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The Marikina Tripartite Industrial Peace Council Memorandum of Agreement

ABSTRACT

(English)

Tripartism is a mechanism in labor that promotes collaboration among its primary pillars: the labor sector, the business sector, and the local government, materialized through an agreement. This paper examines the current state of tripartism in Marikina City, focusing on the opportunities and challenges derived from the triangulated lived experiences of the six standing labor unions in the city through a Focus Group Discussion, and the Labor Relations and Public Employment Service Office of Marikina City (LRPESO), and the business sector through Key Informant Analysis. This study employed a qualitative approach with Institutionalism as its main theory. The results of the study present the successes, challenges, shared responsibilities, and recommendations of the three primary pillars in magnifying the mandates of their existing agreement.

(Filipino)

Ang tripartism ay isang mekanismo sa paggawa na nagtataguyod ng kolaborasyon sa pagitan ng mga pangunahing haligi nito: ang sektor ng manggagawa, ang sektor ng negosyo, at ang lokal na pamahalaan sa ilalim ng isang kasunduan. Sinusuri ng papel na ito ang kontemporaneong kalagayan ng tripartism sa Lungsod ng Marikina, na nakatuon sa mga oportunidad at hamon na nagmula sa triangulated na karanasan ng anim na umiiral na unyon ng manggagawa sa lungsod sa pamamagitan ng Focus Group Discussion, at ng Labor Relations and Public Employment Service Office ng Marikina City (LRPESO), at ng sektor ng negosyo sa pamamagitan ng Key Informant Analysis. Sumailalim ang pag-aaral na ito sa kwalitatibong pamamaraan at Institutionalism bilang pangunahing teorya nito. Ang mga resulta ng pag-aaral na ito ay nagpapakita ng mga tagumpay, hamon, responsibilidad, at rekomendasyon ng tatlong pangunahing haligi ng tripartism sa pagtatagumpay ng mga mandato ng kanilang kasunduan.

Keywords: labor policies, Marikina City, Tripartism

INTRODUCTION

In Marikina City, Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC), as mandated by the Executive Order Number 403 series of 1990, fostered collaboration through the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement among the labor, business, and local government sectors. The agreement facilitated efficient dialogue and became a key development focus beyond dispute resolution (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2006). However, over time, as the memorandum primarily relied on the local government's initiative, challenges to its stability arose. Notably, after Typhoon Ketsana (famously known as Ondoy) in 2009, the city's focus shifted to recovery, sidelining the TIPC memorandum of agreement's intention to empower dialogue. This contributed to a decline in businesses and an increase in labor conflicts, including the closure of the San Miguel Pure Foods plant, the decline of the shoe manufacturing industry due to cheap Chinese imports, and prominent unjust dismissal cases, such as *Marina's Creation Enterprises v. Ancheta* (2016) and a 2018 case involving Philip Morris Fortune Tobacco Corporation (PMFTC Inc.) employees (Rappler, 2018).

In April 2023, almost a decade after its absence, a new Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement was inked. The memorandum aims to revitalize and advance the rights and welfare of the three primary pillars of tripartism (Manila Bulletin, 2023). Studies about tripartism are relatively low in the Philippines. Hence, this study aims to review and explore the prevailing Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement to emphasize and initiate discourse about tripartism as it has been the mandate of the national government (Mansfeldova, 1995) in the Philippines to advance the welfare of both the business and labor sectors through the competency of every local chief executive that acts as both the chairman and primary mediator of the agreement.

The main objective of this research is to impart valuable insights into the existing literature and recommend strategies for how the capacity of tripartism as an avenue to put forward its three primary pillars can be advanced. To achieve this, the researcher has outlined the following specific research objectives: (1) Identify the programs that are connected to implementing the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement in promoting labor rights; (2) Identify the challenges faced by the three primary pillars of tripartism in implementing the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement; and (3) Identify the roles of the three primary pillars of tripartism in fulfilling the mandates of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement using Institutionalism theory. Moreover, to create a clear understanding of the case of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement, the researcher outlines the

following research questions: (1) What programs are connected to implementing the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement to promote labor rights? (2) What are the challenges faced by the three primary pillars of tripartism in implementing the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement? and (3) What are the roles of the three primary pillars of tripartism in fulfilling the mandates of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement?

