing long-term national issues. Intergenerational justice calls for laws and policies that protect the rights of future generations, especially in areas like environmental protection and democratic governance. Ethical legacy reflects the responsibility of legal professionals to uphold integrity and build institutions that endure beyond political cycles. Together, these values guide advocacy efforts toward sustainable reform, inclusive justice, and resilient legal systems.

Informant 6 sees legal advocacy as a public duty not just client representation, but defending democracy, justice, and the rule of law. Lawyers, in their view, are ethical stewards and guardians of accountability.

Ang papel sa mga legal nga abogado importante kaayo ug lainlain ang aspeto. Isip mga abogado, kami nag-alagad isip mga tigbantay sa hustisya ug sa rule of law, dili lang ingon nga depensa sa kliyente (IDI6:SS13). The role of legal advocates is crucial and diverse. As lawyers, we serve as guardians of justice and the rule of law, not just client defenders.

The informant 7 meant that lawyers play multiple roles in society not only upholding legal norms, but also amplifying marginalized voices and driving systemic reforms. Their view reflects a commitment to justice that's both protective and transformative.

Ang atong papel daghan og bahin kita ang mga tigpanalipod sa lagda sa balaod, mga tigpasiugda alang sa mga nahiklin, ug mga katalista alang sa pagbag-o sa polisiya (IDI7:SS6). Our role is multifaceted we are defenders of the rule of law, advocates for the marginalized, and catalysts for policy change.

Legal Community's Assessment of the Government's Adherence to the Rule of Law in Handling National Issue

Crisis-Driven Governance vs. Preventive Justice. In the Philippine context, crisis-driven governance tends to dominate national responses to issues like corruption, human rights violations, and disaster management. This approach prioritizes short-term, reactive measures often politicized and centralized over long-term institutional reform. In contrast, preventive justice advocates for systemic change by addressing root causes through legal empowerment, inclusive policymaking, and rights-based frameworks. While crisis-driven governance may offer immediate solutions, it often deepens structural problems. Preventive justice, though slower, builds resilience by strengthening democratic institutions and promoting accountability. The tension between these models shapes how the country navigates recurring challenges and opportunities for reform.

Informant 7 likely meant that lawyers play a vital role in legitimizing and protecting activism. By grounding protest and dissent in constitutional law, they ensure that advocacy remains within legal bounds while defending those targeted for speaking out. Their work turns abstract rights into concrete legal shields especially for clients facing repression or injustice.

Gihatag nato ang legal nga gambalay alang sa aktibismo, pagsiguro nga ang protesta ug kritisismo nahisubay sa mga katungod sa konstitusyon. Kita anaa sa atubangan nga linya, naghubad sa mga garantiya sa konstitusyon ngadto sa tinuod nga panalipod sa kalibutan alang sa mga kliyente nga nag-atubang sa inhustisya (IDI7:SS7). We provide the legal framework for activism, ensuring that protest and critique are grounded in constitutional

rights. We are on the front lines, translating constitutional guarantees into real-world protection for clients facing injustice.

Informant 8 meant that strategic litigation is a powerful tool for both accountability and legal reform. By filing high-impact cases like plunder or mandamus they aim to expose wrongdoing and compel government action. At the same time, bringing test cases to the Supreme Court helps clarify vague laws or strike down unconstitutional policies, shaping jurisprudence that protects citizens more broadly.

Pagpanalipod sa Accountability pinaagi sa pagpasaka og mga kaso sama sa plunder o mandamus batok sa mga opisyal nga nakalapas sa balaod; ug ikatulo, ang Pagporma sa Jurisprudence pinaagi sa pagdala og test cases sa Korte Suprema aron klaruhon ang mga balaod o ibasura ang mga polisiya nga dili konstitusyonal, nga nagpalig-on sa legal nga balangkas alang sa tanang mga lungsoranon (IDI8:SS28). Upholding Accountability through crucial cases like plunder or mandamus against errant officials; and Shaping Jurisprudence by bringing test cases to the Supreme Court to clarify laws or overturn unconstitutional policies, thereby reinforcing the legal framework for all citizens.

Informant 9 stated that legal advocates in the Philippines play a vital role in defending rights, challenging injustice, and shaping laws. They respond to governance failures through strategic litigation, uphold activism through constitutional protections, and expose gaps in enforcement caused by political interference. While laws are strong, justice depends on fair, consistent application.

Akong gi-assess ang pagtuman sa gobyerno sa rule of law pinaagi sa pagtan-aw kung unsa kini kaparehas ug matarong nga gipatuman sa pag-atubang sa mga nasodnong isyu. Bisan og lig-on ang legal nga balangkas sa Pilipinas, ang pagpatuman niini kasagaran maapektuhan sa politikal nga pagpanghilabot, pinili nga hustisya, ug kalangan sa mga institusyon. Ang mga kaso nga may kalabotan sa paglapas sa tawhanong katungod ug korapsyon nagpadayag sa kakulang sa accountability ug transparency (IDI9:SS10). I assess the government's commitment to the rule of law by examining how consistently and fairly laws are enforced in addressing national issues. While the legal framework in the Philippines is strong, implementation often suffers from political interference, selective justice, and institutional delays. Cases involving human rights violations and corruption frequently reveal gaps in accountability and transparency.

Legal Diplomacy in Sovereignty Defense. Legal diplomacy in the Philippines plays a vital role in defending sovereignty, particularly in contested areas like the West Philippine Sea. By leveraging international law, treaties, and strategic litigation, the country asserts its territorial rights through peaceful, rules-based mechanisms. This approach also strengthens foreign policy, supports human rights advocacy, and reinforces environmental and indigenous claims. In a region marked by geopolitical tension, legal diplomacy offers a principled, nonviolent means of safeguarding national interests and promoting democratic accountability.

The informant 6 calls for stronger accountability in law enforcement, especially in cases of human rights violations, and clearer, internationally coordinated policies to defend Philippine sovereignty in territorial disputes. They emphasize the need for both internal reform and strategic legal diplomacy.

Ang mga sistema sa transparency ug accountability kinahanglan palig-onon, labi na sa mga law enforcement agencies nga nalambigit sa mga paglapas sa katungod sa tawo. Ang mga polisiya bahin sa teritoryal nga panaglalis nanginahanglan og mas klaro nga mga estratehiya ug kooperasyon sa internasyonal aron epektibong mapalig-on ang soberanya (IDI6:SS26). Transparency and accountability systems must be reinforced, particularly within law enforcement agencies implicated in human rights abuses. Policies on territorial disputes require clearer strategies and international cooperation to assert sovereignty effectively.

The informant 7 identifies a triad of deeply interconnected national issues: the erosion of Philippine sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea, systemic corruption that undermines public services and infrastructure, and threats to the rule of law through attacks on judicial independence and legal professionals. They view these problems as reinforcing one another territorial vulnerability weakens national integrity, corruption distorts governance, and compromised legal institutions erode democratic safeguards. Together, these challenges represent a critical test of the country's commitment to justice, accountability, and sovereignty.

Para kanako, ang labing dinalian nga mga isyu mao ang tulo ka hugpong sa mga problema nga nagkadugtong: Ang pagka- anod sa atong soberenya sa West Philippine Sea; Ang lalom, sistematikong korapsyon nga nakaapekto sa serbisyo publiko ug imprastraktura; Ug tingali ang labing kritikal, ang hagit sa lagda sa balaod nga makita sa mga hulga sa independensya sa hudikatura ug ang pagtarget sa mga legal nga propesyonal (IDI7:SS1) For me, the most pressing issues are a triad of interrelated problems: the erosions of our sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea; the deep-seated, systemic corruption that affects public services and infrastructure; and perhaps most critically, the challenge to the rule of law manifested in threats to judicial independence and the targeting of legal professionals.

Informant 10 sees corruption and dynasties as deeply rooted, but notes rising public awareness and stronger legal advocacy. They view the West Philippine Sea dispute as a turning point, with the country leaning on international law showing both progress and persistent challenges in defending sovereignty.

Ang korapsyon ug mga political dynasty nakapakita nga murag dili patas ang balaod, labi na kung ang mga adunahan ug gamhanan dili mapasakaan og silot. Kini nga mga problema nagpasabot sa panginahanglan nga lig-onon ang mga legal nga institusyon ug masiguro nga ang hustisya ipatuman sa tanan nga patas ug walay pinalabi (IDI10:SS4). Corruption and political dynasties have remained persistent, but public awareness and legal advocacy have also increased. Territorial disputes like the West Philippine Sea have pushed the country to rely more on international law, showing both progress and ongoing challenges in defending national sovereignty.

Effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country

Public Trust as a Barometer of Legal Effectiveness. Public trust is a key measure of legal effectiveness in the Philippines. When citizens believe in the fairness and competence of legal institutions, laws are more likely to be respected and enforced. This trust influences how people respond to issues like corruption, political dynasties, and territorial disputes shaping civic engagement, legal mobilization, and national unity.

Informant 4 that laws only work when people trust the institutions behind them. Without trust, even good laws fail to protect against corruption, dynasties, or threats to sovereignty.

Nagkinahanglan kini og komprehensibo ug makanunayong Isip usa ka batid nga abogado, akong nakita kung giunsa nga ang mga paglapas sa tawhanong katungod, extrajudicial killings, korapsyon, ug political dynasties nakapaluya sa pagmando sa balaod ug nakaguba sa pagsalig sa publiko sa mga institusyon. Kining mga isyuha makadaot sa atong demokrasya ug kinahanglang sulbaron (IDI4:SS3). As a seasoned lawyer, the issues of human rights violations, extrajudicial killings, corruption, and political dynasties are viewed as democracy because they have undermined the rule of law and eroded public trust in institutions.

Informant 5 expresses that laws on rights and security must be clear, fair, and checked to prevent abuse. People need to understand and trust these laws for them to work.

Ang mga balaod nga may kalabotan sa tawhanong katungod ug nasudnong seguridad kinahanglan nga musunod sa upat ka yawe nga prinsipyo: legalidad, proportionality, accountability, ug transparency. Una, ang prinsipyo sa legalidad nagpasabot nga ang mga balaod kinahanglan klaro ug angay sa konstitusyon ug internasyonal nga sumbanan. Kini naggarantiya nga walay lakang sa gobyerno nga mahimong arbitrario o supaksa balaod. Ikaduha, ang prinsipyo sa proportionality nagsiguro nga ang mga lakang sa seguridad kinahanglanon lamang ug dili sobra nga makalapas sa mga katungod sa mga tawo. Sa ato pa, ang bisan unsang hakbang nga gihimo aron maprotektahan ang nasud kinahanglan balanse ug dili makadaut sa fundamental nga katungod. Ikatulo, ang accountability nagkinahanglan og lig-on nga mekanismo, sama sa judicial review, aron malikayan ang abuso ug masiguro nga ang mga nagpatuman sa balaod responsable sa ilang mga aksyon. Katapusan, ang prinsipyo sa transparency nagpalig-on sa pagsalig sa publiko pinaagi sa hayag ug bukas nga proseso sa paghimo ug pagpatuman sa mga polisiya sa seguridad. Pinaagi sa pagsunod niini nga mga prinsipyo, masiguro nga ang balaod makahatag og proteksyon sa mga katungod sa katawhan samtang epektibo usab sa pagpanalipod sa nasud. (IDI5:SS16) (Laws affecting human rights and national security must adhere to four key principles: legality, proportionality, accountability, and transparency. Legality requires that laws be clear and consistent with constitutional and international standards. Proportionality ensures security measures are necessary and don't

unnecessarily infringe on rights. Accountability mandates robust mechanisms, like judicial review, to prevent abuse. Finally, transparency builds public trust in security policies.)

Informant 6 underscores that deep, systemic change isn't enough on its own citizens must also be actively involved. Without both reform and participation, problems like corruption, weak institutions, or poor governance could worsen, threatening the country's development and eroding trust in leadership. It's a call for shared responsibility to protect national stability.

Kinahanglan ang komprehensibo nga reporma ug aktibong partisipasyon sa mga lungsuranon aron masulbad kining mga isyu, kay kung pasagdan kini, mahimong makaguba sa progreso sa nasud ug pagsalig sa publiko (IDI6:SS3) Comprehensive reforms and active citizen participation are required to address these issues, which, if left unchecked, risk destabilizing national progress and public trust.

Intersectionality in Legal Mobilization. Intersectionality in legal mobilization helps reveal how overlapping identities such as gender, ethnicity, and class shape people's experiences of injustice in the Philippines. It ensures that laws and advocacy efforts address the specific needs of marginalized groups, like displaced Moro women or indigenous communities, who face multiple layers of discrimination. By recognizing these intersections, legal mobilization becomes more inclusive, strengthens coalitions, and informs policies that respond to the complexity of national issues such as conflict, corruption, and inequality.

Informant 6 means that despite imperfections in the legal system, there are still powerful tools and spaces for defending rights. They recognize that lawyers, advocates, and civil society can use the Constitution and existing laws to push back against abuse and injustice. While institutions may be flawed, they still offer meaningful ways to seek accountability and protect vulnerable groups.

Ang legal advocacy sa Pilipinas adunay dagkong kalig- on, lakip ang abilidad sa epektibong paggamit sa konstitusyonal ug statutory nga balaod aron depensahan ang mga katungod ug supakon ang mga abuso. Bisan pa man sa ilang kakulian, ang naglungtad nga mga institusyon sa balaod naghatag gihapon og hinungdanong dalan aron mangayo og hustisya (IDI6:SS22). Legal advocacy in the Philippines possesses significant strengths, including the ability to effectively use constitutional and statutory law to defend rights and challenge abuses. The existing, though flawed, legal institutions offer crucial avenues for seeking redress.

Informant 3 emphasizes that adherence to legal ethics is fundamental to the integrity of the legal profession, as it upholds the rule of law, fosters public trust, and ensures that legal practitioners conduct themselves with professionalism, accountability, and moral responsibility.

So being in the legal profession, dapat kami mo follow jud unta mi unsay naa sa among legal ethics namo ba the standards na e live by namo in the practice of our profession (IDI3:SS6). So, being in the legal profession, we must strictly follow our legal ethics, the standards we live by in practicing our profession.

Informant 6 indicates that legal advocacy becomes more powerful when it works with journalists and civil society groups. Through these partnerships, it can expose abuses, shape public understanding, and pressure government to act. They see advocacy not just as courtroom work, but as a broader effort to build trust and drive reform through public engagement

Pinaagi sa kolaborasyon sa media ug civil society aron ipromote ang transparency ug accountability, ang legal advocacy nagdula og hinungdanong papel sa pag-impluwensya sa opinyon sa publiko ug aksyon sa gobyerno. (IDI6:SS21). By collaborating with media and civil society to promote transparency and accountability, legal advocacy ultimately plays a vital role in influencing both public opinion and government action.

Perspectives of the Legal Community on the Balance between Human Rights and National Security in Policy-making

Constitutional Aspirations vs. Everyday Realities. In the Philippines, constitutional aspirations such as human rights, democratic participation, and social justice often clash with everyday realities like corruption, inequality, and institutional weakness. While the 1987 Constitution sets high ideals, many national issues reveal gaps in

enforcement and access. Political dynasties persist despite constitutional limits, security policies sometimes undermine civil liberties, and economic rights remain out of reach for many. This disconnect highlights the need for legal mobilization and civic engagement to make constitutional promises more tangible in daily life.

Informant 6 underscores reforms must fix weak enforcement, protect courts from politics, and close legal gaps that let dynasties thrive. This builds trust and ensures fair governance.

Solosyun aspect nga aspeto sa legal ug polisiya nga framework nga nanginahanglan og pagpaayo naglakip sa mga mekanismo sa pagpangpatuman sa balaod, independensya sa hudikatura, ug mga lakang batok sa korapsyon. Ang pagpalig-on sa hudikatura aron kini mahimong gawas sa politikal nga impluwensya makapadugang sa pagsalig sa publiko ug makasiguro sa patas nga paghusay sa mga kaso. Kinahanglan usab sirad-an ang mga loopholes nga nagtugot sa mga political dynasties sa pagdominar sa gobyerno bisan pa sa mga limitasyon sa konstitusyon (IDI6:SS25). Solution aspect of the legal and policy framework that require improvement include the enforcement mechanisms, judicial independence, and anti-corruption measures. Strengthening the judiciary to be free from political influence would increase public trust and ensure fair adjudication. There is also a need to close loopholes that allow political dynasties to dominate governance despite constitutional restrictions.

Informant 5 highlights that legal advocates help ensure national issues are addressed through the rule of law. They protect public welfare and rights by using the constitution and statutes to hold institutions accountable and promote justice.

Ang role sa mga legal advocates sa pagtubag sa mga nasyonal nga isyu multi-faceted ug dako kaayo og kahinungdan sa pagpadagan sa usa ka hustong ug demokratikong sosyedad. Mahulagway nako ang ilang role isip mga magpanalipod sa rule of law, nga nagasiguro nga ang mga nasyonal nga isyu nga makaapekto sa kaayohan sa publiko, katungod, ug pamalaod matan-aw ug matubag sulod sa framework sa konstitusyon ug balaod (IDI5:SS1). The role of legal advocates in addressing national issues is multifaceted and deeply integral to the functioning of a just and democratic society. I would describe their role as defenders of the rule of law who ensure that national issues affecting public welfare, rights, and governance are examined and addressed within the framework of the constitution and statutes.

Informant 5 conveys that legal advocates act as watchdogs who hold the government accountable, defend human rights, and push for reforms that reflect really social and economic conditions.

Ang mga legal advocates nagsilbi isip kanal diin ang mga marginalized nga tingog makadawat og hustisya ug makapartisipar sa hinungdanong paagi sa nasyonal nga diskurso (IDI5:SS4). They also act as watchdogs who promote government accountability, uphold human rights, and seek reforms that are responsive to socio-economic realities.

Resilience and Reform from Within the Legal Community. Resilience and reform within the Philippine legal community are essential in confronting major national issues such as corruption, human rights violations, and systemic inequality. Legal professionals have pushed for judicial modernization, challenged controversial laws, and advocated for reforms that reflect the lived realities of marginalized sectors. These efforts strengthen institutional accountability, protect civil liberties, and ensure that legal systems evolve in response to social demands. By adapting and asserting their role in public discourse, the legal community helps uphold democratic principles and promote justice across the country.

Informant 5 articulates national issues like corruption and political instability have pushed lawyers to be more vigilant and adaptable. They must balance defending clients with upholding the rule of law, staying informed on reforms to protect justice and legal standards.

Ang kasamtangang mga isyu sa nasud dako kaayo og epekto sa praktis sa balaod tungod kay nagkinahanglan kini og mas taas nga pagbantay, pagka-flexible, ug pagka-andam sa mga legal nga propesjonal. Ang mga isyu sama sa korapsyon, kahimtang sa tawhanong katungod, ug politikal nga kalibog naghatag hagit sa mga abogado sa pag-navigate sa komplikado nga legal ug etikal nga mga aspeto samtang nag-advocate alang sa hustisya. Kinahanglan nga ibalanse sa mga legal practitioner ang ilang papel isip mga magpanalipod sa kliyente ug ang

obligasyon sa pagtuman sa rule of law sa nag-uswag ngakahimtang sa nasud. Kini nga mga isyu kasagaran nagkinahanglan og mas taas nga kahibalo sa mga legal reforms ug policy changes, nga nag-awhag sa mga abogado nga magpabilin nga informed ug proaktibo sa pagpanalipod sa legal nga mga standard (IDI5:SS5). The current national issues have significantly influenced the practice of law by necessitating greater vigilance, adaptability, and responsiveness among legal professionals. Issues such as corruption, human rights concerns, and political instability challenge lawyers to navigate complex legal and ethical terrains while advocating for justice. Legal practitioners must balance their roles as defenders of clients with the imperative to uphold the rule of law amidst evolving national dynamics. These issues often demand heightened awareness of legal reforms and policy changes, encouraging lawyers to remain informed and proactive in protecting legal standards.

Informant 6 emphasizes that deep reforms and active citizen engagement are vital to solving national issues. Without them, public trust erodes and progress is at risk.

Kinahanglan ang komprehensibo nga reporma ug aktibong partisipasyon sa mga lungsuranon aron masulbad kining mga isyu, kay kung pasagdan kini, mahimong makaguba sa progreso sa nasud ug pagsalig sa publiko. (IDI6:SS3). Comprehensive reforms and active citizen participation are required to address these issues, which, if left unchecked, risk destabilizing national progress and public trust.

Informant 6 challenge power abuses, defend the marginalized, and use the law to push for reforms. As a bridge between the legal system and the public, we clarify complex issues and promote rights awareness.

Ang among trabaho naglakip sa pagkontra sa abuso sa gahum, pagrepresentar sa mga marginalized nga grupo, ug pagsiguro nga matarong ang pagpatuman sa mga balaod. Kami nag-alagad isip tulay tali sa legal nga sistema ug sa publiko, nga nagpasabot sa komplikado nga mga isyu ug nagpalambo sa kahibalo sa katungod (IDI6:SS14). Our work involves challenging power abuses, representing marginalized groups, and ensuring the correct application of laws. We act as a bridge between the legal system and the public, clarifying complex issues and promoting rights awareness. Through strategic litigation, we push for systemic reforms on issues like human rights and corruption

Analysis of Data

This qualitative research employed transcendental phenomenology as an approach. It is a comprehensive research approach that collects information about how individuals experience a given phenomenon and their corresponding affective states. It recognizes that reality is not a fixed, objective entity but a subjective construct that varies from individual to individual. Therefore, the findings of the study are articulated through informant's perspective, enabling researchers to identify overarching themes related to the phenomenon being studied.

