

# THE MOTORCYCLE TAXI PHENOMENON IN THE PHILIPPINES: IS THE DEMISE OF JEEPNEY POSSIBLE?

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## ABSTRACT

Jeepney occupies not only the streets of the country but also the culture, identity, and values of the Filipino. Aside from it depicts as the “King of the Road” and the “moving icon of the Philippine culture,” it also reflects Filipino’s ingenuity, creativity, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship. However, these symbolisms and functions are being challenged by modernization and globalization. Is the phase-out of jeepney possible? This paper analyzed the case of a route in Camarines Sur in which jeepneys had faced an unfortunate fate of death. Many factors cause the demise of the jeep, one of which is the entrance of motorcycle taxis or locally known as the “door-to-door.” The case may reflect the conditions of the transport sector in the rural places in the country or may reflect unilinear outcomes of the transport vehicle.

**Keywords:** Philippine Jeepney; Motorcycle Taxi; Socio-cultural Change.

## 1. Introduction

*“It’s five o’clock in the morning, and I have to rush things. I have to take a bath faster, eat my breakfast quicker and prepare myself earlier before the Jeepney passes through our village and might leave me unprepared going to school.”*

This was the weekday’s daily routine of Rhea, 28 years of age, 10 years ago where there were reckoned jeepneys passing through their small village. During that time, it was the only transportation available aside from the customarily bullied no franchise recycles by the acclaimed “King of the Road.” Consequently, she witnessed how the Jeepney intentionally “*pinapagaining alikabok*” (fed by dust) the tricycles whenever they caught them riding a passenger(s) on their respective route. On the other side, she had beheld the resilience of this “moving icon of the Philippine culture” as it ensures the rocky-hollow-muddy roads and how it passes through the two rivers just to send the villagers to the town centers’ markets and schools. On her personal rumination, she considers the jeepneys, somehow, as part of her journey in obtaining her degree in college since it provided a cheap fare and it served as a bridge as it sends her from home to school and vice versa, safely.

Arguably, Jeepney is a symbol of Philippine identity (Menez, 1988) and culture (Hodder, 2000; Güss & Tuason, 2008; Ortega, 2002). Its humble beginnings; mass appealing operational set-up; idiosyncratic physical structure; vivacious colors; do-it-yourself flashing multicolored lights and sound accessories; religious and aesthetic items; mind-blowing and emblematic graffiti, stickers, and paintings; peerless designs; and communal interactions of various actors such as the driver, passengers and “kabo” or “barker” provides us the distinctiveness of the Filipino from other race. Jeepney has been part of the landscape of the Philippines from Basco, Batanes to Jolo, Sulo. It is known as the moving street art representing Filipino’s artistry, ingenuity, resiliency, and entrepreneurship.

Conversely, this icon is facing a gradual demise due to the issues confronting its safety, unmet statutory standards, adverse effect on the environment, threats of modernization and impact of globalization. In fact, there are parts of the country that jeepneys are no longer making noise on the streets. This paper will feature a previously Jeepney-dominated route which is now subjugated by the motorcycle taxis. Also, this paper aims to review the origin, social and cultural significance and representation of the Philippine. Subsequently, the said social fact will be examined through various sociological theories and perspectives.

## 2. Background of the Philippine Jeepney

The Jeepney is the most popular mode of public transportation especially in the metropolitan arterial road in the Philippines (Blanton, 2015) due to its convenience, accessibility and lower fare (Evans, 2001; Coz, Flores, & LouieHern, 2015). Consequently, it claimed the brand as the “King of the Road” occupying not only the busy and congested metropolitan cities but also the provinces passing through the rivers and climbing the mountainous terrain while carrying cargo, goods or freight along with the passengers. Due to the nature of jeepneys in the provinces, it has also “evolved to be significantly larger and tougher than those in the cities and are built to take on bad roads in all weather conditions.” (Regidor, Napalang, & Vergel, 2009).