The locus of this study is Marikina City, which has been a pioneer in fostering a relationship between the business and labor sectors under a tripartite agreement. However, this initiative has been limited to a memorandum since its inception. This limitation is notable as tripartism in labor has become an institutionalized local government mechanism in various areas in Metro Manila such as in Valenzuela (Manila Bulletin, 2022), where its three primary pillars are working hand in hand to develop programs and initiate dialogues addressing labor-related issues such as underpayment of salary, illegal dismissal, no overtime or holiday pay, and among others (Manila Bulletin, 2023).

The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the field of Political Science, particularly in labor studies, and support Section 2, Article 18 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, which mandates the State to acknowledge labor as the primary social economic force that must be advanced and promoted in terms of its rights and welfare.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Tripartism

Tripartism is credited for building social consensus under extreme pressures (Hethy & Kylvoh, 1995 as cited in Stelzer et.al., n.d.). Regulatory encounters that foster cooperation and empower public interest groups to resolve policy dilemmas are associated with the creation of tripartism (Ayres & Braithwaite, 1991). In labor, tripartism is a mechanism in which the three primary pillars equally contribute to public policymaking and development (Oxford University Press, 2024). Tripartism is also often implemented to enhance job security through job-related programs which is one of the major needs of people from developing countries for it promotes secure and permanent jobs (Zekic, 2016). It directly addresses the core issues of labor, as it talks about the advancement of rights and welfare of the sector, and securing the absence of threatening factors from the employer and government that might affect the job stability of all employees (Givord & Maurin, 2003; Zekic, 2016).

In the Philippines, tripartism is a product of the mandates of the prevailing 1987 Constitution. Stipulated in Article 3, Section 8 is the right of the people, both from private and public sectors, to form unions, associations, or societies for purposes that are not contrary to the prevailing laws of the land. Consequently, the Philippine Labor Code was established in the year 1974, which puts forward the welfare of both labor and business sectors. Article 275 of the code stipulates the declaration of the role of tripartism in labor relations as a state policy, which outlines measures that ensure holistic employer-employee relations.

In the international level, the International Labor Organization, which the Philippines is a member of, also rallied for an effective tripartism within its member-states. By virtue of the outcome of the ILO Convention 144 in 1976, members of the organization are exhorted to ensure effective consultations with the other pillars of tripartism. In response to the outcome of the conference, the Philippine Labor Code progressed through executive measures to further empower the situation of labor in the country.

Executive Order (EO) Number (No.) 403, Series of 1990 marks the formalization of tripartism through the institutionalization of the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council in the Philippines. The council, comprised of the Secretary of Labor and Employment as the Chairman, is mandated to work with 12 representatives from tripartite sectors designated by the President. The primordial role of the council is to ensure continued coordination of the three primary pillars of tripartism through conferences for the purpose of policymaking and improvement of the general situation of labor in the country. This institutional body was eventually reorganized by virtue of EO No. 383, Series of 1996 for the purpose of inclusiveness. Through the order, the council now ensures integration of representatives from both labor and business sectors and grants the secretary of labor to duly constitute industry-wide tripartite councils to address specific industry concerns.

These developments of tripartism in the Philippines, as seen by the mandates of the orders from the executive, show that the operations of the mechanism is based on the directives of the president, which is, as prescribed by the constitution, must adhere to the rights of the labor sector to organize and constitute bodies for the purpose of the realization of their potentialities, under the facilitation of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as the instituted government body for the labor sector of the country. Eventually, tripartism became a labor mechanism that no longer rely heavily on the directives of the president.