The study employed Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method to analyze the data. The researcher read the participants' accounts multiple times to understand their lived experiences. Then, the researcher identified significant statements in each description that pertained to meaningful statements related to the informants' experiences. Formulated meanings were then derived from these statements, considering the latent meaning within the context. These formulated meanings were then organized into themes and clustered exhaustively described the phenomenon under study. The structure of the phenomenon was identified, and the study was validated by receiving feedback from the informants.

The study extracted significant statements relevant to the research phenomenon from the informants' transcripts. These statements were then formatted into a cluster, developing 12 (12) emergent themes. These themes addressed the sub-problems and are summarized as follows: (a) Perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines, (b) Perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues, (c) Views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues, (d) Legal community's assessment of the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues, (e) Effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country, and (f) . Perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy-making.

This research is primarily anchored on Legal Positivism Theory by Herbert Lionel Adolphus (1961) and supported by Cognitive Theory by Leon Festinger (1957) and Social Comparison Theory by Leon Festinger (1954).

H.L.A. Hart's theory of legal positivism is basically his answer to a simple question: What is law? And his answer was a game-changer. He said, flat-out, that law isn't some mysterious moral force or an appeal to justice; it's just a system of rules that a society has chosen to adopt. He ripped the idea of law away from morality, grounding it instead in cold, hard social practice. Hart's real stroke of genius was sorting these rules into two distinct piles. First, you have primary rules these are the basic "thou shalt nots" that tell us what we have to do and what we can't do (like rules against theft, murder, or speeding). But a society that only has primary rules is inefficient and static. So, Hart introduced the secondary rules, which are essentially the rules about the rules. Think of them as the operating manual for the entire legal system. (Kramer, 2021) H.L.A. Hart was the legal thinker who essentially looked at the centuries-old debate over law and morality and said, "Hold up. Why can't we just see law as something we do, rather than something we believe?" The whole point of his legal positivism is pretty common-sense once you get past the jargon: law is a system of rules that gets its power from human actions and acceptance, not from some divine or some objective moral code. (The legal Positivism of HLA Hart, 2015).

H.L.A. Hart's theory, legal positivism, is famous because it takes the moral high ground out of the picture when we define law. Forget lofty notions of "justice" or "natural rights." Hart argued that the law isn't a mysterious force

handed down from above; it's a system of rules created, accepted, and maintained entirely by us, the people, through our social practices. It is a profoundly human creation.

(Nabaldian, 2025) It's the powerful, annoying psychological discomfort we get when we hold two conflicting thoughts, beliefs, or behaviors at the same time. Think of it as a mental allergic reaction. Our brains crave consistency, and when we catch ourselves being hypocrites even small ones that internal discomfort kicks in, forcing us to fix the contradiction. is basically the intense mental stress you feel when your actions clash with your beliefs. Because we absolutely need to feel consistent, our brains immediately jump into defense mode to reduce that stress, usually by either changing the behavior or more often just rationalizing the contradiction and making up convenient excuses for ourselves.

(Festinger, 2025) Leon Festinger was the guy who put a name to this uncomfortable feeling, and his idea is beautifully simple. We hate being hypocrites. Our brains are essentially wired to crave internal harmony, and when our beliefs, actions, or attitudes clash say, when you truly value environmental sustainability but still fly frequently, we experience a genuine, almost physical, psychological tension. Festinger recognized that this discomfort, the dissonance itself, is actually a powerful motivator. We can't stand the mental mess, so our brains immediately scramble to restore order. The person who knows smoking is dangerous but lights up anyway is the classic example. Their two "cognitions" are fighting "I am a smart person who values health," and "I am actively harming my lungs right now."

(PhD, 2025) His focus on the internal mind game is why Festinger was such a big deal back in the 1950s. At the time, many psychologists were stuck on behaviorism the idea that people only respond to external rewards (a treat) and punishments (a shock). Festinger proved that what really drives us is the deep, fundamental need to maintain a coherent, logical story about ourselves. Today, cognitive dissonance is a cornerstone of behavioral science because it explains human irrationality better than almost anything else. It shows us why we often become more convinced of a political position after it's been proven wrong, why we immediately love an expensive purchase right after we've paid the bill, and why identity and peer pressure can override facts. We aren't logical robots; we are master rationalizers, constantly tweaking our reality to ensure the reflection in the mirror looks consistent and justified. (Eleftherios, 2025) The genius of Festinger's work is how it brought the focus inward, showing that our social context is everything to our identity. Whether we feel confident or insecure today depends almost entirely on the specific individuals we happen to be comparing ourselves to right now. This theory is now the foundation for everything we study about group dynamics, competition, conformity, and perhaps most relevant today how platforms like social media utterly warp our sense of reality by constantly forcing us into high-stakes, upward comparisons.

(Festinger L. (., 2025) Festinger's work provided the foundation for understanding almost all social behavior, from competition among siblings to the powerful pressure of peer influence in teenagers. Today, it's the primary lens through which we analyze the toxic effects of social media a platform that forces us into endless, filtered upward comparisons, often leaving us feeling inadequate. In short, Festinger explained that our identity isn't defined in a vacuum. We figure out who we are, what we can do, and what we should believe by constantly observing and processing the lives of the people around us (Festinger L. (., 2025). Festinger's Social Comparison Theory simply states that we have this deep, restless need to figure out who we are, what we believe, and how good we are at things. The problem? Life doesn't come with an objective scorecard. There's no clear, standardized measure for being a "good boss" or having a "good marriage." This framework explains everything from why group pressure makes us conform to why social media can be such a psychological minefield. Festinger basically proved that our identity is not formed in a vacuum; it's a constant, flexible calculation based on our place within the human crowd. It's the ultimate social barometer (Festinger L. (., 2007).

Perspective of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines

Impunity vs. Institutional Reform: The struggle between impunity and fixing our institutions is fundamentally a battle for who is held responsible under the rule of law. When powerful individuals dodge legal consequences, it breaks down public trust, encourages more bad behavior, and weakens democratic foundations. Institutional reform, on the other hand, is the effort to strengthen laws, increase transparency, and ensure that the justice system is both independent and effective. This tension often flares up in countries moving away from authoritarian rule, where old, entrenched interests fight hard against systemic change. The primary challenge is taking apart that culture of impunity without collapsing already fragile institutions. Ultimately, the goal isn't just to punish past wrongdoing, but to make the government trustworthy again and empower citizens through fair, accountable governance.

This theme is supported by The Procedural Justice Theory backs up the idea of reform by showing that impunity is often kept alive through manipulating the rules, not necessarily through completely ignoring the law. This means that genuine reform needs to focus not just on big new laws and institutions, but on the everyday practices and how decisions are actually made because that's what shapes public opinion. By improving fairness in these procedures things like making sure everyone gets due process, has access to a lawyer, and deals with independent judge's reforms can quickly restore trust and stop people from tolerating impunity. Fair procedures also encourage citizens to get involved, giving the legal system real moral authority. In short, procedural justice is both the lens we use to diagnose the problem and the strategic roadmap to achieve lasting integrity.

Another powerful way to look at the fight between impunity and reform is through Procedural Justice Theory. This idea suggests that people grant legitimacy and trust to the legal system not just because of the final verdict, but because they believe the process was fair, transparent, and consistent. When the rules for decision-making are hidden, biased, or applied only to specific groups, impunity thrives especially among powerful elites who know exactly how to exploit those procedural gaps to escape accountability. To fix this, institutional reform must focus squarely on procedural justice. That means rebuilding trust by ensuring the same rules apply to everyone, and that legal procedures are open, impartial, and predictable for all citizens (Ben Bradford, 2023).

Legal Frameworks vs. Political Will: The interplay between legal frameworks and political will reveals a critical tension in governance and reform. Legal frameworks provide the structural foundation for justice, accountability, and rights protection, but their effectiveness depends on the genuine commitment of political actors to uphold and enforce them. Without political will, even the most robust laws risk becoming symbolic, selectively applied, or ignored altogether. This theme is especially salient in transitional democracies, where entrenched interests may resist reforms that threaten their power. Strong political will can drive transformative change, even in systems with weak or outdated legal structures. Sustainable, reform requires both principled legal design and the courage of leaders to act in the public interest.

This theme is supported by legal Institutionalism Theory explains a simple but frustrating truth: a law is only as strong as the people who enforce it. Laws aren't neutral rules; they are embedded in the messy world of politics, meaning their success depends entirely on the political will the commitment and desire of the government, courts, and police to uphold them. This explains why even the most robust legal systems often falter not because the

laws are badly written, but because political interests, power struggles, and old habits can easily override legal logic, leading to selective enforcement or outright disregard. In regimes moving toward democracy, beautiful constitutional guarantees remain symbolic if leaders resist change. True reform isn't just about drafting better laws it's about the tougher job of building a political culture where people in power are genuinely committed to legality, accountability, and integrity.

A law is only as powerful as the people and organizations including courts, police, government that are willing to back it up. Even the best-written rule can be weakened or completely ignored when leaders lack the political will be the commitment and desire to enforce it. The theory explains that political interests, power struggles, and old habits often make officials twist the rules, enforce them only for their friends, or simply disregard them when it's politically convenient. Essentially, politics frequently cancels out the formal authority of the law (Exploring the Intersection of Law and Politics: A Critical Analysis, 2024).

Perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues

Democratic Principles Under Siege: Captures the unsettling reality that the core rules of democracy are actively being worn down. It's about the erosion of key values like transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. All over the world, democratic systems are being squeezed by leaders with authoritarian tendencies, overwhelming disinformation campaigns that distort reality, and the toxic politicization of the justice system. When those in power undermine checks and balances or suppress dissent, democratic norms quickly become fragile and start to decay. The attack is rarely obvious; it often happens subtly through the exploitation of legal loopholes, inflammatory populist rhetoric, or using emergency powers to bypass proper legislative debates. In this struggle, independent media, civil society groups, and the integrity of the courts become the last line of defense, but these groups are frequently targeted or co-opted. Defending democracy isn't easy; it takes constant vigilance, strong legal resistance, and a shared commitment from all citizens to protect the principles that ensure freedom and equality.

This theme supported by Democratic Decay Theory, makes it clear that the danger to freedom often comes from the very people we elect. It explains how a leader can claim to be a democrat while systematically destroying the democratic rules, meaning the political battle is actually about "Democratic Principles Under Siege." For example, in the Philippines, a leader using populist rhetoric (speaking loudly for "the people") and executive overreach which is taking too much power can challenge the core fairness of the system. The theory helps us understand the confusing reality where things look normal elections are held, the parliament still meets but the actual substance of democracy is gone because there's no real competition or power left for the citizens. Then the theory warns us to look past dramatic coups and be vigilant against the quiet, legalistic erosion where laws themselves are weaponized to crush opposition and keep the powerful in control.

Explains that a democracy can be killed not with a bang, but with a series of tiny cuts. It argues that a country doesn't need a sudden military coup to lose its freedom; instead, elected leaders gradually hollow out the system from the inside. These leaders often use the illusion of legality passing seemingly harmless laws or using their popular mandate to slowly dismantle the very things that keep them

accountable. This incremental process involves quietly weakening the safeguards that keep power in check (checks and balances), turning the courts into political tools, stifling criticism, and rigging the rules of elections. Because the decay happens slowly and often under the guise of being "legal," it's hard for citizens to spot and stop until it's too late, leaving a country with the empty shell of democracy while true accountability and freedom disappear (Ordenez, 2018).

Lawyers as Guardians of Civic Space: Lawyers are the champions fighting for our right to speak up and participate. Think of civic space as the public arena where we can freely organize, protest, and share our opinions. That space is often under attack by governments and powerful groups using surveillance, harsh laws, or political repression to silence critics. The legal profession steps onto the front lines to push back. They aren't just filing papers; they're the ones challenging unfair laws, representing the marginalized and silenced, and using litigation to force powerful entities to be held accountable. This work is critical: it not only protects individual freedoms but also reinforces the democratic safeguards that keep power in check. When the ability to speak freely is under

threat, lawyers transform their expertise into a shield for our collective dignity, keeping our society strong and resilient.

This theme supported by Legal Mediation Theory that demonstrating how they anchor the fight for freedom within the formal rules of the system. In the places where the space for citizens to speak and organize is rapidly disappearing where rights are being crushed, dissent is punished, and laws are being twisted lawyers act as the last line of defense against democratic decay. Because they have credibility and access to the courts, they can defend activists, challenged unconstitutional legal claims. This work ensures that the Rule of Law is not just an idea, but a living shield that actively protects civil society and makes sure the government can't simply ignore its own rules.

According to Tocqueville's Legal Mediation Theory views lawyers as crucial, stabilizing figures like the "grown-ups" of a democratic society. He believed that because of their training in logic, procedure, and precedent, lawyers naturally resist emotional, radical ideas and sudden authoritarian power grabs. They act as essential go-betweens that take the passionate demands of the public and coolly translate them into sensible, workable laws, all while defending the core fairness of the system. Their expertise in the rules allows them to challenge politicians who try to take too much power and protect the rights of ordinary citizens. In short, Tocqueville saw the legal profession as uniquely positioned to keep the democratic system balanced, not just by arguing in court, but by shaping public conversation and ensuring everyone plays by the Rule of Law (How can lawyers and law firms help in supporting and protecting the civic space?, 2025).

Views of the Legal Community on the Effectiveness of Existing Laws and Policies Related to National Issues

Digital Advocacy and Strategic Silence: is about using social media, videos, and online tools to rapidly share a message, rally people, and challenge power. It's how movements build support across the globe. But in dangerous places, or when facing intense surveillance, being too loud can be a trap. That's where Strategic Silence comes in. It's a smart, calculated decision not to post, not to share, or to delay information to protect activists from being targeted or shut down. This silence isn't weakness; it's a powerful tactic to stay safe, maintain control, and choose the best moment to strike. Essentially, modern advocates are master strategists, constantly weighing the risks of visibility versus safety in their fight for change.

This Theme supported by legal Mediation Theory that the theme of digital Advocacy and Strategic Silence flips the script on what resistance looks like, revealing that in a hostile environment, silence can be a powerful act of agency, not surrender. The theory argues that in regimes led by populists or authoritarians, speaking out online often just invites immediate punishment, discrediting, or harassment. Therefore, advocates like lawyers and human rights defenders wisely choose strategic silence as a nuanced form of resistance: they deliberately hold their fire to shield vulnerable communities, maintain their legitimacy, and subtly shift power dynamics. Instead of wasting time battling every inflammatory narrative and online lie, they use curated absence to redirect attention toward serious legal action or meaningful, off-line civic engagement. This reframes advocacy entirely, showing that true influence often comes not from what is said digitally, but from the when and why a voice is deliberately withheld.

Strategic Silence Theory completely changes how we think about not talking, arguing that sometimes the most powerful form of digital advocacy is saying nothing at all. This theory, championed by thinkers like Roumen Dimitrov, rejects the idea that silence is just passive or a failure to speak. Instead, it argues that when used intentionally, silence becomes a deliberate communicative act a form of indirect messaging used to navigate dangerous online environments, preserve credibility, or actually amplify voices by drawing attention to their absence. In hostile digital spaces, activists, lawyers, and institutions can use this strategic restraint as a rhetorical tool, choosing when and how to engage, often withholding commentary to avoid fueling a backlash, being co-opted, or falling victim to surveillance. Theory shifts the focus from simply speaking louder to mastering timing, omission, and symbolic restraint to achieve better results (Dimitrov, 2017).

Intergeneration Justice and Ethical Legacy: It's our moral duty to think about the kids and grandkids who aren't here yet. We have to make sure our choices today about the environment, the economy, and our laws don't ruin

their shot at a good life. It means taking an honest look at the long-term damage our decisions could cause and intentionally building systems that are fair, sustainable, and inclusive. We're not just leaving behind a planet; we're creating an Ethical Legacy the set of values and norms that will define their society. This means correcting past mistakes, refusing to be selfish with short-term gains, and using our imagination to guarantee that the pursuit of equity and dignity doesn't end with us, but endures for all of tomorrow.

This Theme supported by Ethics of Responsibility Theory this extension of Jonas's thought anchors the theme of Intergenerational Justice and Ethical Legacy by forcing us to realize that our moral duties don't end when we die. It demands that in major areas like climate policy, correcting historical injustices, or navigating transitional justice, our decisions must include the long-term moral consequences for the future. The framework challenges our political and legal systems to build in mechanisms like reparations and sustainability goals not just because they're good policies, but because they are ethical imperatives. For example, correcting historical wrongs against marginalized communities isn't just about fixing the past; it's about actively creating a more just future for generations yet to come. Jonas's ethics compel us to move beyond the present and constantly ask ourselves: What kind of ethical legacy are we creating right now?

According to Hans Jonas's Ethics of Responsibility is simple, we have a serious moral duty to protect the planet and the quality of life for all future generations. Jonas developed this theory because our incredible technological power has created threats like climate change that have consequences far into the distant future. He argues that our moral rules must catch up to our power, introducing the principle: "Act so that your actions won't prevent genuine human life from continuing." This isn't just about being good to your neighbor; it's a huge shift in ethics that demands we use foresight and think about the long-term legacy of everything we do. Essentially, the theory states that we must become stewards of the Earth, use our imagination and hold our institutions accountable to ensure the unknown and the unborn inherit a viable world (Nodari, 2025).

Legal Community's Assessment of the Government's Adherence to the Rule of Law in Handling National Issue

Crisis- Driven Governance vs. Preventive Justice is the emergency response the moment a government slams the brakes, makes swift decisions, and sometimes cuts corners on our rights just to get through the moment. While sometimes necessary, doing this too often can erode democracy. Preventive Justice, on the other hand, is about foresight. It's about smart design creating fair laws and strong social systems today that fix problems and address inequality before they explode into crises. The real challenge is finding the sweet spot: making sure leaders can be agile and effective when emergencies hit, but always staying committed to the principles of fairness and justice so we don't have to keep relying on panic buttons.

This theme is supported by Risk Governance Theory that the core problem is simple: governments often wait for a disaster before they act, and when they do, they usually panic and cut corners. This idea shows how reactive governance like the Philippines using emergency powers or military tactics for things like pandemics or disasters ends up hurting democracy in the long run. By constantly putting power into the hands of a few and bypassing laws, they erode public trust and weaken the very institutions meant to protect us. The solution is Preventive Justice: getting smart and looking ahead. We need to design laws and systems now that anticipate problems, protect people's rights, and keep democracy strong, rather than waiting for chaos to give someone an excuse to take absolute control. It's about turning governance into a moral promise to build a stable, fair future.

The main idea of Risk Governance Theory is that leaders shouldn't wait for a disaster to explode before they act. It argues that constantly running things through crisis-driven governance where a few people panic and make rushed, top- down decisions ends up ignoring people's rights and sidelining democracy. Instead, the smart approach is Preventive Justice: getting ahead of the curve. This means designing laws and policies now that are inclusive, forward-thinking, and involve public participation to solve the root problems. The theory says that by building in legal safeguards and getting people involved early, governments can prevent emergencies and ultimately gain more public trust and legitimacy (Brownsword, 2019).

Legal diplomacy in Sovereignty Defense: is a smarter, less explosive way for countries to defend themselves in a tense world. Instead of just relying on military might or huge bank accounts, a nation uses international law,

treaties, and court cases to protect its independence and borders. This approach is absolutely essential for smaller countries that don't have a lot of conventional leverage; they turn their principled legal arguments into a powerful voice on the global stage. By using law strategically, countries can challenge aggression peacefully, strengthen international rules, and keep their autonomy while still being active, cooperative members of the global community. It's about turning legal expertise into a shield of resilience against bigger powers.

The main idea of Legal Constructivism is that international law isn't a rulebook carved in stone; it's more like a living, breathing argument that countries are constantly shaping. This means a nation's sovereignty isn't just a fixed right, but something that must be actively asserted and defended through strategic talk and legal action. Legal diplomacy is the engine for this it's how lawyers and diplomats use legal language, negotiation, and international forums to argue their nation's case, legitimize their position, and influence the global rules. This theory shows that by using the law proactively, a country can resist external pressure and control its own destiny, even in complex geopolitical hotspots (WAHAB-MANANTAN, DYNAMICS BETWEEN DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, 2018).

Effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country

Public Trust as a Barometer of Legal Effectiveness: The theme boils down to a simple truth: laws are only as good as people believe them to be. It's not enough to have fancy court buildings or complicated statutes; the real test of a legal system is whether everyday citizens trust it. When people genuinely believe the laws are fair, transparent, and applied equally (without bias or corruption), they willingly follow them and participate in society. But when distrust takes over because of unfair outcomes or impunity for the powerful it's a flashing red light signaling that the entire system is failing. Trust is our diagnostic tool: it reveals whether legal changes are actually making a difference or are just empty promises, and it's the glue that holds our social contract together.

This theme is supported by Procedural Justice Theory this is powerfully argues that the law can't work if people don't believe in it. For a legal system to be truly effective, it needs more than just rules; it needs public confidence. In places like the Philippines, where people often distrust the courts or police because they suspect corruption, bias, or impunity, the entire system is weakened. The solution lies in procedural justice: focusing on how the law is delivered. When courts and law enforcement act with fairness, transparency, and respect, they start to earn that trust back. This trust isn't just a feel-good measure; it's the critical tool that increases compliance, boosts civic participation, and proves whether legal reform is actually making justice real for everyday citizens.