The entrance of jeepney in transport sector after the Second World War (Antonio, 1982) was due to the desire of the commuting public for faster transportation in which before was using the ox cart or *kareton* and horse-drawn or *calesa* (Mercado, 1994). As American troops began to leave the Philippines at the end of the war, thousands of surplus US army General Purpose (GP) vehicles or known as “jeeps” were sold or given to locals, prompting the emergence of a “ready

market for spare parts” (Nofuente, 1983). The country during that time was devastated and had greatly affected the railways and transport infrastructures. Consequently, in need to have a low-priced and heavy-duty public transportation, Filipinos transformed the jeep into Jeepney which subsequently extended the bodies, painted with festive colors and transforming it to a form of public transportation (Mercado, 1994). After the original US military jeeps, Filipinos continued to make their own by importing engine from other countries like Japan and building a local body structure (Rodell, 2002). Before 1980 three prominent names were known in the jeepney industry – Francisco, Sarao, and Atendido (Pascua, 2009). In 1995, According to Shimazaki & Rahman, about 10 percent of the total labor force in Manila was involved in the Jeepney services. Hence, jeepneys have been contributing to the economy of the Philippines aside from providing access to public transportation.



**Figure 1: A very early GPW jeepney with a fringe on the top that sported a solid framework. Note the slightly lengthened body with unaltered wheelbase, and the spare mounting, which carries over to the jeepneys of today. The passenger capacity would be 6 in the back and 2 in front.” (D. Dizon in Makalintal, 2008)**

As the year passes, the originally military warfare vehicle now becomes deeply rooted in the nation’s consciousness. It is not just a convenient mode of public transportation but also considered as the icon of Philippine values, culture, and identity. Foreign scholars (e.g. Okamura, Kaneko, Nakamura, & Wang, 2013; Otsuka, Kikuchi, & Hayami, 1986) find the jeepney as a unique type of public transportation. Its uniqueness translates from the type of vehicle to the way it is operated and utilized by passengers. Jeepneys have different types depending on the manufacturer and have different sizes. Operators used to extend the frame of the jeepney backward to maximize the number of passengers who can occupy it. It has two long seats facing each other capable of 14-18 passengers aside from the front seats. In the provinces, the locals also occupy the top of the jeepney, or the so-called “top load” or they stand on the edge while holding on its steel body parts designed purposely for them. The passengers sit knee to knee, henceforth, some believed that the etymology of the word jeepney came from the combination of “jeep” and “knee.” The word “jeep” on the other hand, was argued that the etymology came from military abbreviations “GP” or “general purpose” while some also believed it originated from a popular cartoon character “Eugene the Jeep,” who first appeared in the Popeye comic strip in 1936 (Blanton, 2015).

### 3. Socio-cultural Significance and Representation of Jeepney

Nowhere else in the world, except for the Philippines, that Jeepneys were found. It is a uniquely Filipino approach to the mass transport problem, and nothing symbolizes Filipino ingenuity, innovativeness, adaptability, and grit more than this gutsy, cocky, colorful vehicle. No jeepney is the same. Every jeepney was uniquely blended with designs, graphics, and inscriptions. From the skills of craftsman in body-building to the talents of artists in customized painting, the owner as well as the driver purchases or makes ornaments, accessories and hand-paint the inscriptions over the years, hence, the upshot is a highly individualized assemblage (Menez, 1988). The driver considers the jeepney as their second home since they occupy most of their times on it than home. The owners on the other hand usually value the jeepney due to a sentimental attachment. Some even consider it as important as their wife or children. Undeniably, as Güss & Tuason (2008) claimed:

“The jeepney is a substantial and concrete artifact of Filipinos’ beliefs and values... the needs of the people it serves, and how it has become a means of transportation for everyday commuters...the jeepney carries with it the meaning constructs of life in the Philippines (and) it manifests, through its accessories and decorations, the values and sentiments of its passengers, owners, and especially drivers.”