In 2012, Tripartism Law was enacted to further put foundations on the manifestation of tripartism in the country. The law amends Article 275 of the Labor Code with

a new mandate requiring institutionalization of national, regional, and industry level tripartite peace councils for the purpose of furthering the responsiveness, inclusiveness, and productivity of tripartism. Through the law, facilitation of the tripartism will no longer rely solely on the directives of the president alone, as it outlines the operation of tripartism from various levels up to the competence of DOLE. This current development now requires local offices of DOLE to regulate tripartism in areas under their jurisdiction through coordination with the labor mechanism's three primary pillars.

Tripartism in Marikina City

Marikina City, hailed as the Shoe Capital of the Philippines, and a host of big industries brought about by its status as a special manufacturing industrial zone, has been an inspiration to other emerging municipalities in Metro Manila since the 1960s. However, due to changes in the national government policies, Marikina City lost its special status as a special industrial zone (ILO, 2006). Consequently, the city experienced a phase of chaotic industrial relations, entering a phase of militant unionism marked by labor-related conflicts. This led to a “class war” between businesses and workers, prompting large businesses and industrial establishments to relocate or close, as nobody wanted to invest in Marikina (Empel, 2008). In response to these predicaments, consultations were held with the labor sector and remaining businesses in Marikina City under the leadership of former mayor Bayani Fernando.

The consultations, as impacted further by the orders of the national government, has led to the creation of the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC), which promoted labor and business-friendly initiatives and fostered respect among tripartite social partners (Mendoza, 2021). The council facilitated efficient dialogue and became integral to a development focus that extended beyond dispute resolution (International Labour Organization, 2006). Eventually, Workers' Affairs Office (WAO), was established with the task of addressing labor concerns and reducing bias and nepotism. WAO mediated labor disputes, easing the burden on the Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR) and the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) (Magtubo, 2018). By the early 2000s, WAO in Marikina City had consolidated 78 emerging businesses, and it now operates as the Labor Relations and Public Employment Service Office (LRPESO).

In the prime of its implementation, the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement has capacitated its three primary pillars with sufficient independence and willingness

to collaborate—one of the key requirements of a successful tripartism (Stelzer et.al., ND). To solidify this manifestation of the agreement, in 2005, Marikina City launched a local employment strategy for youth through the Promoting Youth Employment Project (PYEP) program that enabled the youth sector of the city to seek employment aligned with their experiences. For the business sector, the project “Invest in Marikina Program” was developed to incentivize businesses upon their investment in the city. These projects helped Marikina City gain recognition from the International Labor Organization as one of the competent cities in pioneering opportunities for the labor sector through its memorandum of agreement with the business sector (Gonzales, 2012).

Marikina City, as the local government unit in this study, holds the primary responsibility of formulating, mediating, and ensuring the implementation of tripartism without any form of prejudice or bias. Since its inception on the city, it must be noted that tripartism remains a memorandum, not an ordinance that is sustained and not heavily reliant on the local government’s initiative. Consequently, its nature of being a memorandum is used in this analysis

With the pressing reality that the mechanism of tripartism in the city is limited to a memorandum of understanding, it must be highlighted that the role of Marikina City is to ensure the performance of tripartism despite circumstances that challenge its capacity to fulfill its mandates. Through understanding the role of the government as the mediating body and the sole institution that has the capacity to bring about changes in the manner which the mechanism could be more established, the study aims to holistically analyze the situation of tripartism in Marikina City.

Meanwhile, the business sector, with its innate nature as profit-driven and into the survival of its investments, is usually in conflict with the labor sector. This reality highlights the need for the sector to be included in the analysis, for its empirical inputs can holistically supplement the analysis, ensuring that, despite the commonality of the reality that it is the labor sector that is usually suppressed in labor disputes, a lens that will explain the insights of the business sector is still considered and analyzed.

In terms of the labor sector, which is usually viewed as a contrast with the other two interests of tripartism, it primarily advocates for reforms that align with the need to achieve a livable wage, humane work environment and treatment, and other labor-related reforms that businesses and the LGU are in contention over. The sector holds great significance in the analysis, for it offers a first-hand view of the implications of the legislation and decisions of their respective employers and the LGU.