Procedural Justice Theory explains why people's trust in the legal system is the real measure of its success. Simply put, it matters less what the final outcome is (like winning or losing a case) and matters far more how they were treated during the process. When people feel the law enforcement and courts handled them with fairness, respect, dignity, and transparency that their voice was heard and the rules were neutral they are much more likely to accept the outcome and view the system as legitimate. This theory gives us a powerful guide: to fix a broken legal system, the focus shouldn't just be on tougher punishments, but on making the citizen experience one of respect and fairness to rebuild essential public confidence (Sun, 2024).

Intersectionality in Legal Mobilization: Is recognizing that no one is just a single label people's lives are defined by overlapping identities like their race, gender, class, or disability. This means that injustice isn't simple; often, people at those intersections face compounded or multiple kinds of oppression that a single law can't fix. Smart legal advocacy understands this, rejecting one-size-fits-all solutions and instead working directly with affected communities to create nuanced strategies that truly reflect their real, complex lives. By using intersectionality, the law stops being a cold, abstract concept and becomes a powerful tool for transformative justice that actually centers empathy, dignity, and deep, substantive fairness.

This theme is supported by Intersectionality Theory showing that to be truly effective, legal advocacy can't afford to be generic; it must be rooted in the complex realities of the people it serves. In a place like the Philippines, where indigenous women, LGBTQ+ activists, and the urban poor face overlapping vulnerabilities, legal action must ensure their unique struggles aren't swallowed up by broad, "one-size-fits-all" rights talk. By using intersectionality, the law shifts from aiming for abstract equality to achieving contextual justice, making it a powerful tool for tearing down structural oppression. This approach also makes coalitions stronger, allowing

different groups to unite around their shared, yet distinctly experienced, fights for dignity and fairness, ultimately making the law more democratic.

According to Kimberlé Crenshaw the theory that people are more than one thing you can't just talk about race or gender alone. If you're a Black woman, for example, the law impacts you in ways that a Black man or a white woman doesn't experience because those identities overlap and create compounded discrimination. The theory argues that legal systems often miss this, so advocacy needs to change. Instead of using fragmented, one-size-fits-all legal strategies, intersectionality demands that we focus on the complex, lived realities of those at the margins to ensure that our laws and reforms actually solve the problem and don't just reproduce the same old exclusions. It's a tool for making justice truly inclusive and transformative (Advancing Political Science, 2025).

Perspectives of the Legal Community on the Balance between Human Rights and National Security in Policy-making

Constitutional Aspirations vs. Everyday Realities: highlights the frustrating gap between what a country promises on paper and what actually happens in people's lives. Constitutions are full of beautiful, high-minded promises about equality, justice, and dignity, but these ideals often crumble when faced with the daily grind of poverty, rampant corruption, or discrimination. This dissonance shows that a grand legal document is just a piece of paper unless institutions actively work to make those promises real. Bridging this gap requires more than just rewriting laws; it demands civic participation, accountability from leaders, and an inclusive government committed to ensuring that the constitution's true strength is seen not just in its words, but in the fairness and moral integrity of the society it creates.

This theme is supported by Transformative Constitutionalism Theory This idea supports the theme by showing that the Constitution must be a living mandate for change, not just a dusty old document. It shows why the grand promises of the Philippine Constitution like those for human dignity and social justice often feel out of reach when they collide with everyday realities of entrenched inequality and weak enforcement. Transformative Constitutionalism argues that to close this painful gap, everyone from judges to citizens must treat the Constitution as an active command to fight for inclusive governance. It turns legal theory into a practical tool for bridging the ideal with the real, demanding sustained democratic action to make constitutional rights genuine and felt in every citizen.

The theory idea is about the Constitution being a living mandate for change, not just a dusty old document. It shows why the grand promises of the Philippine Constitution like those for human dignity and social justice often feel out of reach when they collide with everyday realities of entrenched inequality and weak enforcement. Transformative Constitutionalism argues that to close this painful gap, everyone from judges to citizens must treat the Constitution as an active command to fight for inclusive governance. It turns legal theory into a practical tool for bridging the ideal with the real, demanding sustained democratic action to make constitutional rights genuine and felt in every citizen's life (Chopra, 2021).

Resilience and Reform from Within the Legal Community: is all about lawyers, judges, and legal educators realizing that sometimes, they are the only ones left to fix a broken system. When governments or institutions are decaying or using their power to oppress, these legal professionals become internal catalysts for change. Their resilience isn't just about surviving tough times; it's about proactively using their expertise to challenge bad practices, reinterpret laws, and firmly uphold ethical standards. By mentoring the next generation, building internal coalitions, and promoting principled dissent, they resist being co-opted. When external pressure is suppressed, the legal community becomes the vital internal source of democratic healing, turning their daily work into a quiet but powerful act of resistance and restoration.

This theme is supported by Legal Resilience Theory this idea is about the legal community realizing they can't wait for someone else to fix their problems; the reform has to start inside the courtroom and the law firm. Especially in places like the Philippines, where the legal system struggles with executive power grabs, impunity, and public distrust, Legal Resilience Theory confirms that judges, lawyers, and educators must become agents of change. This means they have to stand up, be ethically accountable to each other, and look hard at their own institutions. Resilience isn't just about weathering political storms it's about proactively reclaiming public

trust by taking principled action to resist co-optation and defend democratic space.

Legal Resilience Theory explains that a legal system isn't a fragile antique it's an adaptive institution capable of fixing itself, even under extreme pressure. Developed by scholars like J.B. Ruhl and Barbara Cosens, the core idea is that resilience isn't just about "toughing it out," but about the ability to reorganize, learn from mistakes, and innovate when facing a crisis. For the legal community, this means lawyers, judges, and educators must take collective action to address internal problems like corruption or politicization. The theory emphasizes that by fostering ethical leadership and self-correction, the legal system can balance its need for stability with the flexibility required for change, ensuring reform comes from within rather than being forced from the outside. (J.B. Ruhl, 2021).

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, findings and the implications about the phenomenon under study.

Summary

This study explored the perspectives of the legal advocates on major national issues in the Philippines.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What are the perspectives of the informants of major national issues in the Philippines?
2. How does the legal community perceive its role in addressing current national issues in the Philippines?
3. What are the prevailing views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues?
4. How does the legal community assess the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues?
5. How have the recent national issues affected the practice of law and legal profession in the country?
6. What are the perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy making?

Qualitative method was utilized in this study, employing the transcendental– phenomenological approach using interview guide questions with an open-ended question for individual discussion (ID) in exploring the perspectives of informants. Furthermore, the study conducted at the Cebu City. Moreover, the ten informants were 10 licensed lawyers who are practicing their legal profession within the scope and area of Barangay Punta, Tisa, and Labangon.

Findings

The researchers developed 12 emergent themes. These emerging themes pointed as a response to the sub-problems and summarized as follows: First problem; the perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines. The researchers analyzed the responses given by the informants and came up with the following emergent themes:

The second problem is the perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues. The researchers analyzed the responses given by the informants and came up with the following emergent themes: Democratic Principles Under Siege; and Lawyers as Guardians of Civic Space.

In the third problem, the views of the legal community on the effectiveness of exciting laws and policies related to national issues. The researchers analyzed the responses given by the informants and came up with the following emergent themes: Digital Advocacy and Strategic Silence; and Intergenerational Justice and

Ethical Legacy.

And in the fourth problem, the legal community's assessment of the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues, the researchers analyzed the responses given by the informants and came up with the following emergent themes: Crisis-Driven Governance vs. Preventive Justice; and Legal Diplomacy in Sovereignty Defense.

In the fifth problem, the effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country. The researchers analyzed the responses given by the informants and came up with the following emergent themes: Public Trust as a Barometer of Legal Effectiveness; and Intersectionality in Legal Mobilization.

And in the last problem, the perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy-making. The researchers analyzed the responses given by the informants and came up with the following emergent themes: Constitutional Aspirations vs. Everyday Realities; and Resilience and Reform from Within the Legal Community. Implications

Implications for Practice

From the inquiry's findings, the following recommendations, suggestions and implementation are offered:

The national government particularly the Executive branch and local government units need to step up their law enforcement efforts to effectively respond to pressing societal issues and reduce their negative impact. It's essential that they actively monitor and assess law enforcement agencies across the country to ensure these institutions are consistently and rigorously implementing the nation's laws and regulations.

The Supreme Court of the Philippines, in collaboration with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, should broaden its educational outreach and actively promote legal symposiums and community consultations especially in remote and upland barangays. This initiative would strengthen the judiciary's ability to clarify and disseminate vital information about constitutional rights and accessible legal remedies, empowering every Filipino with greater awareness and understanding of the law.

Implications for Future Studies

The researchers recommend the conduct of in-depth inquiry on the following topics.

Amending and expanding Republic Act No. 9999, or the Free Legal Assistance Act of 2010, would allow the government to create a more accessible and comprehensive system of state-sponsored legal aid. This includes broader support for legal representation, consultation, and public legal education ensuring that more Filipinos, especially those in underserved communities, can fully exercise their rights under the law.

A potential research project could explore how inadequate law enforcement impacts the broader process of nation-building examining how weak implementation of laws undermines governance, public trust, and the development of democratic institutions.

A prospective study could explore how legal education and increased public awareness contribute to reducing corruption, preventing human rights violations, and addressing broader societal challenges. By examining the role of informed citizens and accessible legal knowledge, the research could highlight how education empowers communities to demand accountability and uphold justice.

A future study could bring together the insights and lived experiences of both the legal and law enforcement communities to examine major national issues in the Philippines. By integrating these perspectives, the research could help develop a unified framework aimed at strengthening governance, enhancing justice delivery, and promoting national development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research would not have reached completion without the invaluable support and assistance of many individuals. The researchers wish to convey their deepest appreciation to the following:

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Our deepest thanks go to our respondents the legal advocates in Barangay Tisa, Punta, and Labangon, Cebu City for generously sharing their time, experiences, and insights. Their contributions were essential in shaping the findings and themes of this study.

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APPENDIX A TRANSMITTAL LETTER

APPENDIX B

University of Cebu Research Office (032)-255-7777 Local 4149

INFORMED CONSENT

[Informed Consent for the Study on PERSPECTIVES OF LEGAL ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES]

[Name of Principal Investigator: Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus]

[Name of Organization: University of Cebu – Main Campus]

[Name of Proposal: PERSPECTIVES OF LEGAL ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES]

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the research with you)
- Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you agree to take part)

You will be given a copy of the complete Informed Consent Form PART I: Information Sheet

Introduction

We are student-researchers from the College of Criminal Justice at the University of Cebu. We are conducting research on a topic that may not be very common in this country and in this region. We will provide you with information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not need to decide now whether or not to participate in the research. Before you decide, you may talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words you do not understand.

Please ask us to pause while we review the information and we will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you may ask any of us or another researcher.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore and understand the lived experiences and perspectives of legal advocates in selected barangays of Cebu City, specifically in Punta, Tisa, and Labangon, regarding major national issues in the Philippines. These issues include, but are not limited to, extrajudicial killings, corruption, political dynasties, human rights, and legal reforms. Through the use of a qualitative research approach and a transcendental phenomenological design, this study aims to uncover how legal professionals interpret their roles in upholding justice, protecting civil liberties, and addressing legal and ethical dilemmas in the context of current national challenges. The findings of this study may contribute to a deeper understanding of the legal community's views and inform future legal education, policy development, and advocacy efforts.

Type of Research Intervention



This research involves conducting individual, semi-structured interviews with selected legal professionals in the barangays of Punta, Tisa, and Labangon, Cebu City. The interviews will explore the participants' experiences and insights related to major national issues in the Philippines. The conversations will be guided by open-ended questions and will be audio-recorded with the participant's permission for accuracy. There will be no physical or medical intervention in this study. The participation involves only a verbal sharing of professional perspectives, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The interviews are expected to last between 30 to 40 minutes.

Participant selection

We are inviting legal professionals specifically practicing lawyers and judges who are currently residing in or practicing within the barangays of Punta, Tisa, and Labangon in Cebu City. Participants must have relevant experience or involvement in legal work that intersects with national issues such as human rights, corruption, extrajudicial killings, or legal reform. The selection includes ten (10) participants in total, whose insights will help explore how the legal community interprets and responds to pressing national concerns. Participation in this study is voluntary, and individuals were chosen based on their availability and willingness to share their professional perspectives through a one-on-one interview.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you choose to participate, you have the right to withdraw at any time without providing any reason and without facing any penalty or negative consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your professional standing or relationship with any institution or the researchers.

Procedures and Protocol

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, semi-structured interview conducted by a member of the research team. Other researchers may be present to assist with audio recording and field note documentation to ensure the accuracy and completeness of your responses. The interview will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience, either in person or through an agreed-upon virtual platform.

Before the interview begins, you will be informed about the purpose of the study, the topics to be discussed, and your rights as a participant. You will then be asked to sign an informed consent form. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your experiences and views regarding major national legal issues in the Philippines, such as human rights, corruption, extrajudicial killings, and legal reforms.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded, and researchers will take field notes throughout the session. All interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and patterns relevant to the research. Your identity will remain confidential throughout the process, and no personally identifiable information will be included in any reports or publications that result from this study.

Duration

The research takes place over three- five months in total. During that time, we will visit them only once for an interview at their convenient time and place. The interview will last for 30 to 40 minutes.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study. The main risk involves the possibility of emotional discomfort when discussing sensitive or controversial national legal issues, such as corruption, human



rights violations, or extrajudicial killings. However, you are not required to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

You may also withdraw from the interview at any point without providing a reason and without any penalty. All information you share will be kept strictly confidential, and every effort will be made to ensure your privacy and anonymity. The researchers will securely store audio recordings, transcripts, and notes, and only the research team will have access to the data.

If you experience any stress or concern as a result of your participation, you may discontinue your involvement, and no information you shared will be used without your consent.

Benefits

While there may be no direct or immediate benefits to you as a participant, your insights will contribute to a deeper understanding of how legal professionals perceive and respond to national legal issues in the Philippines. This research may help inform future academic studies, policy development, legal education, and advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening justice, human rights, and good governance.

By sharing your experiences, you also help promote public awareness and professional dialogue about the legal community's role in shaping a just and democratic society. Additionally, the findings of this study may serve as a valuable reference for future researchers, policymakers, and institutions committed to legal reform and national development.

Reimbursements

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and no monetary or material compensation will be provided. However, your time, insights, and contributions are greatly valued and appreciated. The information you share will play a vital role in understanding the perspectives of legal professionals on national issues and in promoting meaningful legal and social discourse.

Confidentiality

All of the information and responses that you give during this investigation will be held strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to any other parties or individuals. Your information and any other information obtained from this research will be stored, and only the field interviewers and the researchers will have access to it. No one else will be able to see it or use it in any way. Your identities as participants will be concealed from the public. The only people who will have access to the files pertaining to this investigation are the people who are proposing carrying out the investigation, as they will be the only ones who will have the cabinet secured with a lock and key.

Sharing the Results

After the investigation has been completed, the findings will be presented and discussed at a research conference that will take place on the main campus of the University of Cebu. Everyone who participated in the research defense will receive a copy of the research paper that contains the findings of the study, including the research instructor, the research adviser, and the people who served on the research defense panel. It will be published on an as-needed basis in order to make it accessible to the academic community and the school itself so that they can gain knowledge from it.

In cases when it is important to do so, you are welcome to also discuss the results, and the researcher will give you a copy of the report. Please mention the timeline and the rationale for providing the information, as well as the specifics, if you have a plan to do so and if you intend to do so.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw



Participation in this study is completely voluntary on your part. Whether you decide to participate in the review or not, your enrollment status at the review center will not be affected in any way. It is important for you to be aware that you are free to withdraw from participating in the research at any moment or stage.

Who to Contact?

If you have questions, you may ask now. You may also ask after the study has started. If you wish to ask later, you may contact the following:

Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus (Research Leader)
)

- Erra Mae D. Cataluña (Researcher)
-

Ruzziel Ann Ubatay (Researcher)

Atty. Dodelon Sabijon Ph.D. CJ.
09212297427

Dr. Renato Sagayno -

Dr. Juanito N. Zuasula Jr., MD.

(UC CAREC)

This research project has been reviewed and scrutinized by the technical panel of the University of Cebu as part of the completion requirement in Bachelor of Science in Criminology program. If you have any questions, please contact the University of Cebu at 032 -255 - 7777.

PART II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information or had it read to me. I've had the opportunity to ask questions about it, and any inquiries I've asked have been addressed satisfactorily. I consent voluntarily to participate in this research.

Print Name of Participant: .

Signature of Participant: .

Date: .

Day/Month/Year

If Illiterate:

A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Illiterate participants should also include their thumbprints.

I have witnessed the potential participant's consent form being accurately read, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print Name of Witness: .

AND Thumb Print of the Participant

Signature of Witness: .

Date

Day/Month/Year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent.

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability, made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

- 1. Individual interview**
- 2. Record the proceedings of the interview**
- 3. Manually record other responses/ answers during the interview**

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the study, and all questions have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the permission has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher / Person Taking the Consent: Signature of Researcher /Person Taking the Consent: Date:

Day/Month/Year

INFORMED CONSENT

University of Cebu Research Office (032)-255-7777 Local 4149

[Informed Consent for the Study on PERSPECTIVES OF LEGAL ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES]

[Name of Principal Investigator: Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus

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This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

Information Sheet (to share information about the research with you)

Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you agree to take part) You will be given a copy of the complete Informed Consent Form

PART I: Information Sheet**Introduction**

Kami mga estudyante nga mananaliksik gikan sa College of Criminal Justice sa University of Cebu. Nagpadayon kami og usa ka panukiduki nga hilisgutan nga tingali dili kaayo kasagaran dinhi sa atong nasod ug sa atong rehiyon. Amoning ihatag ang impormasyon ug imbitaron ka nga mahimong kabahin sa among panukiduki. Dili ka kinahanglan magdesisyon dayon kung mouyon ba ka o dili sa pag-apil sa maong pagtuon. Sa dili pa ka mouyon, mahimo ka makigstorya sa bisan kinsa nga imong kasaligan mahitungod sa among panukiduki. Ang porma sa pagtugot basin adunay mga pulong nga lisod sabton. Palihug ipahibalo kami kung gusto nimo ipahunong aron among mapatin-aw pag-ayo ang impormasyon. Kung adunay ka pa'y mga pangutana sunod,

pwede ka mangutana sa bisan kinsa namo o sa laing mananaliksik.

Purpose of the research

Ang tumong sa kini nga panukiduki mao ang pagsabot ug pag-ila sa mga kasinatian ug panan-aw sa mga legal nga propesyonal sa napiling mga barangay sa Dakbayan sa Sugbo, partikular sa Punta, Tisa, og Labangon, bahin sa dagkong isyu sa nasud. Kini nga mga isyu naglakip, apan dili limitado sa, mga extrajudicial killings, kurapsyon, politikal nga dinastiya, katungod pantawo, ug reporma sa balaod. Pinaagi sa qualitative nga pamaagi sa panukiduki ug paggamit sa transcendental phenomenological nga disenyo, kini nga pagtuon nagtinguha nga masabtan kung giunsa sa mga legal nga propesyonal pagtan-aw ang ilang papel sa pagpanalipod sa hustisya, pagprotektar sa mga katungod sibil, ug pag- atubang sa mga legal ug etikal nga hagit taliwala sa kasamtangang mga isyu sa nasud. Ang mga kaplag sa kini nga pagtuon mahimong makatampo sa mas lawom nga pagsabot sa panan-aw sa komunidad sa legal ug mahimong basihan sa umaabot nga edukasyon sa balaod, paghimo sa polisiya, ug mga inisyatiba sa adbokasiya.

Type of Research Intervention

Kini nga panukiduki naglakip sa pagdumala og indibidwal nga semi-structured nga interbyu uban sa napiling mga legal nga propesyonal sa mga barangay sa Punta, Tisa, og Labangon, Dakbayan sa Sugbo. Ang mga interbyu maghisgot sa mga kasinatian ug panglantaw sa mga partisipante bahin sa dagkong isyu sa nasud sa Pilipinas. Ang mga estorya pagagiyahan sa mga open-ended nga pangutana ug i-audio record kini uban sa pagtugot sa partisipante aron masiguro ang kasaktuhan sa datos. Walay pisikal o medikal nga interbensyon nga apil sa kini nga pagtuon. Ang partisipasyon naglakip lamang sa berbal nga pagpaambit sa ilang propesyonal nga panglantaw, ug ang mga partisipante mahimo nga mobiya sa pagtuon bisan kanus-a nga walay bisan unsang silot o epekto. Ang interbyu gilauman nga molungtad og 30 hangtod 40 minutos.

Participant selection

Giinbitahan namo ang mga legal nga propesyonal, partikular ang mga nagpraktis nga abogado ug huwes, nga kasamtangang nagpuyo o nagpraktis sa mga barangay Punta, Tisa, og Labangon sa Dakbayan sa Sugbo. Ang mga partisipante kinahanglan nga adunay may kalabutan nga kasinatian o pag-apil sa legal nga trabaho nga nalambigit sa mga isyu sa nasud sama sa katungod pantawo, kurapsyon, extrajudicial killings, o reporma sa balaod. Ang pagpili naglakip og napulo (10) ka partisipante nga ang ilang mga panglantaw makatabang sa pagsabot kung giunsa pagtan-aw ug pagtubag sa legal nga komunidad sa mga nag-unang isyu sa nasud. Ang pag-apil sa maong pagtuon boluntaryo, ug ang mga indibidwal gipili base sa ilang kahimtang nga magamit ug ilang kabubut-on nga ipaambit ang ilang propesyonal nga panan-aw pinaagi sa usa ka one-on-one nga interbyu.