The physical structure itself of a jeepney speaks a lot of being a Filipino. [Rodell \(2002\)](#) in his book “Culture and Custom in the Philippines” described the jeep as “the most obvious form of Philippine folk art.” According to him, each jeepney is specially painted and further individualized with additional lights, mirrors, and reflections; plastic streamers hung the antennae; hood decorations such as standing chrome horses, lettering of favorite song titles, painting of rural scenes or women in erotic poses; extra decals and chrome strips everywhere; the name of the manufacturer and the proud nickname of the driver “Lover Boy,” “Jeepney King,” “Action Kid,” etc.. Similarly, [Menez \(1988\)](#) analyzed the jeepney folk art and inscriptions thematically. In her inventory of the vehicle’s ornaments, she yields the following dominant motifs: love and sex, driving speed, economic success, religion, and family.

Almost the same observations can be extracted from this jeepney in figure 2 with the route from Guinobatan to Legazpi and vice versa in the province of Albay. In my field observation the jeepney can be described piece by piece as this:



**Figure 2. Jeepney in Legazpi Albay**

*“The jeepney in the picture carries a name “Brad Brent.” Its body is fully coated with different colors dominantly by yellow with the artistically painted racing car as the main design and inscriptions such as “Road Jet” and “CrossOver.” On edge near the passenger’s door is the resemblance of the American flag. The steel rim of the wheel and tire is also painted with white and red. Below the passengers’ footrest/stair is the statement “From Dubai with Love” Inside the jeepney is the upholstered chair in red covered by thick plastic for protection. On the ceiling is mosaic of the aesthetically attached/glued broken-like mirrors along with the flashing multicolored lights and sound accessories. Along the front window facing the driver hangs a tasseled curtain on which is embroidered the favorite drivers’ prayer, “God bless our trip” alongside with the miniature altar dedicated to the Christ Child and the Virgin Mary, garlanded with fresh Sampaguita. Aside from Christian religious paraphernalia are the small replica of the Buddha and various Chinese symbols of luck and a small electric fan. Also, inside is the trashcan with a capitalist-sponsored sticker which reminds “Barya lang po sa umaga” (Pay coins only in the morning) and “Kalimutan mo na ang lahat, wag lang ang bayad” (forget everything, except for the fare). At the back of the driver’s chair is the white and red poster which states “No Smoking.”*

By describing the above jeepney alone can provide us with the glimpse of the Philippine folk arts. Although in the case of this jeepney, a diffusion of western pop culture is already observable, but the basic elements of it like the vibrant color, designs, inscriptions, decorations, ornaments and body structures shows the ingenuity and craftsmanship of the Filipino. Meanwhile, it can be observed that jeepneys are named mostly like humans. In the case of the jeepney above, the name given was “Brad Brent.” Customarily, the owner follows the name of a member of the family in choosing the name of the jeep. On the other hand, the paintings and inscriptions determine the values of the owner. This shows how jeepney owners value their family. In fact, according to [Flores \(2008\)](#) jeepney is like a family.

Similarly, we can also observe how different actors such as the driver, conductor (fare collector), barker (passenger caller) and passengers respects and value each other. In the study of [Güss & Tuason \(2008\)](#) on the jeepney drivers of the two major cities in the Philippines - Manila and Davao, they uncover the key values such as *pakikisama* and *pakikipag-kapwa tao* (value given by drivers to people and companionship); *bahala na* (it indicates a feeling that they can do their best when crises arise and a confidence in their ability to handle whatever form of problems take); *pagsisikap* (perseverance); *tiyaga* (hard work); *pakikipag-kapwa* (to be concerned with the other); *pakikisama* (favoring smooth interpersonal relations); *pakikiramdam* (sensitivity and regard for other); and *maka-Diyos* (faith in God’s love and mercy).

The values, inclinations, taste, and preference of Filipinos are the inspiration of the jeepney manufacturers like the Morales Motors in designing their signature patók Jeepneys. According to the observations of [Pascua \(2009\)](#) patók jeepney is “painted with elaborate, bright and colorful designs (*magara*), is equipped with a booming sound system, runs fast (*humaharurot*), and creates a lot of noise on the road (e.g., scratching tires, screeching brakes, and other engine sounds); it is elaborately decorated (*maporma*); and it must have a lot of accessories (*maborloloy*).”