Challenges to the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement

Over the years, the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement facilitated the city to create opportunities where business and labor sectors are in sync with the local government in creating avenues for growth (Ofreneo, 2005 as cited in Empel, 2008). However, this initiative [36] has faced instabilities over time. These challenges started in 1996 after the signing of the Philippines to an agreement under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) that prompted neoliberal approaches in trade through the institutionalization of the World Trade Organization (WTO) amidst rising globalization (Wesley, 2001).

During this period, labor leaders nationwide, including those from Marikina City, organized protests, arguing that APEC's influence on Philippine trade policies would exacerbate the labor sector's struggles amid ongoing economic stagnation (The Wall Street Journal, 1996). This agreement marked the beginning of the decline of Marikina's shoe manufacturing industry, which had been dominated by local shoemakers handling production, while the business sector controlled the branding and pricing (Rappler, 2023). Around the same time, the influx of Chinese-made shoes further jeopardized the sector, as cheap imports intensified labor and trade competition (Scott, 2005, as cited in Tatler, 2021; Mendoza, 2021).

Through the years, challenges continued to accumulate. In 2009, Typhoon Ketsana (Ondoy) swept P10 billion worth of property in Marikina City (Philstar, 2009). The disaster forced the city to prioritize rehabilitation and recovery (Tuaño, Muyrong, & Clarete, 2018), leading to a decline in businesses and less empowerment in the labor sector, which resulted in a series of shutdowns of most emerging businesses and companies in the city recorded by the LRPESO.

Over the years, new labor-related issues have emerged. In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of labor employees in *Goya, Inc. vs. Goya, Inc. Employees Union-FFW*, where the company violated the agreed Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), forcing employees to endure a lengthy court process to defend their rights. In 2016, the Court favored an employee in *Marina's Creation Enterprises v. Ancheta*, who was illegally dismissed due to a stroke. In 2018, Philip Morris Fortune Tobacco Corporation (PMFTC Inc.) in Marikina City laid off 200 workers without due process, leading to strikes and a division among union members, some of whom acted as "eskirols" (scabs) against the union (Rappler, 2018; Bonifacio, 2024). Additionally, in 2020, DOLE identified Marikina City as one of the Philippine cities with a high underemployment rate.

After more than a decade of stagnation, a new Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement was signed in April 2023. According to its three primary pillars, this new agreement aims to foster more holistic relationships between the parties involved in Marikina City (Philstar, 2023). However, the new agreement has remained as a memorandum that will continue its reliance solely on the initiative of the local government in terms of its implementation and sustainability (Department of Labor and Employment, 2020). The effectiveness of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement of 2023 is currently under study, as its potential to promote collaborative programs and relationships holds great significance for advancing the three primary pillars. (Manila Bulletin, 2023).

METHODS

This study employed Institutionalism as its theoretical framework, emphasizing the role of institutions in shaping the progress of actors within a political system (Peters, 2000). Institutions are formalized through laws and legal frameworks. Institutionalism is used to understand how formal institutions, such as government policies and legal frameworks, address the needs of the status quo and empower progress in fulfilling mandates. The theory also highlights the importance of institutional performance, as formal institutions can either constrain or enable future progress. Continued progressive performance leads to growth, development, and the correction of issues, while stagnation undermines their purpose (Rees, 2024).

Historically, Institutionalism has been employed in various studies to explore the role of formal institutions. These studies have unlocked discussions that presented the realities of how effective frameworks affect institutional development which guides policymakers in the formulation of regulations (Bodnieks, 2020), how institutions evolve to shape societal progress and shape behavior, foster interactions, and provide consensus within communities (Broadhead, 2022), and facilitation of institutional progress through credible commitments to achieve shared progress (Peters, 2016).