Voluntary Participation

Ang imong pag-apil sa kini nga panukiduki bug-os nga boluntaryo. Ikaw may kagawasan sa paghukom kung mouyon ba o dili sa pag-apil sa maong pagtuon. Kung mopili ka nga moapil, aduna kay katungod nga mobiya sa pagtuon bisan kanus-a nga walay kinahanglan nga rason ug walay silot o negatibong epekto. Mahimo usab nimo nga dili tubagon ang bisan unsang pangutana nga makapahimo nimo og kasubo o kakulba. Ang imong desisyon nga moapil o dili, dili makaapekto sa imong propesyonal nga kahimtang o relasyon sa bisan unsang institusyon o sa mga mananaliksik.

Procedures and Protocol

Kung mouyon ka nga moapil sa maong pagtuon, pangayuon ang imong pag-apil sa usa-ka-usa (one-on-one) nga semi-structured nga interbyu nga pagadumalaon sa usa sa mga miyembro sa research team. Ang uban nga mga mananaliksik mahimong anaa usab aron motabang sa audio recording ug pagkuha og field notes aron masiguro ang kasaktuhan ug pagkakumpleto sa imong mga tubag. Ang interbyu gilauman nga molungtad og 30 hangtod 40 minutos ug ipahigayon sumala sa imong kasayon, personal nga panagkita o pinaagi sa virtual platform nga inyong sabot.

Sa dili pa magsugod ang interbyu, ipasabut sa imo ang katuyoan sa pagtuon, ang mga topikong hisgutan, ug ang imong mga katungod isip usa ka partisipante. Human niini, pangayuon ang imong pirma sa usa ka informed consent form. Sa panahon sa interbyu, pangutan-on ka bahin sa imong mga kasinatian ug panglantaw mahitungod sa dagkong legal nga isyu sa nasud sama sa katungod pantawo, kurapsyon, extrajudicial killings, ug mga reporma sa balaod.

Uban sa imong pagtugot, ang interbyu i-audio record ug ang mga mananaliksik mokuha og field notes atol sa sesyon. Ang tanang interbyu i-transcribe ug i- analisis gamit ang thematic analysis, aron mailhan ang mga balik-balik nga tema ug pattern nga may kalabutan sa panukiduki. Ang imong identidad magapabiling tinago sa tibuok proseso, ug walay personal nga impormasyon nga makaila sa imo ang iapil sa bisan unsang report o publikasyon nga mogikan sa maong pagtuon.

Duration

.Ang panukiduki molungtad og tulo hangtod lima ka bulan sa kinatibuk-an. Sa maong panahon, usa ra ka beses namong bisitahon ang mga partisipante alang sa interbyu, sa oras ug lugar nga kon asa sila komportable. Ang interbyu molungtad og 30 hangtod 40 minutos.

Risks

Aduna lamang gamay nga risgo ang pag-apil sa maong pagtuon. Ang labing posibleng risgo mao ang emosyonal nga kakulba o kasubo tungod sa paghisgot og sensitibo o kontrobersyal nga mga isyu sa nasudnong balaod sama sa kurapsyon, paglapas sa katungod pantawo, o extrajudicial killings. Apan, dili ka pugson sa pagtubag sa bisan unsang pangutana nga makapahimo kanimo og kasamok o kasubo.

Mahimo usab nimo nga undangon ang interbyu bisan kanus-a nga walay kinahanglan nga rason ug walay silot o kadaut nga imong madawat. Ang tanang impormasyon nga imong ipaambit pagatipigan nga hilabihan ka kompidensyal, ug paningkamotan sa mga mananaliksik nga mapreserbar ang imong pribasiya ug dili ka mailhan. Ang mga audio recordings, transcripts, ug notes pagatipigan sa luwas nga paagi ug ang research team ra ang adunay access niini.

Kung ikaw makasinati og stress o kabalaka tungod sa imong pag-apil sa maong pagtuon, mahimo nimo kining hunongon ug ang bisan unsang impormasyon nga imong giambit dili gamiton gawas kung ikaw motugot.

Benefits

Bisan pa man nga walay direkta o dali nga benepisyong imong madawat isip usa ka partisipante, ang imong mga panglantaw makatampo sa mas lawom nga pagsabot kung giunsa pagtan-aw ug pagtubag sa mga legal nga propesyonal sa mga isyu sa nasudnong balaod sa Pilipinas. Ang maong panukiduki mahimong makatabang sa umaabot nga mga akademikong pagtuon, paghimo og palisiya, edukasyon sa balaod, ug mga paningkamot sa adbokasiya nga nagtinguha sa pagpabakus sa hustisiya, katungod pantawo, ug maayong pagdumala.

Pinaagi sa pagpangambit sa imong kasinatian, makatabang ka usab sa pagpataas sa kahibalo sa publiko ug sa pagpalambo sa propesyonal nga panaghisgot bahin sa papel sa legal nga komunidad sa pagtukod og usa ka makiangayon ug demokratikong katilingban. Dugang pa, ang mga resulta sa maong pagtuon mahimong gamiton nga bililhon nga reperensya alang sa mga umaabot nga mananaliksik, mga tigbuhat og palisiya, ug mga institusyon nga nagtinguha og reporma sa balaod ug kalambuan sa nasud.

Reimbursements

Ang pag-apil sa maong pagtuon hingpit nga boluntaryo ug walay bayad nga kuwarta o materyal nga kompensasyon nga ihatag. Bisan pa niini, ang imong oras, mga hunahuna, ug kontribusyon gilangkuban og dako nga bili ug pasalamat. Ang impormasyon nga imong ipaambit magdula og hinungdanong papel sa pagsabot sa mga panglantaw sa mga legal nga propesyonal kabahin sa mga isyu sa nasud ug sa pagpasiugda og makabungahong panag-istoryahanay sa balaod ug katilingban.

Confidentiality

Ang tanang impormasyon ug tubag nga imong ihatag atol sa maong imbestigasyon pagatipigan nga tinahud ug sekreto, ug dili kini ipadayag sa ubang mga partido o indibidwal. Ang imong impormasyon ug tanang datos nga makuha gikan sa maong pagtuon pagatipigan ug ang mga field interviewers ug ang mga researcher lamang ang adunay access niini. Walay lain nga makakita o makagamit niini sa bisan unsang paagi. Ang imong pagkatawo isip usa ka partisipante pagatabonan ug dili ipadayag sa publiko. Ang mga tawo nga nagdala ug nagpatuman sa maong imbestigasyon ra ang adunay access sa mga file nga may kalambigitan sa maong pagtuon, tungod kay sila ra usab ang adunay yawe ug access sa cabinet diin kini pagasudlan ug serad-an.

Sharing the Results

Pagkahuman sa imbestigasyon, ang mga kaplag ipresentar ug hisgutan sa usa ka research conference nga ipahigayon sa main campus sa University of Cebu. Ang tanan nga miapil sa research defense, lakip na ang research instructor, research adviser, ug mga miyembro sa research panel, makadawat og kopya sa research paper nga naglangkob sa mga resulta sa pagtuon. Kini ipatik base sa panginahanglan aron kini magamit sa akademikong komunidad ug sa eskwelahan aron makapahimulos sila sa maong kasayuran.

Kung adunay kahayag nga importante nga ipahibalo ang resulta sa partisipante, pwede sab nimo kini hisgutan uban sa researcher ug tagaan ka og kopya sa report. Palihug isulti ang oras o petsa kung kanus-a nimo plano ipahibalo ang resulta, ang rason sa paghatag niini, ug ang mga detalye kung ikaw adunay plano nga buhaton kini.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Ang pag-apil sa kini nga pagtuon hingpit nga boluntaryo sa imong bahin. Bisan unsa pa man ang imong desisyon kung moapil ka o dili wala kini'y epekto sa imong enrollment status sa review center. Importante nga imong masayran nga aduna kay kagawasan nga mohawa o mohunong sa pag-apil sa maong pagtuon bisan unsang orasa o yugto sa proseso.

Who to Contact?

Kung ikaw naay mga pangotana, pwede naka mangotana karon dayun. Pwede pod ka mangotana misig nahuman na pagsugod sa pagtuon. Kung ikaw gusto mangotana taod taod, pwede nimo kontakon ang mga musunod.

Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus (Research Leader)

- Erra Mae D. Cataluña (Researcher)

Ruzziel Ann Ubatay (Researcher)

Atty. Dodelon Sabijon Ph.D. CJ.

Dr. Renato Sagayno

-

Dr. Juanito N. Zuasula Jr., MD.

- UC CAREC)

Kini nga proyekto sa pagtuon girebyu og gituki tuki sa teknikal panel sa University of Cebu Graduate School og sa UC research office. Kung naa kay mga pangotana, palihog kontaka ang University of Cebu sa ilang landline, 032-255- 7777.

PART II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information or had it read to me. I've had the opportunity to ask questions about it, and any inquiries I've asked have been addressed satisfactorily. I consent voluntarily to participate in this research.



Print Name of Participant: .

Signature of Participant: .

Date: .

Day/Month/Year

If Illiterate:

A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Illiterate participants should also include their thumbprints.

I have witnessed the potential participant's consent form being accurately read, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print Name of Witness: .

AND Thumb Print of the Participant

Signature of Witness: .

Date .

Day/Month/Year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent.

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability, made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

- 1. Individual interview**
- 2. Record the proceedings of the interview**
- 3. Manually record other responses/ answers during the interview**

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the study, and all questions have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the permission has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant. Print Name of Researcher / Person Taking the Consent: Signature of Researcher /Person Taking the Consent: Date:

Day/Month/Year

**APPENDIX C**

University of Cebu

Research Office

(032)-255-7777 Local 4149

**INFORMED CONSENT**

[Informed Consent for the Study on PERSPECTIVES OF LEGAL ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES]

[Name of Principal Investigator: Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus]

[Name of Organization: University of Cebu – Main Campus]

[Name of Proposal: PERSPECTIVES OF LEGAL ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES]

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the research with you)
- Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you agree to take part)

You will be given a copy of the complete Informed Consent Form

PART I: Information Sheet**Introduction**

We are student-researchers from the College of Criminal Justice at the University of Cebu. We are conducting research on a topic that may not be very common in this country and in this region. We will provide you with information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not need to decide now whether or not to participate in the research. Before you decide, you may talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words you do not understand. Please ask us to pause while we review the information and we will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you may ask any of us or another researcher.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore and understand the lived experiences and perspectives of legal advocates in selected barangays of Cebu City, specifically in Punta, Tisa, and Labangon, regarding major national issues in the Philippines. These issues include, but are not limited to, extrajudicial killings, corruption, political dynasties, human rights, and legal reforms. Through the use of a qualitative research approach and a transcendental phenomenological design, this study aims to uncover how legal professionals interpret their roles in upholding justice, protecting civil liberties, and addressing legal and ethical dilemmas in the context of current national challenges. The findings of this study may contribute to a deeper understanding of the legal community's views and inform future legal education, policy development, and advocacy efforts.

Type of Research Intervention

This research involves conducting individual, semi-structured interviews with selected legal professionals in the barangays of Punta, Tisa, and Labangon, Cebu City. The interviews will explore the participants' experiences and insights related to major national issues in the Philippines. The conversations will be guided by open-ended questions and will be audio-recorded with the participant's permission for accuracy. There will be no physical or medical intervention in this study. The participation involves only a verbal sharing of professional perspectives, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The interviews are expected to last between 30 to 40 minutes.

Participant selection

We are inviting legal professionals specifically practicing lawyers and judges who are currently residing in or practicing within the barangays of Punta, Tisa, and Labangon in Cebu City. Participants must have relevant experience or involvement in legal work that intersects with national issues such as human rights, corruption, extrajudicial killings, or legal reform. The selection includes ten (10) participants in total, whose insights will help explore how the legal community interprets and responds to pressing national concerns. Participation in this study is voluntary, and individuals were chosen based on their availability and willingness to share their professional perspectives through a one-on-one interview.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you choose to participate, you have the right to withdraw at any time without providing any reason and without facing any penalty or negative consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your professional standing or relationship with any institution or the researchers.

Procedures and Protocol

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, semi-structured interview conducted by a member of the research team. Other researchers may be present to assist with audio recording and field note documentation to ensure the accuracy and completeness of your responses. The interview will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience, either in person or through an agreed-upon virtual platform.

Before the interview begins, you will be informed about the purpose of the study, the topics to be discussed, and your rights as a participant. You will then be asked to sign an informed consent form. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your experiences and views regarding major national legal issues in the Philippines, such as human rights, corruption, extrajudicial killings, and legal reforms.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded, and researchers will take field notes throughout the session. All interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and patterns relevant to the research. Your identity will remain confidential throughout the process, and no personally identifiable information will be included in any reports or publications that result from this study.

Duration

The research takes place over three- five months in total. During that time, we will visit them only once for an interview at their convenient time and place. The interview will last for 30 to 40 minutes.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study. The main risk involves the possibility of emotional discomfort when discussing sensitive or controversial national legal issues, such as corruption, human rights violations, or extrajudicial killings. However, you are not required to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

You may also withdraw from the interview at any point without providing a reason and without any penalty. All information you share will be kept strictly confidential, and every effort will be made to ensure your privacy and anonymity. The researchers will securely store audio recordings, transcripts, and notes, and only the research team will have access to the data.

If you experience any stress or concern as a result of your participation, you may discontinue your involvement, and no information you shared will be used without your consent.

Benefits

While there may be no direct or immediate benefits to you as a participant, your insights will contribute to a deeper understanding of how legal professionals perceive and respond to national legal issues in the Philippines. This research may help inform future academic studies, policy development, legal education, and advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening justice, human rights, and good governance.

By sharing your experiences, you also help promote public awareness and professional dialogue about the legal community's role in shaping a just and democratic society. Additionally, the findings of this study may serve as a valuable reference for future researchers, policymakers, and institutions committed to legal reform and national development.

Reimbursements

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and no monetary or material compensation will be provided. However, your time, insights, and contributions are greatly valued and appreciated. The information you share will play a vital role in understanding the

perspectives of legal professionals on national issues and in promoting meaningful legal and social discourse.

Confidentiality

All of the information and responses that you give during this investigation will be held strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to any other parties or individuals. Your information and any other information obtained from this research will be stored, and only the field interviewers and the researchers will have access to it. No one else will be able to see it or use it in any way. Your identities as participants will be concealed from the public. The only people who will have access to the files pertaining to this investigation are the people who are proposing carrying out the investigation, as they will be the only ones who will have the cabinet secured with a lock and key.

Sharing the Results

After the investigation has been completed, the findings will be presented and discussed at a research conference that will take place on the main campus of the University of Cebu. Everyone who participated in the research defense will receive a copy of the research paper that contains the findings of the study, including the research instructor, the research adviser, and the people who served on the research defense panel. It will be published on an as-needed basis in order to make it accessible to the academic community and the school itself so that they can gain knowledge from it.

In cases when it is important to do so, you are welcome to also discuss the results, and the researcher will give you a copy of the report. Please mention the timeline and the rationale for providing the information, as well as the specifics, if you have a plan to do so and if you intend to do so.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participation in this study is completely voluntary on your part. Whether you decide to participate in the review or not, your enrollment status at the review center will not be affected in any way. It is important for you to be aware that you are free to withdraw from participating in the research at any moment or stage.

Who to Contact?

If you have questions, you may ask now. You may also ask after the study has started. If you wish to ask later, you may contact the following:

Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus (Research Leader)	- 09924576453
Erra Mae D. Cataluña (Researcher)	- 09061924382
Ruzziel Ann Ubatay (Researcher)	- 09275499054
Atty. Dodelon Sabijon Ph.D. CJ.	- email add: delon.ucgs@gmail.com
Dr. Renato Sagayno	- 09212297427
Dr. Juanito N. Zuasula Jr., MD.	- 233-5503 (UC CAREC)

This research project has been reviewed and scrutinized by the technical panel of the University of Cebu as part of the completion requirement in Bachelor of Science in Criminology program. If you have any questions, please contact the University of Cebu at 032 -255 - 7777.

PART II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information or had it read to me. I've had the opportunity to ask questions about it, and any inquiries I've asked have been addressed satisfactorily. I consent voluntarily to participate in this research.

Print Name of Participant: ATTY. DOMINIC EDCEL B. ONG

Signature of Participant: 

Date: 09/30/25

Day/Month/Year

If Illiterate:

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent.

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability, made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Individual interview
2. Record the proceedings of the interview
3. Manually record other responses/ answers during the interview

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the study, and all questions have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the permission has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher / Person Taking the Consent: MARY SHERRI LOUISE J. CRENS

Signature of Researcher /Person Taking the Consent:



Date:

09 / 10 / 25

Day/Month/Year



APPENDIX C

Interview Guide University of Cebu Research Office

(032)-255-7777 Local 183

Instruction:

The purpose of this study is to explore perspectives of the legal advocates in Naga City on major national issues in the Philippines. This will be accomplished through an individual in-depth interview (IDI) within 60-90 minutes. Rest assured that the information that you give will be regarded with utmost confidentiality.

Preliminary Questions

Name (Optional):

Address (Optional) :

1. What are the perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines?

(Unsa ang mga panglantaw sa mga informant bahin sa mga pangunang isyu sa nasud sa Pilipinas?)

2. How does the legal community perceive its role in addressing current national issues?

(Giunsa pagtan-aw sa legal nga komunidad ang ilang papel sa pag-atubang sa kasamtangang mga isyu sa nasud?)

3. What are the prevailing views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues?

(Unsa ang nag-una nga mga panglantaw sa legal nga komunidad sa pagka- epektibo sa kasamtangan nga mga balaod ug mga palisiya nga may kalabutan sa nasudnong mga isyu?)

4. How does the legal community assess the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues?

(Giunsa pagtimbang-timbang sa legal nga komunidad ang pagsunod sa gobyerno sa lagda sa balaod sa pagdumala sa nasudnong mga isyu?)

5. How have recent national issues affected the practice of law and legal profession in the country?

(Giunsa pag-apekto sa bag-ong mga isyu sa nasud ang praktis sa balaod ug ang propesyon sa abogasya sa nasud?)

6. What are the perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy – making?

(Unsa ang mga panglantaw sa legal nga komunidad bahin sa balanse tali sa katungod pantawo ug nasudnong seguridad sa paghimo og polisiya?)

Part I. Perspectives of the informants on the major national issues in the Philippines.

1. What are your thoughts on the most pressing national issues currently facing the Philippines?

(Unsa ang inyong mga hunahuna sa labing dakong mga isyu nga giatubang sa Pilipinas karon?)

2. How do you personally view issues such as human rights violations, extrajudicial killings, corruption,

political dynasties, and territorial disputes like the West Philippine Sea?

(Unsay imong personal nga paglantaw sa mga isyu sama sa paglapas sa tawhanong katungod, extrajudicial killings, korapsyon, political dynasties, ug territorial dispute sama sa West Philippine Sea?)

3. How do you think these issues have impacted Philippine society and its legal system?

(Unsa sa imong hunahuna ang epekto niini nga mga isyu sa katilingban sa Pilipinas ug sa legal nga sistema niini?)

4. How do you think these issues have evolved over time?

(Sa imong tan-aw, giunsa pag-uswag o pag-usab sa mga isyung kini sa paglabay sa panahon?)

Part II. Perception of legal advocates in its role in addressing current national issues.

1. How would you describe the role of legal advocates in addressing national issues?

(Giunsa nimo paghulagway sa papel sa mga legal nga tigpanalipod sa pag-atubang sa mga nasudnong isyu?)

2. What motivates legal advocates to engage with these issues?

(Unsa ang nagdasig sa mga legal nga tigpanalipod sa ilang pag-apil sa mga isyung kini?)

3. How do legal advocates influence public discourse and policy?

(Giunsa sa mga abogado pag-impluwensya ang pampublikong diskurso ug mga polisiya?)

4. What do you think are the limitations and strengths of legal advocacy in the Philippines?

(Unsa ang imong tan-aw nga mga kalig-on ug limitasyon sa legal nga adbokasiya sa Pilipinas?)

Part III. Views of the legal community on the effectiveness of existing laws and policies related to national issues.

1. How effective do you think the current laws and policies are in addressing these major issues?

(Sa imong tan-aw, unsa ka epektibo ang kasamtangang mga balaod ug polisiya sa pag-atubang sa mga dagkong isyu?)

2. What aspects of the legal or policy framework do you believe need improvement or reform?

(Unsa nga aspeto sa legal o polisiya nga balangkas ang kinahanglan pa og pagpaayo o reporma?)

3. What factors contribute to the success or failure of these laws?

(Unsa ang mga hinungdan nga nagdala sa kalampusan o kapakyasan sa mga balaod?)

4. How do you think the legal system responds to emerging national challenges?

(Unsa sa imong hunahuna ang tubag sa legal nga sistema sa mga mitumaw nga nasudnong mga hagit?)