Aside from the physical structure of the jeep, Filipino spirit can be observed in the ordinary routine of the drivers and passenger. The passenger and driver enter into a communal relationship during the trip, with passenger helping each other on the jeep, passing fares up to the driver and repeating a request for a stop in the case the driver did not hear the passenger who asked to get off. Thus, in microcosm, the jeepney displays the communal nature of Philippine society ([Rodell, 2002](#)). In some provinces, elders, women, and children are prioritized inside the jeep while the men are seen riding on the top of the roof or standing/hanging from the outer back frame of the jeepney. This shows that the respect for elders and women are still in practice. Another common practice is the way children, usually below five years old, place over the lap (*kandong*) of the guardian to avoid paying the fare.

In the same way, jeepney is the traditional medium of communication in the event where social media, televisions and other media are not dominantly perpetuating in the country. During the trip, the passengers are unashamedly talking to each other, even their personal life, *tsismis* (fake or destructive news about one or group of individuals usually the neighbor) or throwing a common question “*Saan ka papunta*” (Where are you going) which connects to “*Ah, may kilala ako diyan*” (I know somebody from that place). In that way, the trip-long communication between/among passenger-strangers will start.

#### 4. Problems and Issues of the Philippine Jeepney

In spite of the praises and contribution of the jeepney in the Philippine society, it is also seen as an old-rugged artifact needed to be replaced. In fact, the phase out of the jeepney has been circulating across the global news (e.g. [Syed, 2013](#) for BBC News; [Lema, 2007](#) for Reuters). The possible phase-out of the jeepney is beeing linked to many factors. In the fishbone diagram of [Chiu \(2008\)](#) who studied about the problems of the jeepneys and its possible solution, she identified factors such as environmental, technological, political, economic and ethical.

**Environmental Factors.** Since most jeepney as old or refashioned and made up of second-hand reconditioned Japanese diesel engine, it is known for its notorious smoke belching. Consequently, it led to significant carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission and perceived as “unsustainable modes of transportation” ([Regidor, Napalang, & Vergel, 2009](#)). Hence, the removal of jeepney was proposed by environmental groups due to non-compliance on the removal of thermostat and emission gas recycling (EGR) in old model engines ([Diaz, 2002 in Chiu, 2008](#)). [Chiu](#) also linked jeepney as one of the primary cause of traffic congestions in the city due to its rude operation on getting passengers, dropping passengers, speed, and acceleration rates. Thus, some riders are shifting their preference especially due to the entrance of other utility vehicles and other modes of transportation. In fact, [Evans \(2001\)](#) considers jeepneys as an informal and not regulated form of transportation and are risky to passengers.

**Political-Economic Factors.** According to [Chiu](#), one of the problems of the jeepneys is on the issuance of franchises to PUJ lines as it was canceled by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). [Chiu](#) also argued that the PUJs have been left out of government’s planning and are centred on the brand new car maker. Added to it is the unprofitable operations due to unstable oil prices, maintenance or repair, the high cost of spare parts, and very low regulated fare.

**Ethical Factors.** Another concerns to PUJs are its drivers. Many drivers were reported for their crooked behavior and are known for their aggressiveness. Though, this behavior is caused by the heat, traffic and other problems on the streets. According to [Güss & Tuason \(2008\)](#) the work-related issues of the jeepney drivers are the “bad road conditions (e.g., traffic congestion, rerouting, weather conditions), people concerns (e.g., fights with other drivers, police enforcers, non-paying passengers, unfriendly passengers), jeepney problems (e.g., motor troubles, overheating), and lack of money.” Likewise, in the ergonomic study of [Coz, Flores, & LouieHern, 2015](#) on jeepney drivers’ workplace and working conditions, they find it dangerous to their health and safety. Another factor of their aggressiveness is the “boundary system.” In boundary system, the driver enters into a contract, formal or informal, in which the driver will pay a fixed amount of money every day ([Alonzo, 1980](#)). Another form is the share contract, in which the driver and the owner shares both revenue and expenses in an agreed percentage sharing ([Otsuka, Kikuchi, & Hayami, 1986](#)).