In the context of Marikina City, applying Institutionalism in labor rights and movements is both beneficial and relevant for it provides a valuable perspective in examining the 2023 Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement by examining it as a formal institution. Given that Marikina has a long history of tripartite cooperation, the analyzed contemporary agreement in terms of its performance in promoting the rights, relationship, and welfare of its three primary pillars holds great importance

in unraveling its potential and opportunities for stronger collaborations, active development, and progressive perpetuity.

Driven by the purpose of surfacing the successes, challenges, and shared responsibilities of the three primary pillars of the 2023 TIPC Memorandum of Agreement, this study employed a qualitative approach using a case study–exploratory research design. With the Marikina City TIPC Memorandum of Agreement as the institution, case study-exploratory research design is effective for studying the contemporary situation of the three primary pillars it serves (Yin, 2009). The exploration of the institution revealed its realities, which addressed the objectives and questions of this study and served as a springboard in navigating essential ways forward to address the setbacks and further advance the strengths of the institution (Dovetail, 2023; Priya, 2009).

In determining the informants, the characteristics and contribution to the institution were considered. Purposive sampling was utilized, and stories were triangulated to cross-verify the findings and eliminate bias (Ávila et al., 2019; Fassio & Ruddy, 2013; Vivek, 2023; Nanthagopan & Piriyaatharshan, 2023). The informants in this study were selected members of the signatories to the 2023 Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement. These included the presidents of all six registered labor unions in Marikina City under the Workers' Alliance in Marikina (WAM), which has represented the labor sector since the first Tripartite Agreement in 1995. Additionally, an officer from the Labor Relations and Public Employment Services Office represented the Local Government of Marikina City. Lastly, the president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry–Marikina Chapter (PCCI New Marikina), who served as the vice chairman for the business sector in the first year of the agreement, was the key informant for the business sector.

One of the methods utilized for data collection is focus group discussion (FGD). Focus group discussions are a curatively planned discussion designed to gain perceptions on a defined topic in a permissive and liberal environment (Krueger, 1998). Labor union presidents were invited as one unit to discuss the agreement in a focused and interactive way (Morgan, 1997). During the interview, a thorough discussion and sharing of relevant issues and experiences related to the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement were conducted to gather empirical information.

The information gathered was analyzed, which effectively supplicated the study (Merriam & Birkes, 2016). Another method employed was the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with informants from the local government through the LRPESO and the business sector through the president of PCCI Marikina. KIIs positively

contributed to gathering valuable knowledge from the key informants who held relevant knowledge of the agreement (Taylor & Blake, 2015). This created a more comprehensive analysis of the agreement, as their experiences effectively supplemented the study's goals.

Through thematic analysis, the acquired data from informants were analyzed by organizing codes, which eliminated bias and served to holistically identify, analyze, and interpret themes within the information gathered (Braun et al., 2024).

The information gathered was treated confidentially under the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Successes of the Tripartite Agreement

The ability to facilitate the establishment of health and safety policies and regulations that protect workers is one of the tripartism agreement's primary capacities and benefits. Participation and engagement in health and safety regulatory processes have been proven effective in empowering workers to recognize hazards and advocate for their rights (Delp & Riley, 2015).

The informants highlighted several successes of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement. All three primary pillars emphasized the Safety Officer 1 (SO1) training, which equips employees to promote workplace safety. As the secretariat of tripartism, the LRPESO is also working on integrating uniform labor standards across agencies and implementing alternative livelihood programs in collaboration with DOLE and DTI, aligning with Marikina's motto as a city of happy workers and industries.

The business sector additionally shared its partnerships with the Medical and Dental Societies of Marikina to expand benefits for workers, along with a monthly upskilling caravan series with DOST and DTI. These concrete manifestations of tripartism's mandates reflect efficacy by addressing labor market inequalities through equitable access to upskilling and other opportunities for workers (Lindbeck & Snower, 1996). However, the three primary pillars of the agreement criticized these successes as reactive rather than proactive measures that were intended to enhance the agreement's effectiveness.