Part IV. Legal community's assessment of the government's adherence to the rule of law in handling national issues.

1. How would you evaluate the government's commitment to the rule of law in dealing with national issues?

(Unsaon nimo pagtimbang-timbang ang pasalig sa gobyerno sa pagmando sa balaod sa pag-atubang sa nasudnong mga isyu?)

2. What examples come to mind when thinking about the government's compliance or non-compliance with legal standards?

(Unsa nga mga ehemplo ang imong nahinumduman nga nagpakita sa pagtuman o paglapas sa gobyerno sa legal nga mga pamantayan?)

3. How does the legal community respond when the rule of law is perceived to be undermined?

(Giunsa pagtubag sa legal nga komunidad kung ang pagmando sa balaod gitan-aw nga gidaot?)

4. What mechanisms do you believe are effective in ensuring government accountability?

(Unsa nga mga mekanismo ang imong gituohan nga epektibo sa pagsiguro sa tulubagon sa gobyerno?)

Part V. Effects of the national issues in the practice of law and legal profession in the country?

1. How have current national issues influenced your practice as a legal professional?

(Sa unsang paagi ang kasamtangang nasudnong mga isyu nakaimpluwensya sa imong praktis isip legal nga propesyonal?)

2. How do these issues shape the ethical responsibilities of legal practitioners?

(Giunsa paghulma sa mga isyung kini sa etikal nga responsibilidad sa mga legal nga practitioner?)

3. In what ways has the legal profession adapted to these changes?

(Sa unsang paagi nga ang legal nga propesyon mipahiangay niini nga mga kausaban?)

Part VI. Perspectives of the legal community on the balance between human rights and national security in policy – making.

1. How do you view the relationship between human rights and national security in policymaking?

(Giunsa nimo pagtan-aw ang relasyon tali sa tawhanong katungod ug seguridad sa nasud sa paghimo og palisiya?)

What challenges arise when trying to balance these two priorities? (Unsang mga hagit ang motungha sa dihang mosulay sa pagbalanse niining duha ka prioridad?)

What principles should guide the creation of laws that affect both human rights and national security?

(Unsang mga prinsipyo ang kinahanglang mogiya sa pagmugna ug mga balaod nga makaapektar sa tawhanong katungod ug nasudnong seguridad?)

Parting Statement:

Thank you for your participation in this interview for the accomplishment of this research. All the answers that have been given will be transcribed. If you wish to have a copy of the results, please don't hesitate to ask the researcher. Thank you and God Bless.

APPENDIX D

ENDORSEMENT FOR ETHICS COMMITTEE EVALUATION



UNIVERSITY OF CEBU
Main Campus
COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Center of Development in Criminology
255-7777 loc 4123



ADVISER'S ENDORSEMENT FOR ORAL DEFENSE

Date: October 18, 2025

TO : PANEL MEMBERS

This is to certify that the research study entitled: PERSPECTIVES OF LEGAL ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES which submitted by: CATALUÑA, ERRA MAE, CREUS, MARY SHERRI LOUISE I. and UBATAY, RUZZIEL ANN has been thoroughly reviewed and checked and is hereby endorsed for Oral Defense.

Endorsed by:

 <u>DR. CHRISTINE B. SALEM</u> Name of Class Adviser and Signature/Date	<u>ATTY. DODELON F. SABIJON</u> Name of Research Adviser and Signature/Date
--	--

Approved by:

ATTY. DODELON F. SABIJON, RCrim, Ph.D Crim
Chairman

APPENDIX E PROTOCOL APPROVAL



University of Cebu
Research Ethics Committee

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

Form 2.7



September 3, 2025

Protocol Version Approved: One (1)

ICF Version Approved: One (1)

CREUS, MARY SHERRI LOUISE I.University of Cebu
Main CampusRe: **BSCRIM(1)-2025-08-055****PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEGAL
ADVOCATES ON MAJOR NATIONAL
ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES**

Dear Sir/ Madam:

We wish to inform you that your study protocol under (expedited/full board review/expedited), is hereby granted approval for implementation by the UCREC. This ethical clearance is valid for one year from September 3, 2025 until expiration date September 3, 2026.

Investigator Responsibilities after Approval:

- Submit document amendments for REC approval before implementing them
- Submit RNE's reports to the REC within 14 days
- Submit progress report every 12 months
- Submit final report after completion of protocol procedures at the study site
- Report protocol deviation/ violation
- Comply with all relevant international and national guidelines and regulations
- Abide by the principles of good clinical practice and ethical research
- Apply for continuing review if conduct of study will last more than 1 year.
- Be prepared for a site visit by members of the UCAREC.
- Submit Continuing Review before expiration of approval

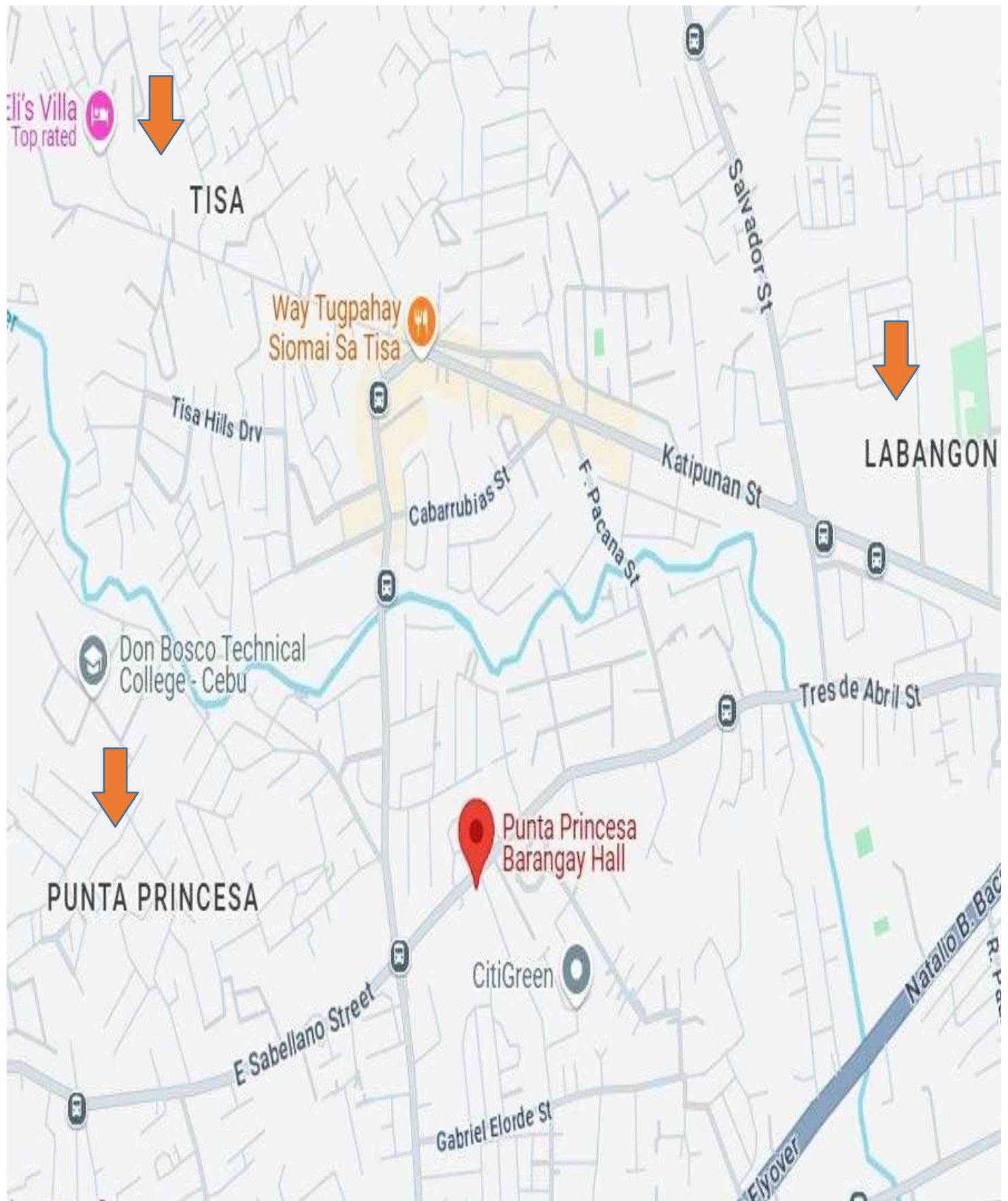
Very truly yours,



DR. JUANITO N. ZUASULA, JR. MD
Chair, UCREC

APPENDIX F

LOCATION MAP



APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF VERIFICATION FORM OF THE TRANSCRIPTION

VERIFICATION FORM OF TRANSCRIPTION INDIVIDUAL IN- DEPTH INTERVIEW

Informant : Informant 6

Session : 1

Date : September 22, 2025

Time Started : 3:55 Pm

Time Ended : 4:50 Pm

Duration : 50 minutes

: Punta Princesa, Cebu City, Lahug, Cebu City

: Erra Mae D. Cataluña, Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus Ruzziel Ann

Ubatay

: Erra Mae D. Cataluña, Mary Sherri Louise I. Creus Ruzziel Ann

Ubatay

Reviewed by : Atty. Dodelon F. Sabijon, Ph.D.,Crim

Adviser : Atty. Dodelon F. Sabijon, Ph.D.,Crim

1	The Philippines currently faces several pressing national issues, including human rights concerns, political corruption, and territorial disputes especially in the West Philippine Sea. These challenges deeply affect social stability and governance. Economic inequality and poverty remain critical and fuel other problems, compounded by ongoing conflicts in regions like Mindanao. Comprehensive reforms and active citizen participation are required to address these issues, which, if left unchecked, risk destabilizing national progress and public trust.	I6
2	I agree that human rights violations and extrajudicial killings are a grave threat, creating a climate of fear and undermining the rule of law. Corruption and political dynasties further weaken accountability and hinder development by centralizing power. Meanwhile, the West Philippine Sea dispute highlights the critical need to protect national sovereignty. All these challenges point to institutional weaknesses that require urgent attention, stronger legal frameworks, and vigilance from both the government and civil society to safeguard the Philippines' democratic ideals.	I6
3	These national issues have fostered deep distrust in the government and legal institutions due to perceived impunity and inequality. This has intensified social divisions, with marginalized groups suffering the most. The legal system often struggles with political interference, hindering law enforcement and rights protection, leading to widespread calls for judicial reform and greater transparency. Civil society and media often step in to promote accountability, as the continued issues hamper social cohesion and long-term development.	I6

4	Over time, these issues have evolved but remain persistent challenges. Human rights violations and extrajudicial killings have fluctuated in intensity depending on the political climate but have not been fully resolved. Corruption has taken on new forms, including digital scams and complex financial fraud, while political dynasties remain entrenched through electoral and legislative influence. The territorial dispute over the West Philippine Sea has grown more urgent, shaped by regional geopolitical shifts and international law developments. Efforts have been made to address these problems through legislation, activism, and	I6
	international cooperation, but progress is slow and uneven. The interplay of history, culture, and politics continues to influence how these issues are perceived and tackled. Continuous vigilance and reforms are essential to adapting to these evolving challenges.	
5	The role of legal advocates is crucial and diverse. As lawyers, we serve as guardians of justice and the rule of law, not just client defenders. Our work involves challenging power abuses, representing marginalized groups, and ensuring the correct application of laws. We act as a bridge between the legal system and the public, clarifying complex issues and promoting rights awareness. Through strategic litigation, we push for systemic reforms on issues like human rights and corruption. By holding actors accountable, legal advocates ultimately help strengthen democratic institutions and foster a just, equitable society.	I6
6	Legal advocates are primarily driven by a deep commitment to justice and service and a desire to help the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Their motivation stems from witnessing societal injustices, which inspires them to act using their legal expertise. This drive is rooted in an ethical responsibility to uphold human dignity and constitutional rights. Whether through personal conviction or professional duty, advocates are motivated by the hope for meaningful change and the protection of democratic principles. For many, empowering the oppressed and shaping fairer policies are the most significant rewards that outweigh the professional challenges.	I6
7	Legal advocates are crucial in shaping public discourse and policy by offering expert analysis, raising awareness, and advocating for legal reforms. Through litigation, public statements, and policy dialogues, we bring critical national issues to public attention, framing them around justice, legality, and human rights. We assist lawmakers by drafting legislation and providing legal opinions to ensure laws are just and effective. By collaborating with media and civil society to promote transparency and accountability, legal advocacy ultimately plays a vital role in influencing both public opinion and government action.	I6
8	Legal advocacy in the Philippines possesses significant strengths, including the ability to effectively use constitutional and statutory law to defend rights and challenge abuses. The existing, though flawed, legal institutions offer crucial avenues for seeking redress. Advocates are skilled in using strategic litigation to expose injustices, influence public policy, and protect vulnerable sectors. However, limitations are significant. Political interference, slow judicial processes, and resource constraints often impede fair and timely outcomes. A persistent gap between legal rules and enforcement exists, sometimes alongside low public awareness. Furthermore, advocates may face threats or intimidation in high-profile cases. Despite these challenges, the resilience and dedication of legal professionals	I6

	remain the driving force for justice.	
9	The current laws and policies addressing major national issues in the Philippines show mixed effectiveness. While laws on human rights, anti-corruption, and territorial defense exist, their implementation often falls short due to weak enforcement and political interference. Some legal frameworks provide strong protections on paper but lack the practical mechanisms to ensure compliance. Policies related to political dynasties and extrajudicial killings remain insufficiently addressed due to loopholes and limited oversight. However, these laws serve as important tools for legal advocates and civil society to hold violators accountable and push for reforms. The gap between legislation and actual practice hinders the full realization of their intended impact. Enhancing the efficiency and integrity of law enforcement is essential to improve the	I6
	effectiveness of these policies.	
10	Key aspects of the legal and policy framework that require improvement include the enforcement mechanisms, judicial independence, and anti-corruption measures. Strengthening the judiciary to be free from political influence would increase public trust and ensure fair adjudication. There is also a need to close loopholes that allow political dynasties to dominate governance despite constitutional restrictions. Transparency and accountability systems must be reinforced, particularly within law enforcement agencies implicated in human rights abuses. Policies on territorial disputes require clearer strategies and international cooperation to assert sovereignty effectively. Additionally, legal provisions should be updated to address technological advances and new forms of crime. Comprehensive reforms combining legal clarity, resource allocation, and education will bolster the framework's responsiveness.	I6
11	The success or failure of laws depends largely on political will, resource availability, and public awareness. Laws backed by strong government commitment and sufficient funding tend to have better implementation. Conversely, political interference, corruption, and lack of enforcement capacity contribute to failure. The judiciary's ability to act independently and promptly also affects outcomes. Public knowledge and engagement play a crucial role in demanding accountability and supporting legal processes. Social and cultural factors, such as deep-rooted patronage systems, can undermine reforms even with strong laws. Hence, multifaceted approaches involving government, civil society, and the community are necessary to translate laws into tangible change.	I6
12	The legal system's response to emerging national challenges, like cybercrime and modern corruption, has been adaptive but often reactive. While new laws and regulations are crafted, enforcement frequently lags due to resource constraints and bureaucratic inertia. Reforms are often driven by public pressure and international obligations. The continuous challenge remains balancing safeguarding rights and ensuring security. Ultimately, the system requires more proactive strategies, technological integration, and continuous evaluation to effectively address new threats.	I6
13	The government's commitment to the rule of law in addressing national issues is complex and uneven. While official statements affirm this commitment, actual	I6



	practices often involve selective enforcement and political considerations, undermining legal consistency. Concerns about adherence to constitutional protections and due process arise, particularly with issues like extrajudicial killings and corruption. However, some agencies do work diligently within legal frameworks. Strengthening institutional independence and transparency is necessary to foster genuine respect for the rule of law.	
14	Examples of government compliance include efforts to prosecute high-profile corruption cases and initiatives to improve the legal framework on human rights protections. On the other hand, instances such as reported extrajudicial killings and suppression of dissent highlight significant non-compliance with legal norms. The controversy over the handling of territorial disputes sometimes involves accusations of ignoring legal rulings or international law. Moreover, political interference in judicial proceedings and slow resolution of cases contribute to the perception of eroded legal standards. Legislative acts that concentrate power or limit freedoms also raise red flags about the government's respect for democratic principles. These contrasting examples underscore the need for constant vigilance and accountability.	I6
15	When the rule of law is undermined, the legal community responds through	I6
	collective action and advocacy. Lawyers, bar associations, and human rights groups issue public statements, file petitions, and launch education campaigns to uphold legal principles. They use strategic litigation to challenge unconstitutional acts and protect the vulnerable. The community also collaborates with the media and participates in legislative reform efforts to address systemic gaps. Despite facing challenges like political retaliation, these efforts are crucial, demonstrating the legal community's vital role as watchdogs in defending the rule of law.	
16	Effective government accountability relies on several mechanisms. These include independent oversight bodies (like the Commission on Human Rights and the Ombudsman), transparent judicial processes, and the automatic public disclosure of government actions. External checks from civil society, watchdog organizations, and media scrutiny are also vital. Furthermore, whistleblower protection and accessible complaint mechanisms encourage reporting. Fundamental to the system are constitutional checks and balances among government branches. Strengthening the genuine independence of these institutional safeguards, combined with active citizen engagement, creates a robust system of government responsibility.	I6
17	Current national issues have significantly influenced my practice as a legal professional by expanding the scope and urgency of cases I handle. Issues like human rights violations and corruption demand a more vigilant and proactive approach to defending clients and advocating for justice. The political environment often requires carefully balancing legal advocacy with awareness of potential risks to safety and reputation.	I6
18	These national concerns necessitate continuous education on evolving laws and standards, leading to more frequent public interest cases and strategic litigation against systemic problems. This enriches the lawyer's role as both a legal expert and a social advocate. These issues have reshaped the ethical responsibilities of legal	I6



	practitioners, emphasizing integrity, courage, and impartiality. Lawyers have an ethical imperative to uphold the rule of law against political pressure and prioritize protecting marginalized clients. They must ensure transparency and actively avoid conflicts or complicity in abuses, fulfilling their duty to advance both individual interests and the public good.	
19	The legal profession has adapted by developing stronger networks of solidarity with human rights and civil society groups. Continuing legal education now heavily emphasizes human rights, anti-corruption, and environmental justice. Legal organizations have intensified their role in monitoring government actions and supporting harassed members. There's greater use of technology to disseminate information and improve access to justice. Practitioners now favor collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches, like working with journalists and policymakers. These adaptations help lawyers respond effectively and maintain the professions.	I6
20	The relationship between human rights and national security in policymaking is complex but interdependent. National security, aimed at protecting the state, must be balanced so it doesn't unjustly infringe upon human rights the foundation of a democratic society. Respecting rights actually enhances security by fostering public trust. Conversely, neglecting rights for security risks abuse of power and long-term instability. Effective policy recognizes that protecting human rights is essential for sustainable peace, requiring laws that uphold both values harmoniously.	I6
21	Balancing human rights and national security presents challenges primarily due	I6
	to potential conflicts between public safety and civil liberties. Security measures, such as surveillance or detention, often risk violating privacy, due process, or freedom of expression. Policymakers face pressure to prioritize immediate threats, which can lead to overreach or abuse. Further difficulties lie in ensuring transparency and accountability in implementing security laws, defining the scope and limits of these measures clearly, and preventing disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups. Overcoming these requires a principled approach and constant vigilance.	
22	These legal and national challenges require that laws balancing human rights and national security adhere strictly to the principles of proportionality, legality, necessity, and accountability. Security measures must be the least restrictive means available, constitutionally grounded and clear, and only used when genuinely needed to prevent harm. Robust accountability mechanisms must be in place to monitor enforcement and offer redress for any abuses. Ultimately, respect for fundamental human rights must be paramount, reflecting the doctrine that security and liberty can and must coexist for the nation's well-being.	I6

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE CODED SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS

CODED SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT (INFORMANT 6)

SIGNIFICANT TATEMENTNUMBER	SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT	INFORMANT NUMBER	LINE NUMBER
1	Ang korapsyon, klaro kaayo nga supak gyud na sa	I6	1

	balaod unsa pa man kaha, diba? Supak na sa balaod mao nga kinahanglan gyud sila kasuhan. Ug ang atong gobyerno, gituohan unta nga molihok ubos sa sistema sa checks and balances. Pero sa tinuod lang, wala man gyud klarong checks and balances tungod sa gitawag nato'g 'bans.' Ug kung naay 'bans,' murag nagpasabot na siya og political family dynasties. Corruption, well, it's very obvious that it's against the law what else could it be, right? It's against the law, so they have to be prosecuted. And then, our government is supposed to operate with a system of checks and balances. But there's really no checks and balances because of what we call 'bans.' And when there are 'bans,' I think that refers to political family dynasties IDI1: SS1		
2	Mao gyud na ang rule of law. Pero wala gyud tinuod nga rule of law kay wala tay ahensya nga tarong nga mo-check. Ug katong mga ahensya nga dapat unta mao'y mo-check, sila hinoon ang magpabug-at sa reklamo sa nagreklamo, nga unta trabaho na nila. Labi na kung gobyerno ang imong ireklamo kinsa man imong ireklamohan? Pero kung civilian, naa may mga ahensya sama sa NBI nga mo-handle ana. Ang problema sa rule of law, daghan man gyud ug balaod, pero kung luya ang pag-implementar, lisod gyud. Ang hinungdan nganong dili ta ka-implementar og tarong mao na akong giingon tungod sa mga kompromiso, backer, ug mga paryente. Mao nga bati kaayo ang implementasyon sa atong mga balaod. That's what the rule of law is. But there is no real rule of law because we don't have an agency that properly checks. And those agencies that are supposed to check end up giving the burden of providing evidence to the complainant, when it should actually be their job. Especially when it comes to government who are you complaining against? But if it's a civilian, there are agencies like the NBI to handle that. The thing with the rule of law is, there may be many laws, but if the implementation is weak, it's difficult. The reason we can't implement properly is because of what I already mentioned compromises, backers, and relatives. That's why the implementation of our laws is poor.	I6	1