**Technological Factors.** The biggest threat of today, at the time of this writing, is the plan of the government named “PUV Modernization.” According to the Facebook Page of Department of Transportation – DOTr Philippines (<https://www.facebook.com/pg/DOTrPH/>) the program aims to make the public utility vehicles safe, comfortable and environment-friendly. Specifically, it aims to encourage people from all income levels to use the country’s mass transport systems; offer spacious, clean, safe, wifi-equipped and PWD-friendly PUVs; prioritize safety of the passengers and will

not make them exposed to pollution, other vehicles, and maybe flood or rain; and encourage people to commute rather than use or buy their own cars, resulting in less traffic. Also, with the implementation of PUV Modernization, operators are expected to consolidate to ensure better fleet management, resulting in efficient and optimum road usage. The drivers, on the other hand, will be salaried and provided adequate training; will be given regular salaries with corresponding employment benefits. Hence, no need for drivers to work long hours and compete for passengers. Further, with PUV Modernization, public transport franchises will be approved by local transport plans as LGUs are more knowledgeable about local needs, and the direction of development of their local land use. However, as to the date, the final guidelines are not yet released so far.

With the above-discussed threats, issues, and problems, the demise of jeepneys is really possible. There are places in the Philippines in which jeepneys are no longer running on the streets. They seem like an old mechanical tools or machinery piled on the owners' garage. This is the subject of my case study.

## 5. The Demise of Jeepney and the Proliferation of Motorcycle Taxies along Calalahan-Goa Route: A Case Study

This paper features a previously dominated Jeepney route in Camarines Sur – the Calalahan – Goa route and vice versa. Calalahan is one of the twenty-seven barangays of San Jose, a fourth class municipality, and Goa, a second-class municipality, is the educational and economic center of the Fourth District of Camarines Sur. This route passes eight barangays including the town center of San Jose. Figure 3 shows the map and the previous jeepney route. It has two routes: the arrows in yellow illustrate a circular route covering three municipalities while the arrows in orange is the vice versa of the Calalahan – Goa route.

This case study employed descriptive research design. According to [Mitchell & Jolley \(2012\)](#), descriptive research is a “method that will provide objective, reliable, and scientifically valid description of what people think, say and do.” In the case of this case study, it will describe the factors affecting the demise of the jeepney and proliferation of motorcycle taxies along Calalahan – Goa route. The study made used participant observation, structured and unstructured interview, historical narratives, key-informant interview, and secondary data analysis. Regarding sampling, the study employed a purposive sampling design since there are very few former jeepney operators in the area and the motorcycle taxies are not yet organized. Hence, the researcher finds it difficult to account the exact population. Accordingly, 12 motorcycle taxi drivers were interviewed with open-ended questions.

### 5.1 Historical background the transportation in Calalahan-Goa route

The jeepney in Calalahan to Goa route started to thrive in the 1990s. Although the first jeep, according to the residents, started in the 1980s. Before the arrival of the jeep in the area, people are found walking kilometers from their village to the town center where they buy goods in the market. One elder in the village even narrated to me a happy moments walking together during those years:

*“Aram mo noy, kaito maugma kami na nagrarakaw hali digdi pasiring sa munipipyo, dawa harayoon pero dahil sa dakulon kami tapos maugmahon ang iiristoryahan, dae mi naggad namamati an pagal. Mapansin mo kaan nyaon ka na sa lugar na dudumanan mo.”* (You know boy, we enjoyed walking from the village to the town center before, although it's quite a distant but since we are in group walking and entertainingly sharing stories, we never felt the weary. Eventually, you will noticed that you are already on the place you are going to.)

Subsequently, the “*pamaba*” or water buffalo-drawn brought out as one of the transport mechanism of the villagers to go out to the market or as they used the term “*makaluwas lamang sa centro*.” This statement implies the difficulty of the villagers in accessing the town center. Water buffalo was used instead of the horse because the village is a farming community and it served as a farming resource in cultivating the farmlands. The owner attached an elongated cart with a large wheel made of wood, a body made of bamboo and thatch roof made of nipa. Customarily, this type of transport mechanism is used in carrying agricultural goods from the farm to the house, intended customer or to the market. These days, this traditional type of transportation can still be seen from time to time carrying nipa thatch for paddling purposes. Figure 4 depicts a picture of water buffalo-drawn cart used in carrying agricultural goods.