Challenges of the Tripartite Agreement

Proactive tripartism agreements mitigate regulatory capture by empowering public interest groups, which fosters cooperation and reduces corruption risks (Ayres & Braithwaite, 1991). In contrast, reactive tripartism has been shown to initiate various challenges in the promotion of labor rights and welfare, such as inconsistent labor standards compliance, which can undermine the effectiveness of labor protections and negatively affect worker rights and safety, as well as instability in labor relations. It induces power imbalances and unresolved conflicts between the three pillars, which pull them from having effective collaboration and policymaking (Cox, 2000; Fine, 2013).

When probed deeper about the implemented programs that manifest the successes of tripartism, the three primary pillars have shared their experiences that have unveiled the reactive status of the existing tripartite agreement. The labor sector shared that despite its promising impact on the employees, the SO1 training was only made feasible as it is a basic safety requirement by DOLE. The sector emphasized that before the collaborative work of the local government, DOLE, and the PCCI (New Marikina) implemented the training, they had to first lobby for the initiative in one of the general meetings with the other two primary pillars of the tripartite agreement.

We had a meeting where we talked about various seminars and trainings. One of which is Safety Officer 1. But it was us who made the call. It happened because they also needed to comply.

The sector emphasized that before the collaborative work of the local government, DOLE, and the PCCI (New Marikina) implemented the training, they had to first lobby for the initiative in one of the general meetings with the other two primary pillars of the tripartite agreement. Additionally, the sector shared that they do not feel the business sector's manifestation of the caravan series for upskilling, which was supposed to contribute to the successes of tripartism.

We are not aware. How often is that? We are not aware of its existence.

In dialogues, the same appreciation of the status of the existing tripartite agreement by the three primary pillars is seen. Here, the key informant from the LRPESO noted that tripartism is only felt in moments of dispute, comparing the agreement to a fire truck that only responds in moments of need.

What is happening now (in the agreement) is like a firefighter. If there is a dispute, that's only the time it reacts. The agreement has no clear plans laid before us.

The same sentiment was echoed by a representative from the labor sector, who stated that tripartism lacks in promoting effective mediation during misunderstandings and proactive and productive initiatives. Meanwhile, although appreciative of the existence of tripartism as a mechanism for resolving labor misunderstandings, they, too, noted that it only manifests during disputes. These shared experiences by the three primary pillars present the defeat of the very essence of tripartism, for reactive measures are proven to lead to a lack of mitigating measures that could prevent problems between the sectors it caters to, resulting in a cycle of conflict rather than collaboration (Ayres & Braithwaite, 1991).

The failure to fulfill the agreement's mandates can be further substantiated by examining its primary movers. In the agreement's mandated hierarchy of officers, the city mayor is the chairman of tripartism and is responsible for mediating and determining the trajectory of tripartism under their supervision. Despite this mandate, criticism exists, as scholars suggest that the role of the mayor as the chairman may not always lead to meaningful outcomes, particularly in contexts when politics and power dynamics are imbalanced (Marsh & Grant, 1977), which manifested in this study.

The Roles of the Three Primary Pillars of Tripartism

When asked about the significance of shared responsibility in executing the existing tripartite agreement, representatives from all three primary pillars expressed their sentiments regarding the urgent need for the mayor, as chairman, to take proactive steps to fulfill the agreement's mandates. First, a representative from the labor sector stated that the formulation of proactive measures is heavily incumbent upon the chairman of tripartism.

The major challenge in fulfilling the agreement is really on the mayor. In comparison to the time of BF, despite his administration's strict approaches, the agreement was implemented.

Second, the LRPESO stated that the chief executive of the local government unit (LGU), who sits as the chairman of tripartism, holds more power as the three pillars

are under his direct leadership, which means that he can compel obedience and reinforcements to meet the promises of the agreement.

The key to a successful tripartism is the chief executive of the LGU, for they can find ways to execute the agreement.

Lastly, the business sector shared that the government rarely funds nor organizes a dialogue, and most of the meetings of the three pillars were sponsored. They further shared that if meetings were to remain purely sponsored, meeting the minds of the three primary pillars, just like how it was before the inception of the existing tripartite agreement, would remain a challenge.