	IDI1: SS3		
3	Ang among komunidad sa balaod, vocal gyud mi sa among baruganan. Sa pikas bahin, nag-amping sab mi, labi na sa among mga opinyon sa online, kay basin masabot nga nag- advocate mi para sa usa ka butang, labi na kung politika. Basin gamiton ni sa mga politiko, ug maimpluwensyahan ang mga tawo kung gikan sa baba sa usa ka abogado. Mas bug-at ang among opinyon, mao nga maampingon gyud mi. Pero kung naay mga isyu nga kinahanglan gyud namo ipadayag ang among habig, para sa katin-awan sa publiko, vocal gyud mi. Naa'y uban namo nga mangita gyud og research, ug ila dayong i-post. The legal community, we are really vocal on our stand. On the other hand, we're also careful, especially with our opinion in the online, because it might be perceived as we're advocating for something, especially if it's political. It might be used by the politicians, so, and also the people will be swayed if it comes out from the mouth of a lawyer or something. So, there's a greater weight in our opinion, so we're kind of careful. But if there are issues that need to be, we need to air out our side, for the sake of clarity of the public, we really are vocal. We do, some of us do some research, actually. They provide it and they post it. IDI2: SS1	I6	1
4	Ang legal nga komunidad sa kinatibuk-an, dili lang ang tagsa- tagsa ka abogado, kay mas dako'g gahom kung magtinabangay. Nahitabo na ni sauna, nga ang mga abogado nag-advocate dili lang sa mga isyu sa nasud, apil na ang mga isyu sa kalikupan. Sa akong tan-aw, sa mga isyu sa nasud, labi na sa mga paglapas sa human rights, mo-barug gyud ang mga abogado, pero mas kolektibo. Pananglitan, mag-file mi'g petisyon aron i-nullify ang ubang probisyon sa anti-terror bill kay mura'g gipugngan ang freedom of speech o expression. Ang naa sa likod niini mao ang kadaghanan sa mga abogado. The legal community as a whole, not just individual lawyers, because we have more power if we do collective actions. So, it happened before, like lawyers advocate not just for, um, national issues but for environmental issues. So, I think on national issues, especially violations of human	I6	2

	rights, lawyers will take a stand, but more collectively, in that sense. Like we file a petition to nullify, for example, um, some provisions of the anti-terror bill because it kind of suppresses the freedom of speech, or of expression. So, behind those are the majority of lawyers. IDI2: SS3		
5	Ang among motibasyon usa ka lawom nga sagol sa propesyonal nga katungdanan ug moral nga kasuko batok sa kawalay hustisya. Nagsugod kini sa Panumpa sa Katungdanan (Oath of Office) ang among ilegal-on nga saad sa pagpanalipod sa Konstitusyon. Kini gilig-on pa sa personal nga paningkamot para sa sosyal nga hustisya, nga nag-ila nga ang among kahibalo sa balaod usa ka gamhanang hinagiban aron mapanalipdan ang mga huyang, ilabina ang mga	I6	2
	kababayan-an ug mga kabataan. Gipaningkamotan namo kini tungod sa paglaum para sa mas maayong kaugmaon, aron masiguro nga ang sunod nga henerasyon sa mga Pilipino makapanunod ug mga sistema nga matarong ug lig-on dili mga buak ug daotan. Our motivation is a deep-seated blend of professional duty and moral indignation. It starts with the Oath of Office our binding promise to protect the Constitution. This is reinforced by a personal commitment to social justice, recognizing that our legal skills are a powerful tool to protect the vulnerable, especially women and children. We are driven by the hope for a better future, striving to ensure the next generation of Filipinos inherits systems that are just, not broken. IDI3: SS2		
6	Masulti nako nga posible silang epektibo, apan sa praktis, huyang gihapon. Dili ang balaod ang problema, kundili ang kakulang sa matinud-anong pagpangpatuman ug ang pagpili- pili sa pag-implementar niini. Ang Anti-Graft Law kompleto ug lig-on nga balaod, apan nagpadayon gihapon ang korapsyon tungod kay ang mga sistema nga gidesinyo aron mopatuman niini kasagaran naapektuhan sa pulitika o kulang sa pondo ug suporta. I'd say they are potentially effective, but	I6	2

	practically weak. Our laws are not the problem; the problem is the lack of faithful implementation and selective enforcement. The Anti- Graft Law is comprehensive, yet corruption persists because the systems designed to enforce it are often politically compromised or under-resourced. IDI3: SS3		
7	Ang nagdasig kanako ug sa daghan nakong mga kauban mao ang tinguha nga makahimo og kausaban ug motuman sa pagmando sa balaod. Giduso kami sa pagbati sa responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad. Labaw pa sa dinalian nga panginahanglan sa kliyente, ang mga tigpanalipod lig-on nga naningkamot sa paghagit sa systemic injustices ug pagsiguro nga ang tawhanong katungod ug mga garantiya sa konstitusyon maabot sa tanan, labi na sa mga gipihig. Legal advocates are motivated by a desire to make a difference and to uphold the rule of law. This is driven by a strong sense responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad, along with a deep commitment to challenging systemic injustices and ensuring fundamental human rights are accessible to all, especially the marginalized. IDI4:SS4		3
8	Ang mga legal nga tigpanalipod adunay dakong papel sa pag- impluwensya sa pampublikong diskurso ug polisiya pinaagi sa ilang eksperto nga analisis ug adbokasiya. Kinahanglan nilang gamiton ang ilang kahibalo aron pormahon ang polisiya ug ipasiugda ang hustisya. Ilang hubaron ang komplikado nga mga prinsipyo sa balaod ngadto sa mga panawagan alang sa aksyon ug reporma pinaagi sa estratehikong pag-apil sa litigasyon, pagdraft sa mga balaod, ug pagpresentar sa makapadasig nga mga argumento sa publiko. Legal advocates influence public discourse and policy through expert analysis and advocacy. They must use their knowledge to shape policy and promote justice. They translate complex legal principles into calls for action and reform by strategically engaging in litigation, drafting legislation, and presenting compelling public arguments.	I6	3



	IDI4:SS7		
9	Sa konteksto sa Pilipinas, ang legal nga adbokasiya adunay daghang kusog sama sa lig-on nga konstitusyonal nga pundasyon, usa ka network sa mga dedikadong tigpanalipod, ug nagkadako nga mga mekanismo alang sa pag-access sa legal nga tabang. Kini usa ka gamhanang galamiton alang sa sosyal nga hustisya, nga nagtugot sa mga marginalized nga sektor sa pagpangayo og hustisya ug pag-impluwensya sa mga reporma. Apan, daghang limitasyon ang naglungtad lakip na ang politikal nga mga presyur nga makapahuyang sa mga adbokasiya, kakulang sa mga kapanguhaan, limitado nga kasayuran sa publiko bahin sa ilang legal nga mga katungod, ug kalisod sa pag-abot sa mga hilit nga komunidad. Bisan pa niini, ang mga legal nga tigpanalipod nagpadayon sa ilang misyon, padayon nga nag-uyon sa mga estratehiya aron maprotektahan ang demokrasya ug mapalambo ang pagmando sa balaod. In the Philippine context, legal advocacy has notable strengths such as a strong constitutional foundation, a network of committed advocates, and growing mechanisms for access to legal aid. It is a powerful tool for social justice, enabling marginalized sectors to pursue claims and influencing reforms. However, significant limitations exist, including political pressures that can threaten advocacies, resource shortages, limited public awareness of legal rights, and challenges in reaching remote communities. Despite these, legal advocates persist in their work, continuously adapting strategies to protect democracy and promote the rule of law. IDI5:SS8	I6	3
10	Ang kapasidad sa legal nga sistema sa pagtubag sa mga nasyonal nga hagit napugngan sa politikal nga mga presyur ug kakulang sa mga kapanguhaan. Samtang nag-uswag ang mga balaod pang-ekonomiya, ang mga tubag sa paglapas sa tawhanong katungod, mga isyung pangkalikupan, ug sibil nga kagawasan kasagaran nga nag-ulang, nga nagmugos sa sistema nga motubag sa krisis imbes nga malikayan kini sa pauna. Ang kaluwasan sa mga huwes ug abogado nagpabiling kritikal nga isyu, nga nagpaluyloy sa independensya sa hudikatura. Mas dako nga pamuhunan sa institusyonal nga kapasidad ug	I6	4

	padayon nga reporma sa balaod ang gikinahanglan aron mahimong mas abtik ang sistema ug epektibong mapatuman ang hustisya. The legal system's ability to address national challenges is constrained by political pressures and resource limitations. While economic laws advance, responses to human rights violations, environmental issues, and civil liberties often lag, forcing the system to react to crises rather than proactively prevent them. The safety of judges and lawyers remains a critical issue, undermining judicial independence. Greater investment in institutional capacity and continuous legal reform is essential for the framework to become agile and effectively uphold justice. IDI5:SS12		
11	Kini nga mga nasyonal nga isyu nakapadako sa kalawom nga kawalay pagsalig sa gobyerno ug mga institusyon sa balaod tungod sa gibati nga impunidad ug dili patas nga pagtrato. Nagpalalom kini sa sosyal nga pagkabahinbahin, diin ang mga marginalized nga sektor maoy labing apektado. Ang legal nga sistema kasagaran naglisod tungod sa politikal nga panghilabot, nga nakababag sa epektibong pagpatuman sa balaod ug pagpanalipod sa mga katungod hinungdan sa daghang panawagan alang sa reporma sa hudikatura ug mas hayag nga proseso. Ang sibil nga katilingban ug media kasagaran mosulod aron ipasiugda ang accountability, samtang ang padayon nga mga isyu nagbabag sa sosyal nga panaghiusa ug dugay nga kalamboan. These national issues have fostered deep distrust in the government and legal institutions due to perceived impunity and inequality. This has intensified social divisions, with marginalized groups suffering the most. The legal system often struggles with political interference, hindering law enforcement and rights protection, leading to widespread calls for judicial reform and greater transparency. Civil society and media often step in to promote accountability, as the continued issues hamper social cohesion and long-term development. IDI6:SS3	I6	4
12	Ang mga kasamtangang balaod ug polisiya nga nagtubag sa dagkong nasyonal nga isyu sa Pilipinas nagpakita og sagol nga kaepektibo.	I6	4

	Adunay mga balaod bahin sa tawhanong katungod, anti-korapsyon, ug territorial nga depensa, apan kasagaran kulang ang ilang implementasyon tungod sa kahuyang sa pagpangpatuman ug politikal nga panghilabot. Ang ubang legal nga mga balangkas naghatag og lig-on nga proteksyon sa papel, apan kulang sa praktikal nga mga mekanismo aron masiguro ang pagsunod. Ang mga polisiya nga may kalabotan sa political dynasties ug extrajudicial killings nagpabiling kulang og pagtubag tungod sa mga loopholes ug limitadong oversight. The current laws and policies addressing major national issues in the Philippines show mixed effectiveness. While laws on human rights, anti-corruption, and territorial defense exist, their implementation often falls short due to weak enforcement and political interference. Some legal frameworks provide strong protections on paper but lack the practical mechanisms to ensure compliance. Policies related to political dynasties and extrajudicial killings remain insufficiently addressed due to loopholes and limited oversight. IDI6:SS9		
13	Bisan pa niini, ang mga balaod importante nga galamiton alang sa mga legal nga tigpanalipod ug sibil nga katilingban aron ipaningil ang mga molapas ug ipasaka ang mga reporma. Ang gilay-on tali sa balaod ug aktuwal nga praktis maoy babag sa hingpit nga pag-abot sa gitinguhang epekto niini. Ang pagpalig-on sa kaepektibo ug integridad sa pagpangpatuman sa balaod maoy yawe aron mapauswag ang kaepektibo sa mga polisiya. However, these laws serve as important tools for legal advocates and civil society to hold violators accountable and push for reforms. The gap between legislation and actual practice hinders the full realization of their intended impact. Enhancing the efficiency and integrity of law enforcement is essential to improve the effectiveness of these policies. IDI6:SS10	I6	5
14	Ang mga isyu wala mawala; nahimong mas komplikado ug nagkahiusa. Ang kurapsyon kasagarang natabunan na karon sa mga pormal nga proseso sa burukrasya. Ang mga isyu sa tawhanong katungod, bisan padayon, misibog na	I6	5

	ang pokus gikan sa hayag nga panagbangi kaniadto ngadto sa mga alegasyon sa gisuportahan sa estado nga kapintasan ug pagpugong sa pagsupak karon. Ang hagit sa West Philippine Sea (WPS) milambo gikan sa diplomatikong panagbangi ngadto sa konkretong hulga sa atong mga kahinguhaan ug teritoryal nga integridad. The issues haven't disappeared; they've become more sophisticated and intertwined. Corruption is now often masked by bureaucratic procedures. Human rights issues, while persistent, have shifted in focus from open conflict in the past to issues of alleged state-sanctioned violence and suppression of dissent today. The challenge in the WPS has evolved from a diplomatic spat to a tangible threat to our resources and territorial integrity. IDI7:SS4		
15	Ang atong pangunang kusog nagagikan sa kaisog ug kinaadman sa legal nga komunidad sa Pilipinas, nga gisuportahan sa usa ka konstitusyonal nga sistema nga nagtugot sa judicial review ug public interest litigation. Apan, ang pinakagrabe natong mga limitasyon mao ang mga hulga sa seguridad nga gisagubang sa mga abogado, nga makapugong kanila sa pagdawat og delikadong mga kaso, ug ang hinay nga dagan sa hustisya nga makapaluya sa pagsalig sa publiko ug sa epektibong paghatud sa hustisya. Our key strength lies in the tenacity and intellectual brilliance of the Filipino legal community, supported by a constitutional system that enables judicial review and public interest litigation. However, our most serious limitations are the security risks faced by advocates, which deters lawyers from taking dangerous cases, and the inherent slowness of the justice system, which frustrates both public trust and the delivery of justice. IDI7:SS8	I6	5
16	Alang kanako, ang labing hinungdanong mga isyu mao ang sistematikong kurapsyon, ang padayon nga pagkaluya sa pagmando sa balaod, ug ang mga hagit sa nasudnong soberanya sa West Philippine Sea. Bisan pa nga kanunayng anaa ang mga isyung pang-ekonomiya, kining tulo maoy nag- igo sa kinauyokan sa atong panggobyerno,	I6	6

	seguridad, ug sistema sa hustisya nga direkta nga nakaapekto sa tanang aspeto sa kinabuhi sa nasud. The most pressing issues, in my view, are systemic corruption, the continuous erosion of the rule of law, and the challenges to national sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea. While economic issues are always present, these three cut to the core of our governance, security, and justice system, directly affecting all other aspects of national life. IDI8:SS1		
17	Ang kalisod sa mga problema sa nasud nagpalalom sa ilang pagkagamot. Ang kurapsyon kasagarang nagtago na karon sa mga legal nga pamaagi nga walay etika, nga nagpalisod sa pagpasaka og kaso. Ang mga Political Dynasty maalamong naggamit sa mga balaod sa eleksyon aron lig-onon ang ilang gahum, nga nagapugong sa kompetisyon. Ang labing kabalaka, ang hagit sa Tawhanong Katungod misamot og kadaut, uban sa panglantaw nga ang grabeng mga paglapas sama sa mga nahitabo sa gubat batok droga murag gitugotan sa estado, nga usa ka dakong pagbiya sa pagmando sa balaod. The complexity of national problems has deepened their entrenchment. Corruption now often hides behind legally sound, unethical procedures, complicating prosecution. Political Dynasties expertly exploit electoral laws to solidify power, stifling competition. Most alarmingly, the Human Rights challenge has evolved dangerously, with a perception that severe violations, such as those in the war on drugs, are tacitly state-sanctioned, marking a profound departure from the rule of law. IDI8:SS4	I6	6
18	Ingon usa ka abogado, akong nakita nga ang mga paglapas sa tawhanong katungod ug mga ekstrahudisyal nga pagpamatay usa ka seryosong hulga sa due process ug sa mga proteksyon sa konstitusyon. Kining mga buhat nagaluyang sa pagmando sa balaod ug kinahanglan atubangon pinaagi sa independyenteng imbestigasyon ug legal nga panubag. Ang kurapsyon nagapaluyos sa panggobyerno ug sa pagsalig sa publiko. Kinahanglan nato ang mas lig-on nga pagpangpatuman sa mga balaod batok sa kurapsyon ug transparent nga mga sistema. Ang	I6	6

	mga political dynasty, bisan wala pa gibabagan sa balaod, supak sa demokratikong mga prinsipyo ug angay nga regulahon pinaagi sa enabling legislation.		
	As a lawyer, I see human rights violations and extrajudicial killings as serious threats to due process and constitutional protections. These acts undermine the rule of law and must be addressed through independent investigations and legal accountability. Corruption weakens governance and public trust. We need stronger enforcement of anti-graft laws and transparent systems. Political dynasties, though not yet banned by law, contradict democratic principles and should be regulated through enabling legislation. IDI9:SS2		
19	Ginakilala nako nga ang Pilipinas adunay lig-on nga legal nga balangkas nga nagatubag sa kurapsyon, tawhanong katungod, politikal nga panubag, ug nasudnong soberanya. Apan, ang kaepektibo sa mga balaod kasagarang napaluya tungod sa huyang nga pagpangpatuman, politikal nga panghilabot, ug institusyonal nga paglangan. Pananglitan, bisan pa nga anaa ang mga balaod batok sa kurapsyon, ang implementasyon niini dili pareho ug pinili ra. Ang mga proteksyon sa tawhanong katungod gilakip sa Konstitusyon, apan ang ekstrahudisyal nga pagpamatay ug mga abuso nagapadayon tungod sa kakulang sa panubag. Ang kakulangan sa enabling legislation batok sa mga political dynasty nagpakita usab sa kakuwang tali sa tuyo sa Konstitusyon ug sa buhat sa lehislatura. Sa kaso sa West Philippine Sea, ang mga kadaugan sa internasyonal nga legal nga arena wala pa nahimong lig-on nga lokal nga polisiya o proteksyon sa kadagatan. Sa kinatibuk-an, anaa ang mga balaod, apan ang ilang epekto nagdepende sa politikal nga kabubut-on, independensya sa hudikatura, ug pagbantay sa publiko. I recognize that the Philippines has a robust legal framework addressing corruption, human rights, political accountability, and territorial sovereignty. However, the effectiveness of these laws is often undermined by weak enforcement, political interference, and institutional delays. For example, while anti-corruption laws exist,	I6	7

	implementation is inconsistent and selective. Human rights protections are enshrined in the Constitution, yet extrajudicial killings and abuses persist due to lack of accountability. The absence of enabling legislation against political dynasties also reflects a gap between constitutional intent and legislative action. In the case of the West Philippine Sea, international legal victories have not translated into strong domestic policy or maritime protection. Overall, the laws are in place, but their impact depends on political will, judicial independence, and public vigilance. IDI9:SS9		
20	Para nako, ang mga paglapas sa tawhanong katungod ug ang mga ekstrahudisyal nga pagpamatay usa ka seryosong hulga sa pagmando sa balaod ug sa dignidad sa matag Pilipino. Ang kurapsyon ug mga political dynasty nagapaluyos sa pagsalig sa publiko ug nagapugong sa patas nga pag-access sa hustisya ug mga serbisyo publiko. Mas nagkagrabe kini nga mga problema kung ang mga balaod dili ipatuman sa hustong paagi o kung ang mga gamhanang tawo dili panubagon. Ang panaglalis sa teritoryo sa West Philippine Sea nagpasabot sa panginahanglan sa lig-on nga legal nga diplomasiya ug pagtahod sa internasyonal nga balaod aron maprotektahan ang atong soberanya. Aron masulbad kini nga mga isyu, kinahanglan ang lig-on nga paninindot alang sa hustisya, transparency, ug pagpanalipod sa katungod sa matag lungsuranon. Ara nako akong pag tan aw sa human rights violations og sa extrajudicial killings as seryoso threats to the rule of law and the dignity of every Filipino. Corruption and political dynasties weaken public trust and prevent equal access to justice and public services. These problems are made worse when laws are not enforced fairly or when powerful individuals are not held accountable. The territorial dispute in the West Philippine Sea highlights the need for strong legal diplomacy and respect for international law to protect our sovereignty. Dayunmasulbad ang problema, tas requires a firm commitment to justice, transparency, and the protection of every citizen's rights. IDI10:SS2	I6	7
21	Pinaagi sa kolaborasyon sa media ug civil society	I6	7