Next to the timeline of transportation in the area was the entrance of bicycle. Villagers were able to buy a bicycle from Manila. Since they find it viable for transportation, they attached a body to make it a tri-cycle type called “*padyak*.” “Padyak” literally means stamping on the pedals of the bicycle, continuously. Today, “padyak” still exists but they can be found in town centers only rooming around the streets.

The early 1980s, since the key-informant does not remember the exact year, the first jeepney came to the area. The owner of the jeep told me that the jeep was financed by his sister who happens to work abroad. They named it “Annabelle” following the name of their sister. The jeep was originally made by Sarao Motors, one of the famous family in jeepney industry in the Philippines. Throughout the years, the family has restructured, rebuild, and redesign the jeepney to make it entirely new. In the late 1990s, the family bought another jeep, and they named it “Annabelle II.” That year, these

jeepneys have become the literally “King of the Road” crossing through the rocky and uneven roads and two rivers. Eventually, other operators of jeepney also invade the route due to the increasing population in the area.

During the flourish of jeepneys in the area, motorcycle also came into the streets. Some put a body on it and are known as “tricycle.” Eventually, tricycles carry passengers competing for the jeepneys, especially when they were granted a franchise by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) in early 2000. According to the former tricycle, I have interviewed one of the former tricycle drivers, and he told me that they were thirty (300 in the organization named as “TODA” or the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association.”

During those years, in early 2000, there was a competition between the jeepney and tricycle. Compared to a tricycle, jeepneys have a longer route, covering up until the city of Naga while the tricycle was limited only to the town proper of San Jose. However, some would still prefer the tricycle because it drives for at least four passengers only while the jeep has to fill up the intended passenger seat and the “top load” before they go.

In 2005, the village had access to a cheaper motorcycle and favorable payment options such as installment due to the presence of financing companies and banks which ventures on this personal asset as collateral. Subsequently, a motorcycle turn motorcycle taxi started to flourish and have invaded the route. In 2009, jeepneys were no longer seen in the streets. Some of the operators pushed to sell their jeeps, transfer to other route and some made it as a private vehicle.

## 5.2 Factors contributed to the demise of the jeepney along the route

Many factors are affecting the demise of jeepneys along the route. The first factor includes the villager’s change on preference on the form of transportation. As one middle-aged woman told me:

*“Sa jeep kaipuhan mi pa maghalat mapano bago maghali, sa door-to-door, dawa saro ka lang pwede ka na ilarga asin darhon sa mismong lugar na gusto mo ika ibaba.”* (the jeep has to fill out first the passenger seats before they go, while the door-to-door, pertaining to the motorcycle taxis, can go even though you are alone and he will take you wherever you want to get off.

The villagers, though times, tend to be more time conscious than money-conscious. As most villagers told me, *“Sa door-to-door mahal, pero makakuli ka man amay kaysa man sa jeep maparahalat ka dae ka na makakagibo man mga gibohon mo sa harong”* (Door-to-door is expensive, but you can go home early while in jeep you still have to wait up to the extent that you cannot do household chores.) As the world gets complicated where there are many functions to do, people tend to be more time-conscious. This is the case of the feature village in which before they only rely on farming activities and their functions revolved only at home and their small piece of lands.

Another factor is that most of the jeepneys passing through the route are old, rugged and dilapidated. In fact, “Annabelle” the jeep, was branded as the “Killer Jeep” because the jeepney has met many accidents which killed many people. Hence, the villagers were afraid to ride a jeep and prefer the motor taxi instead.