In every adjournment of our sponsored meetings, I can see positive results. However, if all our meetings are to be sponsored, it will be hard. It would be best if there were a meeting where we could sit with the labor sector as visitors to the LGU.

In another aspect, a complication in communication about the validity of the agreement is manifested, for the key informant from the LRPESO has presented the agreement as an institutionalized mechanism, yet the labor sector has no clue as they recommended for the agreement to be formally institutionalized as a labor mechanism of the city, and the business sector also presented that they hold hopes for the institutionalization of the agreement, arguing that it is necessary for Marikina City for it is the pioneer of tripartism. From the foregoing, it is evident that the absence of active engagement of the chairman negatively affects necessary regulatory frameworks of tripartism, for mandate-driven initiatives were not established, which complicates the implementation efforts of the agreement. (Tarigan, 2017).

While it is true that all three primary pillars have presented a uniform answer on the slumbering status of the chairman of the agreement, they also shared separate suggestions their counterparts may exhibit to equally contribute to the success of the agreement. On one hand, the labor sector suggested that the business sector, just like the local government, must also be proactive in implementing initiatives that promote their well-being and right to work and life balance, arguing that they cannot work all the time and that their companies could exhibit intentions in securing their emotional stability as it drives them to work efficiently.

Work and life balance is important. Workers like us usually work the whole day, even on holidays. I personally aspire for a socialization day for us employees, for we cannot just work all the time.

Studies have shown that such forms of initiative, which are often fostered through tripartite dialogue, correlate with lower stress levels and higher job satisfaction among employees (Wieneke et al., 2018). On the other hand, both the business sector and the LRPESO suggested that the labor sector must comprehensively organize itself and consider that there are misunderstandings that are beyond their capacity to proactively resolve, for by doing so, they can better understand the formal and informal rules that influence employer and local government behaviors, and formulate more effective collaborative interventions in resolving predicaments and fulfilling the promises of the tripartite agreement (Braun et.al., 2012).

In retrospect, tripartism as a mechanism in Marikina City, in realization of its mandates through a memorandum, has been vital in the development of Marikina City. At its prime, pragmatism in the negotiations and meetings of the three primary interests was seen in their willingness to negotiate and compromise. These collaborative actions led to the advancement of more benefits, most especially to the labor sector such as benefits for mobilization, organizing, education, and other purposes pertinent to their development as a consolidated body (Magtubo, 2018). The mayor as the chairman of the agreement has also been pragmatic and did not interfere with all acts of posturing of the three primary pillars within and beyond the city so long as peace is maintained and healthy compromises are met (Mendoza, 2021). More than a year after its signing, the new memorandum of agreement was analyzed in three major parts: (1) the programs it successfully implemented and proposals it laid down in the pipelines of its three primary interests which can be seen as its forms of success; (2) the challenges it holds that impede its materialization, that need to be addressed; (3) the responsibilities the three primary pillars must execute to fulfill the mandates of the agreement.

This study used a qualitative approach to examine the successes and challenges of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement, focusing on the shared responsibilities of its three primary pillars. Through the perspectives of registered union presidents, the vice chairman of the business sector, and the LRPESO, the study revealed the current status of the agreement. A correlation between shared successes and challenges was found, with a unified call for stronger collaboration. The findings suggest that the agreement needs to evolve, as the pillars—also beneficiaries—identified setbacks in fulfilling its mandates. The pillars also shared potential compromises and expressed hopes for the agreement to enhance collaboration in Marikina City.

The Institutionalist approach in this study argues that institutions must go beyond being mere signed documents (Peters, 2000), requiring tangible actions that

extend beyond signing and ratification. Although the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement showed success through various initiatives, it failed to reframe labor rights as an interconnected system of rules and norms, a key expected outcome (Kjaer & Vetterlein, 2018). This is reflected in the primary pillars' desire for the agreement to foster collaboration in creating concrete opportunities and regulations that meet mandates, rather than just fulfilling government agency requirements. Additionally, dissatisfaction with the chairman's performance further highlights the need for the agreement to evolve beyond its current state.