	aron ipromote ang transparency ug accountability, ang legal advocacy nagdula og hinungdanong papel sa pag- impluwensya sa opinyon sa publiko ug aksyon sa gobyerno. By collaborating with media and civil society to promote transparency and accountability, legal advocacy ultimately plays a vital role in influencing both public opinion and government action. IDI6:SS21		
22	Ang legal advocacy sa Pilipinas adunay dagkong kalig-on, lakip ang abilidad sa epektibong paggamit sa konstitusyonal ug statutory nga balaod aron depensahan ang mga katungod ug supakon ang mga abuso. Bisan pa man sa ilang kakulian, ang naglungtad nga mga institusyon sa balaod naghatag gihapon og hinungdanong dalan aron mangayo og hustisya. Legal advocacy in the Philippines possesses significant strengths, including the ability to effectively use constitutional and statutory law to defend rights and challenge abuses. The existing, though flawed, legal institutions offer crucial avenues for seeking redress. IDI6:SS22	I6	8
23	Ang mga abogado eksperto sa paggamit sa strategic litigation aron ipakita ang mga kawalay hustisya, impluwensyahan ang pampublikong polisiya, ug protektahan ang mga vulnerableng sektor. Apan, aduna usab dagkong limitasyon. Ang politikal nga interbensyon, hinay nga proseso sa hudikatura, ug kakulang sa kapanguhaan kanunay makapugong sa patas ug tukmang resulta. Aduna pay kaguliyang tali sa balaod ug sa pagpangpatuman niini, usahay kauban sa ubos nga kahibalo sa publiko. However, limitations are significant. Political interference, slow judicial processes, and resource constraints often impede fair and timely outcomes. A persistent gap between legal rules and enforcement exists, sometimes alongside low public awareness. IDI6:SS23	I6	8
24	Dugang pa, ang mga abogado usahay makaatubang og mga hulga o intimidasyon sa	I6	8

	high-profile nga mga kaso. Bisan pa niini nga mga hagit, ang pagkamaunongon ug dedikasyon sa mga legal nga propesyonal nagpabilin nga nagmando sa pagpangita og hustisya. Furthermore, advocates may face threats or intimidation in high-profile cases. Despite these challenges, the resilience and dedication of legal professionals remain the driving force for justice. IDI6:SS24		
25	Soulosyun aspect nga aspeto sa legal ug polisiya nga framework nga nanginahanglan og pagpaayo naglakip sa mga mekanismo sa pagpangpatuman sa balaod, independensya sa hudikatura, ug mga lakang batok sa korapsyon. Ang pagpalig-on sa hudikatura aron kini mahimong gawas sa politikal nga impluwensya makapadugang sa pagsalig sa publiko ug makasiguro sa patas nga paghusay sa mga kaso. Kinahanglan usab sirad-an ang mga loopholes nga nagtugot sa mga political dynasties sa pagdominar sa gobyerno bisan pa sa mga limitasyon sa konstitusyon. Solution aspect of the legal and policy framework that require improvement include the enforcement mechanisms, judicial independence, and anti-corruption measures. Strengthening the judiciary to be free from political influence would increase public trust and ensure fair adjudication. There is also a need to close loopholes that allow political dynasties to dominate governance despite constitutional restrictions. IDI6:SS25	I6	10
26	Ang mga sistema sa transparency ug accountability kinahanglan palig-onon, labi na sa mga law enforcement agencies nga nalambigit sa mga paglapas sa katungod sa tawo. Ang mga polisiya bahin sa teritoryal nga panaglalis nanginahanglan og mas klaro nga mga estratehiya ug kooperasyon sa internasyonal aron epektibong mapalig-on ang soberanya. Transparency and accountability systems must be	16	10

	reinforced, particularly within law enforcement agencies implicated in human rights abuses. Policies on territorial disputes require clearer strategies and international cooperation to assert sovereignty effectively. IDI6:SS26		
27	Dugang pa, ang mga legal nga probisyon kinahanglan i- update aron matubag ang mga teknolohikal nga kausaban ug bag-ong porma sa krimen. Ang komprehensibong reporma, nga naghiusa sa klaridad sa balaod, tukmang pag-apod-apod sa mga kapanguhaan, ug edukasyon, makapalig-on sa kahimtang sa framework aron mas responsive kini sa nag- uswag nga mga hagit. Additionally, legal provisions should be updated to address technological advances and new forms of crime. Comprehensive reforms combining legal clarity, resource allocation, and education will bolster the framework’s responsiveness. IDI6:SS27	16	10
28	Ang kalampusan o kapakyasan sa mga balaod nagdepende sa daghang butang, lakip na ang political will, kapanguhaan nga magamit, ug kahibalo sa publiko. Ang mga balaod nga gisuportahan sa lig-on nga commitment sa gobyerno ug igo nga pondo kasagaran mas epektibo ang pagpangpatuman. Sa laing bahin, ang politikal nga impluwensya, korapsyon, ug kakulang sa kapasidad sa pagpangpatuman maoy hinungdan sa kapakyasan. The success or failure of laws depends largely on political will, resource availability, and public awareness. Laws backed by strong government commitment and sufficient funding tend to have better implementation. Conversely, political interference, corruption, and lack of enforcement capacity contribute to failure. IDI6:SS28	I6	11
29	Ang abilidad sa hudikatura nga molihok nga independente ug paspas usab makaapekto sa resulta. Dako usab ang papel sa kahibalo ug partisipasyon sa publiko sa pagpangayo og accountability ug pagsuporta sa legal nga proseso.	I6	11

	The judiciary's ability to act independently and promptly also affects outcomes. Public knowledge and engagement play a crucial role in demanding accountability and supporting legal processes. IDI6:SS29		
30	Ang mga sosyal ug kultural nga butang, sama sa lawom nga nakaugat nga sistema sa patronage, makapaluya sa mga reporma bisan pa adunay lig-on nga balaod. Busa, kinahanglan ang multifaceted nga pamaagi nga nag-apil sa gobyerno, civil society, ug komunidad aron ang mga balaod mahimong tinuod nga magdala og kausaban. Social and cultural factors, such as deep-rooted patronage systems, can undermine reforms even with strong laws. Hence, multifaceted approaches involving government, civil society, and the community are necessary to translate laws into tangible change. IDI6:SS30	I6	11
31	Kung ang rule of law malapas o mapasipala, ang komunidad sa mga abogado motubag pinaagi sa kolektibong aksyon ug advocacy. Ang mga abogado, bar associations, ug mga grupo sa human rights magpagawas og pampublikong pahayag, mag-file og petisyon, ug maglunsad og kampanya sa edukasyon aron mapalig-on ang mga legal nga prinsipyo. When the rule of law is undermined, the legal community responds through collective action and advocacy. Lawyers, bar associations, and human rights groups issue public statements, file petitions, and launch education campaigns to uphold legal principles. IDI6:SS31	I6	15
32	Gigamit nila ang strategic litigation aron challengon ang unconstitutional nga mga aksyon ug protektahan ang mga kabus ug vulnerable. Ang komunidad usab nakig-collaborate sa media ug nagtambong sa mga paningkamot sa legislative reform aron matubag ang systemic nga kakulangan. They use strategic litigation to challenge unconstitutional acts and protect the vulnerable.	I6	15



	The community also collaborates with the media and participates in legislative reform efforts to address systemic gaps. IDI6:SS32		
33	Bisan pa sa mga hagit sama sa political retaliation, kini nga mga paningkamot mahinungdanon kaayo, nga nagpakita sa papel sa komunidad sa legal isip mga watchdog sa pagpanalipod sa rule of law. Despite facing challenges like political retaliation, these efforts are crucial, demonstrating the legal community's vital role as watchdogs in defending the rule of law. IDI6:SS33	I6	15
34	Ang kasamtangang mga isyu sa nasud dako kaayo'g epekto sa akong praktis isip usa ka legal nga propesyonal, tungod kay napalapdan niini ang sakop ug pagkadinalian sa mga kaso nga akong giatiman. Current national issues have significantly influenced my practice as a legal professional by expanding the scope and urgency of cases I handle. IDI6:SS34	I6	17
35	Ang mga isyu sama sa paglapas sa katungod sa tawo ug korapsyon nagkinahanglan og mas mabinantayon ug proaktibong pamaagi sa pagdepensa sa kliyente ug pag- awhag alang sa hustisya. Issues like human rights violations and corruption demand a more vigilant and proactive approach to defending clients and advocating for justice. IDI6:SS35	I6	17
36	Ang politikal nga kahimtang kasagaran nagkinahanglan nga maampingong balansehon ang legal advocacy uban sa kahibalo sa posibleng mga risiko sa seguridad ug reputasyon. The political environment often requires carefully balancing legal advocacy with awareness of potential risks to safety and reputation. IDI6:SS35	I6	17



37	Ang propesyon sa balaod nag-adaptar pinaagi sa pagpanday og lig-on nga mga network sa solidariti uban sa mga grupo sa human rights ug civil society. Ang padayon nga legal nga edukasyon karon nagpunting pag-ayo sa human rights, anti- corruption, ug environmental justice. The legal profession has adapted by developing stronger networks of solidarity with human rights and civil society groups. Continuing legal education now heavily emphasizes human rights, anti-corruption, and environmental justice. IDI6:SS37	I6	19
38	Ang mga legal nga organisasyon nagpalig-on sa ilang papel sa pagmugna og monitoring sa aksyon sa gobyerno ug sa pagsuporta sa mga myembro nga gipangharass. Mas daghang paggamit sa teknolohiya aron ipakalat ang impormasyon ug mapaayo ang access sa hustisya. Legal organizations have intensified their role in monitoring government actions and supporting harassed members. There's greater use of technology to disseminate information and improve access to justice. IDI6:SS38	I6	19

39	Karon, ang mga practitioner mas pabor sa kolaboratibo ug multidisiplinaryong pamaagi pananglitan, pakigtrabaho sa mga journalist ug policymakers. Kini nga mga adaptasyon nagtabang sa mga abogado nga epektibong motubag ug mapadayon ang integridad sa propesyon. Practitioners now favor collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches for example working with journalists and policymakers. These adaptations help lawyers respond effectively and maintain the professions. IDI6:SS39	I6	19
40	Ang relasyon tali sa human rights ug national security sa paghimo og polisiya komplikado apan nagtinabangay. Ang national security, nga nagtumong sa pagpanalipod sa estado, kinahanglan balansihon aron dili kini makalapas	I6	20



	sa human rights nga mao ang pundasyon sa usa ka demokratikong katilingban. The relationship between human rights and national security in policymaking is complex but interdependent. National security, aimed at protecting the state, must be balanced so it doesn't unjustly infringe upon human rights the foundation of a democratic society. IDI6:SS40		
41	Ang pagtahod sa mga katungod sa tawo makapalig-on pa gani sa seguridad pinaagi sa pagpasiugda sa pagsalig sa publiko. Sa laing bahin, ang pagbalewala sa mga katungod alang sa seguridad mahimong mosangpot sa abuso sa gahum ug dugay nga kawalay-kalma. Respecting rights actually enhances security by fostering public trust. Neglecting rights for security risks abuse of power and long-term instability. IDI6:SS41	I6	20
42	Ang epektibong polisiya nag-ila nga ang pagpanalipod sa human rights importante alang sa malungtarong kalinaw, nga nagkinahanglan og mga balaod nga magtahod ug magpasiugda sa duha ka prinsipyo sa hapsay nga paagi. Effective policy recognizes that protecting human rights is essential for sustainable peace, requiring laws that uphold both values harmoniously. IDI6:SS42	I6	20

APPENDIX I FORMULATION OF CORE MEANING

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT	FORMULATED MEANINGS
Ang korapsyon, klaro kaayo nga supak gyud na sa balaod unsa pa man kaha, diba? Supak na sa balaod mao nga kinahanglan gyud sila kasuhan. Ug ang atong gobyerno, gituohan unta nga molihok ubos sa sistema sa checks and balances. Pero sa tinuod lang, wala man gyud klarong checks and balances tungod sa gitawag nato'g 'bans.' Ug kung naay 'bans,' murag nagpasabot na siya og political family dynasties. Corruption, well, it's very obvious that it's against the law what else could it be, right? It's against the law, so they have to be prosecuted. And then, our government	Corruption persists due to weak checks and balances, worsened by political dynasties and patronage networks what people call "bans." This culture breeds entitlement and silence, even beyond politics. Reform requires stronger controls and proactive action before crises escalate.



is supposed to operate with a system of checks and balances. But there's really no checks and balances because of what we call 'bans.' And when there are 'bans,' I think that refers to political family dynasties IDI1: SS1	FM1
Mao gyud na ang rule of law. Pero wala gyud tinuod nga rule of law kay wala tay ahensya nga tarong nga mo-check. Ug katong mga ahensya nga dapat unta mao'y mo-check, sila hinoon ang magpabug-at sa reklamo sa nagreklamo, nga unta trabaho na nila. Labi na kung gobyerno ang imong ireklamo kinsa man imong ireklamohan? Pero kung civilian, naa may mga ahensya sama sa NBI nga mo-handle ana. Ang problema sa rule of law, daghan man gyud ug balaod, pero kung luya ang pag- implementar, lisod gyud. Ang hinungdan nganong dili ta ka- implementar og tarong mao na akong giingon tungod sa mga kompromiso, backer, ug mga paryente. Mao nga bati kaayo ang implementasyon sa atong mga balaod. That's what the rule of law is. But there is no real rule of law because we don't have an agency that properly checks. And those agencies that are supposed to check end up giving the burden of providing evidence to the complainant, when it should actually be their job. Especially when it comes to government who are you complaining against? But if it's a civilian, there are agencies like the NBI to handle that. The thing with the rule of law is, there may be many laws, but if the implementation is weak, it's difficult. The reason we can't implement properly is because of what I already mentioned compromises, backers, and relatives. That's why the implementation of our laws is poor. IDI1: SS3	This statement underscores a critical breakdown in the rule of law: while laws exist, enforcement is undermined by weak institutional checks, misplaced burdens on complainants, and pervasive patronage. Without impartial oversight and structural reform, legal accountability remains elusive especially when power protects itself. FM2
Ang among komunidad sa balaod, vocal gyud mi sa among baruganan. Sa pikas bahin, nag-amping sab mi, labi na sa among mga opinyon sa online, kay basin masabot nga nag-advocate mi para sa usa ka butang, labi na kung politika. Basin gamiton ni sa mga politiko, ug maimpluwensyahan ang mga tawo kung gikan sa baba sa usa ka abogado. Mas bug-at ang among opinyon, mao nga maampingon gyud mi. Pero kung naay mga isyu nga kinahanglan gyud namo ipadayag ang among habig, para sa katin-awan sa publiko, vocal gyud mi. Naa'y uban namo nga mangita gyud og research, ug ila dayong i-post.	The legal community speaks out on key issues but exercises caution online due to the influence of their words. When public clarity is needed, they advocate through research-based posts.

The legal community, we are really vocal on our stand. On the other hand, we're also careful, especially with our opinion in the online, because it might be perceived as we're advocating for something, especially if it's political. It might be used by the politicians, so, and also the people will be swayed if it comes out from the mouth of a lawyer or something. So, there's a greater weight in our opinion, so we're kind of careful. But if there are issues that need to be, we need to air out our side, for the sake of clarity of the public, we really are vocal. We do, some of us do some research, actually. They provide it and they post it. IDI2: SS1	FM3
Ang legal nga komunidad sa kinatibuk-an, dili lang ang tagsa- tagsa ka abogado, kay mas dako'g gahom kung magtinabangay. Nahitabo na ni sauna, nga ang mga abogado nag-advocate dili lang sa mga isyu sa nasud, apil na ang mga isyu sa kalikupan. Sa akong tan-aw, sa mga isyu sa nasud, labi na sa mga paglapas sa human rights, mo-barug gyud ang mga abogado, pero mas kolektibo. Pananglitan, mag-file mi'g petisyon aron i-nullify ang ubang probisyon sa anti-terror bill kay mura'g gipugngan ang freedom of speech o expression. Ang naa sa likod niini mao ang kadaghanan sa mga abogado. The legal community as a whole, not just individual lawyers, because we have more power if we do collective actions. So, it happened before, like lawyers advocate not just for, um, national issues but for environmental issues. So, I think on national issues, especially violations of human rights, lawyers will take a stand, but more collectively, in that sense. Like we file a petition to nullify, for example, um, some provisions of the anti-terror bill because it kind of suppresses the freedom of speech, or of expression. So, behind those are the majority of lawyers. IDI2: SS3	The legal community wields greater influence through collective action mobilizing not just for national concerns but also for environmental and human rights issues. United efforts, such as petitions challenging laws that suppress free expression, reflect the profession's shared commitment to democratic principles. FM4
Ang among motibasyon usa ka lawom nga sagol sa propesyonal nga katungdanan ug moral nga kasuko batok sa kawalay hustisya. Nagsugod kini sa Panumpa sa Katungdanan (Oath of Office) ang among ilegal-on nga saad sa pagpanalipod sa Konstitusyon. Kini gilig-on pa sa personal nga paningkamot para sa sosyal nga hustisya, nga nag-ila nga ang among kahibalo sa balaod usa ka gamhanang hinagiban aron mapanalipdan ang mga huyang, ilabina ang mga kababayan-an ug mga kabataan. Gipaningkamotan namo kini tungod sa	The informant explains that motivation stems from a strong sense of duty and moral conviction guided by our oath to uphold the Constitution and a personal drive to protect the vulnerable, aiming to build a just future for the next generation.



paglaum para sa mas maayong kaugmaon, aron masiguro nga ang sunod nga henerasyon sa mga Pilipino makapanunod ug mga sistema nga matarong ug lig-on dili mga buak ug daotan. Our motivation is a deep-seated blend of professional duty and moral indignation. It starts with the Oath of Office our binding promise to protect the Constitution. This is reinforced by a personal commitment to social justice, recognizing that our legal skills are a powerful tool to protect the vulnerable,	FM5
especialy women and children. We are driven by the hope for a better future, striving to ensure the next generation of Filipinos inherits systems that are just, not broken. IDI3: SS2	
Masulti nako nga posible silang epektibo, apan sa praktis, huyang gihapon. Dili ang balaod ang problema, kundili ang kakulang sa matinud-anong pagpangpatuman ug ang pagpili-pili sa pag-implementar niini. Ang Anti-Graft Law kompleto ug lig-on nga balaod, apan nagpadayon gihapon ang korapsyon tungod kay ang mga sistema nga gidesinyo aron mopatuman niini kasagaran naapektuhan sa pulitika o kulang sa pondo ug suporta. I'd say they are potentially effective, but practically weak. Our laws are not the problem; the problem is the lack of faithful implementation and selective enforcement. The Anti-Graft Law is comprehensive, yet corruption persists because the systems designed to enforce it are often politically compromised or under-resourced. IDI3: SS3	Laws like the Anti-Graft Law are strong in theory but weak in practice due to poor implementation, selective enforcement, and politically compromised systems. FM6
Ang nagdasig kanako ug sa daghan nakong mga kauban mao ang tinguha nga makahimo og kausaban ug motuman sa pagmando sa balaod. Giduso kami sa pagbati sa responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad. Labaw pa sa dinalian nga panginahanglan sa kliyente, ang mga tigpanalipod lig-on nga naningkamot sa paghagit sa systemic injustices ug pagsiguro nga ang tawhanong katungod ug mga garantiya sa konstitusyon maabot sa tanan, labi na sa mga gipihig. Legal advocates are motivated by a desire to make a difference and to uphold the rule of law. This is driven	Despite some progress, the emergence of new issues (like technology crimes and the need for more transparency and accountability) shows that the situation is constantly evolving, presenting fresh difficulties.



