Stigma and Discrimination in the context of COVID-19

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These steps lead to Palma Hall, where I held classes when I started teaching at the University of the Philippines many years ago.
Palma Hall looked the same when I came back from teaching at the National University of Singapore and restarted as a lecturer in 2016.

It still looks the same today – but not inside.
There are beds instead of chairs
Then there’s

A triage entry

A swabbing booth
Lots of beds for patients
That’s because

UP-Diliman’s Palma Hall now a DOH-approved quarantine facility

Updated May 13, 2020, 2:51 PM

By Rizal Obanil
This has been a place of pride

- Parents used to accompany their children
- Feeling very proud
- That they made it to the best university in the country
Things are different this time around
People visiting Palma Hall are likely to experience STIGMA and DISCRIMINATION.
Many of us think of this kind of discrimination

Frontliners tell harrowing tales of discrimination

4-5 minutes

Updated April 16, 2020, 1:39 PM

By Marie Tonette Marticio

TACLOBAN City – “I was not able to sleep that night. I was traumatized. I thought I would be kicked out of our house.”
Against PATIENTS

Asthmatic senior citizen dies at home after being rejected by 6 hospitals, says kin
Guard kicked out of apartment, loses job due to fever amid COVID-19 fears
Nurse cries harassment by neighbor, mulls pressing anti-discrimination raps
People have been harmed

After bleach thrown at personnel's face, Sultan Kudarat hospital condemns discrimination

The St. Louis Hospital utility worker was passing by the public market when he was attacked by 5 individuals.
Evicted, banned from eateries: Frontliners face discrimination in Iloilo City

'It’s really disheartening seeing our staff being discriminated against despite their service and sacrifice,' says Dr Felix Ray Villa, chief of The Medical City Iloilo where Iloilo's first coronavirus patient is confined

Rhick Lars Vladimer
Albay
Then there’s discrimination against SAILORS who are coming home.

Local gov'ts urged to allow entry of OFWs cleared of COVID-19.

We used to welcome them as heroes of the economy!
There’s even discrimination against THE DEAD!

MORENO WARNS FUNERAL PARLORS VS REFUSING TO ACCEPT COVID-19 DEAD

By: Gabriel Pabico Lalu - Reporter / @GabrielLaluINQ
There have been lots of instances of discrimination.

PNP records 104 cases of attacks, discrimination vs health workers amid COVID-19 crisis

ABS-CBN News
Posted at May 02 2020 01:08 PM | Updated as of May 02 2020 01:48 PM

MANILA - More than a hundred cases of attacks and discrimination targeting health workers have been recorded during the enhanced community quarantine because of the coronavirus crisis, the Philippine National Police (PNP) reported Saturday.
Response to discrimination has been swift

- There are temporary dormitories for medical staff
- Hotels have been converted
- Hotels have donated beddings, pillows, blankets, and toiletries
- Residents have offered unoccupied apartments for use of frontline workers
Discrimination is now punishable

Metro Manila now Covid-19 anti-discrimination zone

4-5 minutes
Quarantine facilities are being built in response to discrimination

Manila city gov’t builds more COVID-19 quarantine facilities

Published May 9, 2020, 12:18 AM

By Minka Klaudia Tiangco

To isolate the ill from those who are not

pna.gov.ph

DOH sets up more Covid-19 isolation facilities in Cavite

2-3 minutes
We understand STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION to be driven by

- Ignorance
- Vulnerability
- Lack of power
- Fear
You will have fear of COVID-19 if you lived in this place

Where there’s no space for isolation
Vulnerable if you lived here

Shacks along a waterway in Manila (Andy Maluche/Flickr)
During the early days of the lockdown, mild cases were sent home for self-quarantine and isolation.

14 of Quezon City’s COVID-19 cases sent home following DOH directives.
In the slums, many have been left vulnerable and powerless – and full of fear

“[With] families whose members sleep side-by-side on wooden or cement floors ..., where people are packed like bees in a hive, there is no such thing as social distancing.”

Coronel, S (2020) Philippines/ Covid-19 will devastate the poor
4.5 million people are homeless or living in informal settlements

Manila is the most densely populated city in the world at 66,000 people/sq. km. (2015)

Compared to New York City’s 11,000 / sq. km.

UN Demographic Yearbook
“Many … don’t have running water. How can they even wash their hands?”
Some are lucky to isolate from neighbors – by living among the dead

Graveyard living: inside the 'cemetery slums' of Manila

Quarantine provides temporary shelter for people whose shelter has always been temporary.

If you lived here, wouldn’t you want to move here?

Or here.
The most glaring examples of discrimination (1)

- That are being addressed during this emergency
- Have existed for a long time
- But have been neglected

- These are drawing heightened attention in the context of COVID-19
- Because we are seeing the impact on everybody
The most glaring examples of discrimination (2)

- Are affecting the poor and the homeless
- Who need space for isolation and quarantine
- But were previously ignored

- Now they are getting attention
- They need isolation -- BREATHING SPACE
- But they should have breathing space AS A RIGHT!
- Even without a pandemic
The most glaring examples of discrimination (3)

- Are being addressed
- Because COVID-19 has taught us
- that the problems of the DISADVANTAGED
- Are also the problems of the ECONOMICALLY PRIVILEGED

- Our lives are all INTERCONNECTED
- INTERTWINED
- The VIRUS of one person is
- Everybody’s INFECTION
The most glaring examples of discrimination (4)

- The lack of FAIR ACCESS
  - To secure and safe housing
  - To clean water
  - To fair wage
  - To proper health care

- These are getting our attention
  - Because COVID-19 is a contagious infection
  - A poor person’s virus is a rich person’s infection
A poor person’s virus is everyone’s concern

- The rich person has to be concerned about the poor person’s virus
- Because he can be the next victim
- We are all interconnected
- The virus connects us all

- The rich person has to be concerned about the poor person’s virus
- FOR HIS OWN SAKE
- Not just for the poor person’s sake
- That is what the virus is teaching us
- That is what justice is about

- WE ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED
The most glaring examples of discrimination (5)

- Are about chronic injustice
- Not only about a virus
- CHRONIC INJUSTICE is a virus more potent than SARS-CoV-2
- We cannot avoid it by wearing facemasks or by physical distancing
Chronic Injustice

- Cannot be solved by EVACUATION ETHICS
- Temporary measures will not prepare us for the next pandemic or disaster
- We need SOLIDARITY ETHICS
- We need durable measures to address the long-standing inequities in access to societal resources
And durable measures to address chronic corruption too!

Gov’t officials crowd out patients for COVID-19 testing

By: Pocholo Concepcion - Desk Editor / @Inq_Lifestyle
Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:51 AM March 23, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — At least 34 government officials, mostly without symptoms or aggravating conditions, have demanded that the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) of the Department of Health (DOH) prioritize their diagnostic tests for COVID-19, including that of their asymptomatic family members, while persons under investigation (PUIs) displaying real symptoms waited to be tested for the disease.
The new normal

- People have been talking about the normal emerging from this pandemic
- With face masks, physical distancing, telehealth care
- And with remote learning, online banking, online supermarkets, even online worship
- With continuing INEQUITY & INJUSTICE???
- A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND!!!
I recall this message from a teen-age student

❖ “It used to be that when I had fever, only my mother cared.”

❖ “Now, when I have fever, all the neighbors, and even the entire barangay (village) are concerned.

❖ I am deeply touched!
Anyone’s Virus is Everybody’s Infection
Have a safe and healthy day!

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS:

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