Also, the building of integrated central terminal in Goa, Camarines Sur is seen as one of the factors that lead to the demise of the jeep. First, the motorcycle taxis were able to get passengers in the town centers since most of the passenger before does not want to the newly built terminal due to the distance or you have to ride a tricycle going there which connect additional fare for the passenger. Second, the terminal had provided space for Goa-Calalahan route. However, the jeepney operators or drivers have to pay for every hour they occupy the space. This is disadvantageous on the part of the jeepney in which the passenger is quite small in number and only increases in number during peak hour (e.g., after school or office hours).

The last factor, according to the operators of the jeep, is the increasing prices of oil and spare parts. Since the jeep is already old and it was derived from a secondhand diesel engine, the operators have to exert effort and invest money for its maintenance.

Although most would perceived the “door-to-door” or motorcycle taxis as the factor for the demise of the jeepney, this paper revealed that a psychological, structural or government programs and policies, and economic factors affect the demise of jeepney along the route.

## 5.3 The proliferation of motorcycle taxis along the route

Motorcycle taxis are a popular transportation in the less urbanized areas including the small towns throughout the Philippines. These include the “habal-habal,” which are not regulated but have similar operations as their relatives in other countries like Thailand and Indonesia. Then there is the “skylab,” which is also a motorcycle taxi but with a wooden plank perpendicular to the motorcycle that allows for additional passengers balanced by the driver. Hence, the vehicle is made to appear like the fallen satellite of which it was named after (Regidor, Napalang, & Vergel, 2009). In the subject of the study, they are called “door-to-door.” Its operation is similar to “habal-habal” who take someone a ride in exchange for a relatively higher amount of fare than the regular and authorized form of transportation.

They started to operate in the area way back in 2005 and flourished in 2012. Some door-to-door drivers have associated it already as their main source of livelihood since the time they started. Since most of these drivers are married and have dependents, their motivation for entering the field is their family's needs (especially household needs and school-related needs). Most of the interviewed drivers are from informal sectors before pursuing the "door-to-door" as a livelihood. Most of them were former construction workers, farmers/ farm laborer, and contract laborers. Few of them were former tricycle and jeepney drivers who just embrace the system and become one of them. One of them was a former security guard, even occupying the highest post but left the career due to the minimum salary he gets. Almost all of the drivers spend riding and looking for a passenger for more or less twelve hours from 6 AM to 8 PM and gets 200 to 500 pesos a day, depending on the number of passengers and their toil.

Most of them identified the unfavorable policy of the government towards their livelihood as their main problem. Since they are not authorized and have no franchise to ride a passenger, the Land Transportation Office intended employees and police catch them and confiscate their licenses. Interestingly, these drivers also wanted to be organized and be recognized as one of the public utility vehicles of the country. However, some of them would also argue that the LTO will not permit it to happen. Another problem is the increasing number of people who buy their own motorcycle and increasing number of people who also venture (buying their own motor) to this form of livelihood. This new wave of pattern also threatens the existence of their informal livelihood. As one of the drivers told me, before they get 700 pesos per day but now, they are deemed fortunate if they get around 400 pesos a day. Moreover, due to the increasing number of a motorcycle in the area, accidents also persist in the streets.

Meanwhile, door-to-door still the only means of transportation in the area. In that place, its but just a normal to see two to four people riding on a single motor in any age – young kids or even the elder. Door-to-door also carry heavy goods; they have mastered the way how they will do it.

## 6. Sociological Implication

Jeepney evolved out of the need of the Filipinos on a durable and cheap transportation after the World War II. Going back to the history, the Filipinos were using the ox cart or *kareton* or horse-drawn or *kalesa* and the water buffalo-drawn or "*pamaba*" in the case of the area featured. This pre-war phenomenon can still be observed in historical sites in the Philippines like the Fort Santiago, Rizal Park and Vigan in Ilocos Sur. The evolution of jeepneys is akin to the social evolution theories. According to its proponent, societies gradually change from simple beginnings into even more complex form. Accordingly, the birth of jeepney can be rooted from its humble beginnings and became more complex in form. It can also be argued that the evolution process is cyclical in which it is linked to a biological organism with the same life cycle, birth, maturity, old-age, and death. The demise of a jeepney in Calalahan-Goa route simply supports Toynbee's cyclical theory. However, the fate of the jeepney in the country would be based on their resistance to the proposed change. If they continue to challenge the modernization of PUVs, they make succeed and be able to ride another cycle.