by a strong sense responsibilidad ngadto sa among mga kliyente ug sa komunidad, along with a deep commitment to challenging systemic injustices and ensuring fundamental human rights are accessible to all, especially the marginalized. IDI4:SS4	FM7
Ang mga legal nga tigpanalipod adunay dakong papel sa pag- impluwensya sa pampublikong diskurso ug polisiya pinaagi sa ilang eksperto nga analisis ug adbokasiya. Kinahanglan nilang gamiton ang ilang kahibalo aron pormahon ang polisiya ug ipasiugda ang hustisya. Ilang hubaron ang komplikado nga mga prinsipyo sa balaod ngadto sa mga panawagan alang sa aksyon ug reporma pinaagi sa estratehikong pag-apil sa litigasyon, pagdraft sa mga balaod, ug pagpresentar sa makapadasig nga mga argumento sa publiko. Legal advocates influence public discourse and policy through expert analysis and advocacy. They must use their knowledge to shape policy and promote justice. They translate complex legal principles into calls for action and reform by strategically engaging in litigation, drafting legislation, and presenting compelling public arguments. IDI4:SS7	Legal advocates use their expert knowledge to translate complex law into simple, persuasive arguments to influence public opinion and government policy, ultimately aiming to promote justice and drive reform. FM8
Sa konteksto sa Pilipinas, ang legal nga adbokasiya adunay daghang kusog sama sa lig-on nga konstitusyonal nga pundasyon, usa ka network sa mga dedikadong tigpanalipod, ug nagkadako nga mga mekanismo alang sa pag-access sa legal nga tabang. Kini usa ka gamhanang galamiton alang sa sosyal nga hustisya, nga nagtugot sa mga marginalized nga sektor sa pagpangayo og hustisya ug pag-impluwensya sa mga reporma. Apan, daghang limitasyon ang naglungtad lakip na ang politikal nga mga presyur nga makapahuyang sa mga adbokasiya, kakulang sa mga kapanguhaan, limitado nga kasayuran sa publiko bahin sa ilang legal nga mga katungod, ug kalisod sa pag-abot sa mga hilit nga komunidad. Bisan pa niini, ang mga legal nga tigpanalipod nagpadayon sa ilang misyon, padayon nga nag-uyon sa mga estratehiya aron maprotektahan ang demokrasya ug mapalambo ang pagmando sa balaod. In the Philippine context, legal advocacy has notable strengths such as a strong constitutional foundation, a network of committed advocates, and growing mechanisms for access to legal aid. It is a powerful tool for social justice, enabling marginalized sectors to	Legal advocacy in the Philippines is a powerful tool for social justice, supported by a strong Constitution and a dedicated network of advocates providing legal aid to the marginalized. FM9

pursue claims and influencing reforms. However, significant limitations exist, including political pressures that can threaten advocacies, resource shortages, limited public awareness of legal rights, and challenges in reaching remote communities. Despite these, legal advocates persist in their work, continuously adapting strategies to protect democracy and promote the rule of law. IDI5:SS8	
Ang kapasidad sa legal nga sistema sa pagtubag sa mga nasyonal nga hagit napugngan sa politikal nga mga presyur ug kakulang sa mga kapanguhaan. Samtang nag-uswag ang mga balaod pang-ekonomiya, ang mga tubag sa paglapas sa tawhanong katungod, mga isyung pangkalikupan, ug sibil nga kagawasan kasagaran nga nag-ulang, nga nagmugos sa sistema nga motubag sa krisis imbes nga malikayan kini sa pauna. Ang kaluwasan sa mga huwes ug abogado nagpabiling kritikal nga isyu, nga nagpaluyloy sa independensya sa hudikatura. Mas dako nga pamuhunan sa institusyonal nga kapasidad ug padayon nga reporma sa balaod ang gikinahanglan aron mahimong mas abtik ang sistema ug epektibong mapatuman ang hustisya. The legal system's ability to address national challenges is constrained by political pressures and resource limitations. While economic laws advance, responses to human rights violations, environmental issues, and civil liberties often lag, forcing the system to react to crises rather than proactively prevent them. The safety of judges and lawyers remains a critical issue, undermining judicial independence. Greater investment in institutional capacity and continuous legal reform	The legal system is hindered by politics and resource issues, causing it to react to crises (like human rights and environmental problems) instead of preventing them. Protecting the safety of judges and lawyers is crucial to judicial independence. Greater investment and continuous reform are necessary to make the justice framework effective. FM10
is essential for the framework to become agile and effectively uphold justice. IDI5:SS12	
Kini nga mga nasyonal nga isyu nakapadako sa kalawom nga kawalay pagsalig sa gobyerno ug mga institusyon sa balaod tungod sa gibati nga impunidad ug dili patas nga pagtrato. Nagpalalom kini sa sosyal nga pagkabahinbahin, diin ang mga marginalized nga sektor maoy labing apektado. Ang legal nga sistema kasagaran naglisod tungod sa politikal nga panghilabot, nga nakababag sa epektibong pagpatuman sa balaod ug pagpanalipod sa mga katungod hinungdan sa daghang panawagan alang sa reporma sa hudikatura ug mas hayag nga proseso. Ang sibil nga katilingban ug media	Political interference hinders the legal system's ability to enforce laws and protect rights, prompting widespread calls for judicial reform and transparency. As these issues damage social cohesion and development, civil society and media often step in to promote accountability.

kasagaran mosulod aron ipasiugda ang accountability, samtang ang padayon nga mga isyu nagbabag sa sosyal nga panaghiusa ug dugay nga kalamboan. These national issues have fostered deep distrust in the government and legal institutions due to perceived impunity and inequality. This has intensified social divisions, with marginalized groups suffering the most. The legal system often struggles with political interference, hindering law enforcement and rights protection, leading to widespread calls for judicial reform and greater transparency. Civil society and media often step in to promote accountability, as the continued issues hamper social cohesion and long-term development. IDI6:SS3	FM11
Ang mga kasamtangang balaod ug polisiya nga nagtubag sa dagkong nasyonal nga isyu sa Pilipinas nagpakita og sagol nga kaepektibo. Adunay mga balaod bahin sa tawhanong katungod, anti-korapsyon, ug territorial nga depensa, apan kasagaran kulang ang ilang implementasyon tungod sa kahuyang sa pagpangpatuman ug politikal nga panghilabot. Ang ubang legal nga mga balangkas naghatag og lig-on nga proteksyon sa papel, apan kulang sa praktikal nga mga mekanismo aron masiguro ang pagsunod. Ang mga polisiya nga may kalabotan sa political dynasties ug extrajudicial killings nagpabiling kulang og pagtubag tungod sa mga loopholes ug limitadong oversight. The current laws and policies addressing major national issues in the Philippines show mixed effectiveness. While laws on human rights, anti-corruption, and territorial defense exist, their implementation often falls short due to weak enforcement and political interference. Some legal frameworks provide strong protections on paper but lack the practical mechanisms to ensure compliance. Policies related to political dynasties and extrajudicial killings remain insufficiently addressed due to loopholes and limited oversight. IDI6:SS9	Laws in the Philippines address key national issues, but weak enforcement and political interference limit their impact. Strong legal frameworks exist, yet gaps between policy and practice hinder real progress. Improving law enforcement is crucial for effective ness. FM12
Bisan pa niini, ang mga balaod importante nga glamiton alang sa mga legal nga tigpanalipod ug sibil nga katilingban aron ipaningil ang mga molapas ug ipasaka ang mga reporma. Ang	National issues in the Philippines have grown more complex. Corruption now hides behind bureaucracy, human



gilay-on tali sa balaod ug aktuwal nga praktis maoy babag sa hingpit nga pag-abot sa gitinguhang epekto niini. Ang pagpalig- on sa kaepektibo ug integridad sa pagpangpatuman sa balaod maoy yawe aron mapauswag ang kaepektibo sa mga polisiya. However, these laws serve as important tools for legal advocates and civil society to hold violators accountable and push for reforms. The gap between legislation and actual practice hinders the full realization of their intended impact. Enhancing the efficiency and integrity of law enforcement is essential to improve the effectiveness of these policies. IDI6:SS10	rights concerns center on alleged state violence and silencing dissent, and the West Philippine Sea dispute has escalated into a real threat to national resources and sovereignty. FM13
Ang mga isyu wala mawala; nahimong mas komplikado ug nagkahiusa. Ang kurapsyon kasagarang natabunan na karon sa mga pormal nga proseso sa burukrasya. Ang mga isyu sa tawhanong katungod, bisan padayon, misibog na ang pokus gikan sa hayag nga panagbangi kaniadto ngadto sa mga alegasyon sa gi-suportahan sa estado nga kapintasan ug pagpugong sa pagsupak karon. Ang hagit sa West Philippine Sea (WPS) milambo gikan sa diplomatikong panagbangi ngadto sa konkretong hulga sa atong mga kahinguhaan ug teritoryal nga integridad. The issues haven't disappeared; they've become more sophisticated and intertwined. Corruption is now often masked by bureaucratic procedures. Human rights issues, while persistent, have shifted in focus from open conflict in the past to issues of alleged state-sanctioned violence and suppression of dissent today. The challenge in the WPS has evolved from a diplomatic spat to a tangible threat to our resources and territorial integrity. IDI7:SS4	The Filipino legal community is resilient and intellectually strong, backed by a constitution that supports judicial review and public interest litigation. Yet, threats to lawyer safety and a slow justice system undermine public trust and hinder effective legal action. FM14
Ang atong pangunang kusog nagagikan sa kaisog ug kinaadman sa legal nga komunidad sa Pilipinas, nga gisuportahan sa usa ka konstitusyonal nga sistema nga nagtugot sa judicial review ug public interest litigation. Apan, ang pinakagrabe natong mga limitasyon mao ang mga hulga sa seguridad nga gisagubang sa mga abogado, nga makapugong kanila sa pagdawat og delikadong mga kaso, ug ang hinay nga dagan sa hustisya nga makapaluya sa pagsalig sa publiko ug sa epektibong paghatud sa hustisya. Our key strength lies in the tenacity and intellectual brilliance of the Filipino legal community, supported by a constitutional system that enables judicial review	The Philippines' most critical challenges are systemic corruption, declining rule of law, and threats to sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea. These deeply impact governance, security, and justice, shaping every other aspect of national life beyond economics. FM15

and public interest litigation. However, our most serious limitations are the security risks faced by advocates, which deters lawyers from taking dangerous cases, and the inherent slowness of the justice system, which frustrates both public trust and the delivery of justice.	
IDI7:SS8	
Alang kanako, ang labing hinungdanong mga isyu mao ang sistematikong kurapsyon, ang padayon nga pagkaluya sa pagmando sa balaod, ug ang mga hagit sa nasudnong soberanya sa West Philippine Sea. Bisan pa nga kanunayng anaa ang mga isyung pang-ekonomiya, kining tulo maoy nag-igo sa kinauyokan sa atong panggobyerno, seguridad, ug sistema sa hustisya nga direkta nga nakaapekto sa tanang aspeto sa kinabuhi sa nasud. The most pressing issues, in my view, are systemic corruption, the continuous erosion of the rule of law, and the challenges to national sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea. While economic issues are always present, these three cut to the core of our governance, security, and justice system, directly affecting all other aspects of national life. IDI8:SS1	National issues in the Philippines are growing more complex. Corruption hides behind legality, dynasties exploit electoral laws, and human rights abuses especially in the drug war erode the rule of law. FM16
Ang kalisod sa mga problema sa nasud nagpalalom sa ilang pagkagamot. Ang kurapsyon kasagarang nagtago na karon sa mga legal nga pamaagi nga walay etika, nga nagpalisod sa pagpasaka og kaso. Ang mga Political Dynasty maalamong naggamit sa mga balaod sa eleksyon aron lig-onon ang ilang gahum, nga nagapugong sa kompetisyon. Ang labing kabalaka, ang hagit sa Tawhanong Katungod misamot og kadaut, uban sa panglantaw nga ang grabeng mga paglapas sama sa mga nahitabo sa gubat batok droga murag gitugotan sa estado, nga usa ka dakong pagbiya sa pagmando sa balaod. The complexity of national problems has deepened their entrenchment. Corruption now often hides behind legally sound, unethical procedures, complicating prosecution. Political Dynasties expertly exploit electoral laws to solidify power, stifling competition. Most alarmingly, the Human Rights challenge has evolved dangerously, with a perception that severe violations, such as those in the war on drugs, are tacitly state-sanctioned, marking a profound departure from the rule of law.	Human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings threaten due process and the rule of law. Corruption erodes governance and trust, while political dynasties undermine democracy. Stronger enforcement and legal reforms are urgently needed. FM17

IDI8:SS4	
Ingon usa ka abogado, akong nakita nga ang mga paglapas sa tawhanong katungod ug mga ekstrahudisyal nga pagpamatay usa ka seryosong hulga sa due process ug sa mga proteksyon sa konstitusyon. Kining mga buhat nagaluyang sa pagmando sa balaod ug kinahanglan atubangon pinaagi sa independyenteng imbestigasyon ug legal nga panubag. Ang kurapsyon nagapaluyos sa panggobyerno ug sa pagsalig sa publiko. Kinahanglan nato ang mas lig-on nga pagpangpatuman sa mga balaod batok sa kurapsyon ug transparent nga mga sistema. Ang mga political dynasty, bisan wala pa gibabagan sa balaod, supak sa demokratikong mga prinsipyo ug angay nga regulahon pinaagi sa enabling legislation.	The Philippines has strong laws on key issues, but weak enforcement, political interference, and delays limit their impact. Real progress depends on political will, judicial independence, and active public oversight. FM18
As a lawyer, I see human rights violations and extrajudicial killings as serious threats to due process and constitutional protections. These acts undermine the rule of law and must be addressed through independent investigations and legal accountability. Corruption weakens governance and public trust. We need stronger enforcement of anti-graft laws and transparent systems. Political dynasties, though not yet banned by law, contradict democratic principles and should be regulated through enabling legislation. IDI9:SS2	
Ginakilala nako nga ang Pilipinas adunay lig-on nga legal nga balangkas nga nagatubag sa kurapsyon, tawhanong katungod, politikal nga panubag, ug nasudnong soberanya. Apan, ang kaepektibo sa mga balaod kasagarang napaluya tungod sa huyang nga pagpangpatuman, politikal nga panghilabot, ug institusyonal nga paglangan. Pananglitan, bisan pa nga anaa ang mga balaod batok sa kurapsyon, ang implementasyon niini dili pareho ug pinili ra. Ang mga proteksyon sa tawhanong katungod gilakip sa Konstitusyon, apan ang ekstrahudisyal nga pagpamatay ug mga abuso nagapadayon tungod sa kakulang sa panubag. Ang kakulangan sa enabling legislation batok sa mga political dynasty nagpakita usab sa kakuwang tali sa tuyo sa Konstitusyon ug sa buhat sa lehislatura. Sa kaso sa West Philippine Sea, ang mga kadaugan sa internasyonal nga legal nga arena wala pa nahimong lig-on nga lokal nga polisiya o proteksyon sa kadagatan. Sa kinatibuk-an, anaa ang mga balaod, apan ang ilang epekto nagdepende sa politikal nga kabubut-on, independensya sa hudikatura, ug pagbantay sa publiko.	Human rights violations, corruption, and political dynasties threaten justice and public trust in the Philippines. Weak law enforcement and lack of accountability worsen these issues. Resolving them requires strong legal diplomacy, respect for international law, and a firm commitment to justice and citizens' rights. FM19



I recognize that the Philippines has a robust legal framework addressing corruption, human rights, political accountability, and territorial sovereignty. However, the effectiveness of these laws is often undermined by weak enforcement, political interference, and institutional delays. For example, while anti-corruption laws exist, implementation is inconsistent and selective. Human rights protections are enshrined in the Constitution, yet extrajudicial killings and abuses persist due to lack of accountability. The absence of enabling legislation against political dynasties also reflects a gap between constitutional intent and legislative action. In the case of the West Philippine Sea, international legal victories have not translated into strong domestic policy or maritime protection. Overall, the laws are in place, but their impact depends on political will, judicial independence, and public vigilance.	
IDI9:SS9	
Para nako, ang mga paglapas sa tawhanong katungod ug ang	Accountability relies on strong
mga ekstrahudisyal nga pagpamatay usa ka seryosong hulga sa	institutions, transparency, and fair law
pagmando sa balaod ug sa dignidad sa matag Pilipino. Ang	enforcement. Justice thrives with
kurapsyon ug mga political dynasty nagapaluyos sa pagsalig sa	public awareness and fearless legal
publiko ug nagapugong sa patas nga pag-access sa hustisya ug	systems.
mga serbisyo publiko. Mas nagkagrabe kini nga mga problema	
kung ang mga balaod dili ipatuman sa hustong paagi o kung ang mga gamhanang tawo dili panubagon. Ang panaglalalis sa teritoryo sa West Philippine Sea nagpasabot sa panginahanglan sa lig-on nga legal nga diplomasiya ug pagtahod sa internasyonal nga balaod aron maprotektahan ang atong soberanya. Aron masulbad kini nga mga isyu, kinahanglan ang lig-on nga paninindot alang sa hustisya, transparency, ug pagpanalipod sa katungod sa matag lungsuranon. Ara nako akong pag tan aw sa human rights violations og sa extrajudicial killings as seryoso threats to the rule of law and the dignity of every Filipino. Corruption and political dynasties weaken public trust and prevent equal access to justice and public services. These	FM20



problems are made worse when laws are not enforced fairly or when powerful individuals are not held accountable. The territorial dispute in the West Philippine Sea highlights the need for strong legal diplomacy and respect for international law to protect our sovereignty. Dayunmasulbad ang problema, tas requires a firm commitment to justice, transparency, and the protection of every citizen's rights.

IDI10:SS2

APPENDIX J DEVELOPMENT OF CLUSTER THEMES

FORMULATED MEANINGS	CLUSTER THEMES	EMERGENT THEMES
Corruption persists due to weak checks and balances, worsened by political dynasties and patronage networks what people call "bans." This culture breeds entitlement and silence, even beyond politics. Reform requires stronger controls and proactive action before crises escalate.	Structural Impunity and Elite Capture.	Impunity vs. Institutional Reform
FM1	Rule of Law Erosion and Accountability Gaps	Legal
This statement underscores a critical breakdown in the rule of law: while laws exist, enforcement is undermined by weak institutional checks, misplaced burdens on complainants, and pervasive patronage. Without impartial oversight and structural reform, legal accountability remains elusive especially when power protects itself.	Strategic Advocacy and Digital Self- Censorship	Frameworks vs. Political Will
FM2	Collective Legal Mobilization for Democratic Integrity	Democratic Principles Under Siege
The legal community speaks out on key issues but exercises caution online due to the influence of their words. When public clarity is needed, they advocate through research-based posts.	Ethical	Lawyers as Guardians of Civic Space
FM3	Commitment and Generational Justice	Digital Advocacy and Strategic Silence
The legal community wields greater influence through collective action mobilizing not just for national concerns but also for environmental and human rights issues. United efforts, such as petitions challenging laws that suppress free expression, reflect the profession's shared commitment to democratic principles.	Legal Strength Undermined by Political Fragility.	I.Intergenerational Justice and Ethical Legacy
FM4	Evolving Governance Challenges in the Digital Age	Crisis-Driven Governance vs. Preventive Justice
The informant explains that motivation stems from a strong sense of duty and moral conviction guided by		Legal
		Diplomacy in Sovereignty Defense
		Public Trust as a Barometer of Legal



our oath to uphold the Constitution and a personal drive to protect the vulnerable, aiming to build a just future for the next generation.	II. Legal Advocacy and Public Policy Reform	Effectiveness
FM5	Empowering Justice Through Legal Advocacy	Intersectionality in Legal Mobilization.
Laws like the Anti-Graft Law are strong in theory but weak in practice due to poor implementation, selective enforcement, and politically compromised systems.	Strengthening Judicial Independence and Systemic Reform	
FM6		



Despite some progress, the emergence of new issues (like technology crimes and the need for more transparency and accountability) shows that the situation is constantly evolving, presenting fresh difficulties.	XI. Safeguarding Justice through Institutional Integrity and Civic Engagement	XI. Constitutional Aspirations vs. Everyday Realities
FM7	XII. Bridging the Gap Between Law and Implementation	XII. Resilience and Reform from Within the Legal Community
Legal advocates use their expert knowledge to translate complex law into simple, persuasive arguments to influence public opinion and government policy, ultimately aiming to promote justice and drive reform.	XIII. Deepening Governance and Sovereignty Challenges	
FM8	XIV. Resilience and Reform in the Legal Profession	
Legal advocacy in the Philippines is a powerful tool for social justice, supported by a strong Constitution and a dedicated network of advocates providing legal aid to the marginalized.	XV. Core Threats to National Integrity and Governance	
FM9	XVI. Democratic Erosion and Legal Manipulation	
The legal system is hindered by politics and resource issues, causing it to react to crises (like human rights and environmental problems) instead of preventing them. Protecting the safety of judges and lawyers is crucial to judicial independence. Greater investment and continuous reform are necessary to make the justice framework effective.	XVII. Upholding Democratic Values Through Legal Accountability	
FM10	XVIII. Translating Legal Strength into Effective Governance	
Political interference hinders the legal system's ability to enforce laws and protect rights, prompting widespread calls for judicial reform and transparency. As these issues damage social cohesion and development, civil society and media often step in to promote accountability.	XIX. Restoring Public Trust Through Legal	
FM11		
Laws in the Philippines address key national issues, but weak enforcement and political interference limit their impact. Strong legal frameworks exist, yet gaps between policy and practice hinder real progress. Improving law enforcement is crucial for effectiveness.		
FM12		
National issues in the Philippines have grown more complex. Corruption now hides behind bureaucracy, human rights concerns center on alleged state violence and silencing dissent, and the West Philippine Sea dispute has escalated into a real threat to national resources and sovereignty.		
FM13		

Xccccv



The Filipino legal community is resilient and intellectually strong, backed by a constitution that supports judicial review and public interest litigation. Yet, threats to lawyer safety and a slow justice system undermine public trust and hinder effective legal action.

FM14

The Philippines' most critical challenges are systemic corruption, declining rule of law, and threats to sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea. These deeply impact governance, security, and justice, shaping every other aspect of national life beyond economics.

FM15

National issues in the Philippines are growing more complex. Corruption hides behind legality, dynasties exploit electoral laws, and human rights abuses especially in the drug war erode the rule of law.

FM16

Human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings threaten due process and the rule of law. Corruption erodes governance and trust, while political dynasties undermine democracy. Stronger enforcement and legal reforms are urgently needed.

FM17

The Philippines has strong laws on key issues, but weak enforcement, political interference, and delays limit their impact. Real progress depends on political will, judicial independence, and active public oversight.

FM18

Human rights violations, corruption, and political dynasties threaten justice and public trust in the Philippines. Weak law enforcement and lack of accountability worsen these issues. Resolving them requires strong legal diplomacy, respect for international law, and a firm commitment to justice and citizens' rights.

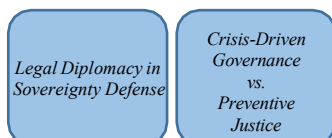
FM19

Accountability relies on strong institutions, transparency, and fair law enforcement. Justice thrives with public awareness and fearless legal systems.

FM20



APPENDIX K DIAGRAM OF COMMON THEMES



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