With all the challenges presented and successes of the Marikina TIPC Memorandum of Agreement, it can be generally inferred that the agreement must be recalibrated to address its pressing challenges in promoting labor relations in Marikina City. Based on the recommendations of the three primary pillars, the agreement needs to be proactive, as proactivity is proven to significantly enhance social and economic performance by balancing the interests of workers, businesses, and the government, hence addressing probable market challenges (Kaufman, 2010). As further suggested by the three primary pillars, proactivity can be reached through consolidated efforts of the labor sector through WAM and the continued development of avenues of communication to collaboratively formulate regulations and initiatives by the LRPEO and the business sector through the incumbent leadership of PCCI New Marikina.

Now, while it is true that through shared responsibilities of the three primary pillars the agreement can flourish, it must be noted that it is the dedication of the chairman of the agreement to ignite progress, as resources and means to consolidate the three primary pillars of tripartism are under their competency. Given the agreement's role in promoting labor rights and welfare, especially for the socio-economic drivers of the city, it is crucial for the chairman to ensure its longevity, as it concerns the social-economic movers of the city and of the state which are also its primordial stability support from its once state as a special industrial zone to its current status as a thriving city in Metro Manila.

The agreement is overdue for institutionalization, requiring transformation into a funded ordinance that mandates the binding commitment of the three pillars, like practices in other Metro Manila cities like Valenzuela and Quezon City (Manila Bulletin, 2022). If the agreement remains ineffective, the status of the three pillars will not improve, and tripartism's only success will be its reactive role in labor disputes. Since memorandum of agreement is only expected to put structure on the operations of tripartism in a city, such will not suffice in improving the overall

labor situation in the city if not synergized with the Regional TIPC, which heavily manifested on the empirical inputs of the informants.

Ultimately, this study stresses the need for evaluating institutions to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and shared responsibilities, ensuring continued progress in labor relations. Ultimately, this study stresses the need for evaluating institutions to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and shared responsibilities, ensuring continued progress in labor relations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study helped surface the status of the existing Marikina City TIPC Memorandum of Agreement. Based on the responses and insights shared by the informants, the study found that the existing agreement is in a reactive state and under the chairman's inactivity, causing low performance to fulfill its mandates. The status of the agreement affirmed the Institutionalism Theory (Peters, 2000), which presented the need for the agreement to evolve beyond merely being a signed memorandum, as it is only the beginning of fulfilling the real promise of tripartism. The successes of tripartism were particularly evident in the existence of SO1 Training and upskilling caravans alongside proposals under the pipelines of the LRPESO and the business sector. However, while these initiatives and proposals demonstrate support for the successes of the existing tripartite agreement, it is important to note that these manifestations also contributed to the agreement's challenges. It was determined that the initiatives and proposals implemented before the pipelines of the LRPESO and the business sector that were supposed to be seen as successes of tripartism were primarily the result of advocacy by the labor sector.

Moreover, it was presented by all the selected informants that the dormant state of the mayor as the chairman of tripartism is a major pull to the agreement from realizing its potentialities and fulfilling mandates, for there is no sense of consolidation and compelled collaboration that is supposed to reconcile differences to foster a consensus. Ultimately, all three primary pillars expressed hopes for consolidation in order to actualize the essence of tripartism as a mechanism for promoting holistic and responsive initiatives and regulations concerning labor rights and welfare.

To ensure perpetuity in discovering the potential of tripartism and as a response to this study, which was executed for less than a year, a longitudinal analysis

of secondary data that presents the trends of the triumphs and downsides of tripartism in the years of its stability vis-à-vis instability is recommended to be done. By conducting a thorough analysis, the verbalizations from the informants, as presented in the findings, can further be utilized as evidence of the need for Marikina City's tripartism to ascend beyond the status quo of being a mere memorandum with reactive actions for the sake of real progress and consensus growth.

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The author reports that there are no competing interests to declare.

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