Jeepney is one of the most celebrated forms of Filipino craftsmanship and artistry. They called it as the "moving form of street arts" and has been part of the Philippine culture since its inception. Functionally, this form of art simply relieves the passengers from the congested place, traffic, heat of the sun, and other problems in the streets ([Menez, 1988](#)). Likewise, jeepney is the cheapest form of transportation preferred by the masses, usually those who cannot afford to ride the air-conditioned buses and another public utility vehicle with relatively higher fare than in the jeepneys and those who cannot afford to buy their own personal car. Symbolically, the jeepney represents "a model of public space that incorporates rather than excludes difference. The jeepney, then, is a resource for peaceful being-together. People do not have to agree or even converse any more than images need to be thematically coherent. They can simply cohabitate as precious idiosyncrasies. It is partly our individual uniqueness that makes each person valuable to others." ([Gustafson, 2012](#)).

Similarly, jeepney reflects and communicates to others the culture, identity, and values of the Filipino. The paintings, body structure, inscriptions, decorations and the like are a symbolism of the Filipino ingenuity. For instance, [Lara-De Leon & Miguel \(2015\)](#) explain the symbolism of the inscriptions and signages found in the tricycle, which can also be found most in the jeepneys:

*Bawat Problema May Solusyon* reflects Filipino optimism and implies the fatalism of the Filipino driver as he believes on the existence of a Supreme Being who guides him in finding solutions to his problems and cure to all his pains.

*Toys for the Big Boys* are a signage that reflects masculinity, that is, the tricycle has been made as their expression or symbol of masculine power. As observed, they seem to be reckless and drive so fast when plying the highway. Apparently, speed may also express their manhood in terms of their tricycles, their toys.

*Pasahero sa Umaga, Misis sa Gabi* stresses that the driver's obligation to his family to bring home additional income would come first. The secondary would be his obligation to his wife. The signage clearly reflects the concept of machismo which has influenced Filipino society and its treatment of women.

In God, We Trust reflects the innate religiosity among Filipinos that ultimately leads to social cohesion. Moreover, such registers can be seen as the drivers' way of lessening their anxiety in life. Their belief in a God whose guidance never fails lessens the anxiety brought by life's difficulties.

*Katas Saudi/Katas ng Hongkong/Souvenir from Singapore/ Katas ng Dagupan Bus* are signages that clearly reflect the reality that Filipinos are hardworking and responsible individuals who value their earnings for the sake of the family. Symbolically, their usage of these signages can be seen as a representation of an uplifted socio-economic status of the family. The tricycle has become a necessity and a status symbol to the lower working class. It is a status symbol that sends messages about the type of cultural capital a person has.

The PUV modernization of the government will lead to the elimination of the old jeepneys in the streets. However, who will benefit most from this program? The operators who will be provided financing scheme and will be burdened by debt up until his/her death? The commuters in general who aims for a safe, comfortable, with wifi, environment-friendly but not wallet-friendly PUVs? Or the capitalist who invested their money in the development of e-jeepneys in the Philippines?

## Conclusion

Jeepney is like society, accepted by society and symbolizes the society. The birth of jeepney in the Philippines is one of the culturally rich phenomena. However, the death of the moving icon of Philippine culture is being challenged by modernization and globalization.

The case of Calalahan-Goa route is not distinct to other places in the Philippines. It just simply reflects the reality of the problematic transport sectors of the country. Like the featured route, the demise of jeepneys in other areas is also possible not only because of the government's plan to modernize it but other social psychological, economic, environmental, and structural factors affecting the preference of the commuters or the general public in choosing the modes of transportation.

Truly, the government is doing its task, more importantly, in favor of the general public – the commuters. The government also considers the environmental and economic factors but not so with the culture attached to it. Hence, the paper recommends that the government must consider the socio-cultural implication of their decision in drafting the rules and regulation in the modernization of the public utility vehicles such as the jeepneys.

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