

Advertising as Propaganda: The Promotion of Pro- Filipino Consumption Behavior in the 1930s

FERNAN TALAMAYAN

National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

ABSTRACT

In the 1930s, several advertisements appealing to nationalist sentiments bore the mark of NEPA, or the National Economic Protectionism Association. NEPA was formed by Filipino business magnates who embraced Manuel L. Quezon's call for the strengthening of the Philippine economy and its industries. For almost half a decade, NEPA was used as a brand that advanced 'pro-Filipino' consumption behavior. While the brand's pro-Filipino posturing seemed to resist the colonial rhetoric, a more nuanced assessment of the elements, orientation, and mobilization of such branding suggests that it was systematically produced and promoted to serve political and economic elite interests. To shed light on the brand's essence and intentions, this article examines several advertisements for NEPA branded products from 1934 through 1941. It analyzes the brand's historical and institutional contexts to establish the link between its notion of 'nationalism' and the state's and entrepreneurs' political, cultural, and economic motivations. Ultimately, this study demonstrates how NEPA's advertising campaign attempted to engineer Filipino consumption behavior and generate a 'basic grammar' in which the articulation of pro-Filipino in the 1930s was framed.

Keywords: advertising, consumption behavior, media history, NEPA, propaganda, protectionism

INTRODUCTION

The Americans utilized various media and technologies to advance their colonial project in the early 1900s. Rafael (2000) showed how photography was used to advance colonialism, as he likened the camera to a gun which “has been part of the technology of subjugation” in the Philippines (77). Enriquez (2003) described colonial broadcasting along these lines, highlighting how the United States used radio as “an agent for the ‘Americanization’ of the Filipino consciousness” (124). Meanwhile, Reyes demonstrated how the combination of aggressive advertising campaigns, domestic science classes, and the spread of English language packaged American colonialism in a good light. Reyes (2012) explained that American advertising was centered on selling the “American identity that was thoroughly advanced, egalitarian, and economical” (220). In an earlier work (Talamayan 2019), the author referred to Reyes’ take on colonial propaganda in identifying how colonial education and media aided the development of a Filipino appetite for the American food lifestyle (15).

The proliferation of messages such as the Filipino’s ‘appreciation’ of the American civilizing mission and the publication of statistics that signify the wide patronization of their material and non-material culture gave an impression that the assimilation of Filipinos to the American ways was complete. However, despite the triumph of American colonialism in the Philippines, there was a time when Filipinos seemed to have expressed resistance to Americanization through media, mainly when talk of independence was high in the 1930s. Advertisements that bore the brand NEPA, which stands for National Economic Protectionism Association, went against the grain of the colonial campaign and championed the revitalization of the Philippine economy through the ignition of nationalistic feelings. In such advertisements, NEPA branded products conveyed to Filipinos that ‘true’ freedom could be attained through people’s patronage of Philippine goods and services. Patronage and love for one’s country were presented as necessities for propelling a robust and independent Philippine economy. Hence, in the 1930s, Philippine companies such as Ang Tibay, Elizalde and Company, Inc., F.E. Zuellig, Inc., San Miguel Brewery, and Gonzalo Puyat and Sons, Inc., who were then, members of NEPA, advertised their products with a flare of nationalism.

This article analyzes several NEPA branded product advertisements, as well as promotional materials produced by the association, which were simultaneously published and broadcast from 1934 until 1941. In describing NEPA texts that indicated resistance to the colonial rhetoric, it offers a critical assessment of the essence and intentions of NEPA’s nationalistic campaign. By employing textual analysis and situating NEPA branded advertisements in their historical and institutional contexts, the study determines NEPA’s political, cultural, and economic motivations and sheds light on the association’s articulation of nationalism. Framing advertising as propaganda, this study examines the role of advertising in the normalization of pro-Filipino propagandistic meanings.

Products or services that have the NEPA brand mainly implied three things: first, their manufacturer or service providers are members of the association; second, in promoting the product, the association ascertains its quality 'despite' being locally produced; and third, that the product joins the goal of NEPA (see Figure 1 for an example) to promote the Philippine economy and industries. Thus, patronizing the products is perceived as a symbolic gesture of support for the association's pro-Filipino advocacy.



Figure 1. An example of a NEPA branded product advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section provides a definition of advertising and propaganda and explains the article's theoretical and methodological considerations. It also offers a literature review and describes how commercial advertising can take the form of political propaganda. The second section provides key information about NEPA. It discusses the association's activities that were in line with the promotion of the pro-Filipino attitude. It also includes information about the structure that facilitated the repetition and multiplication of NEPA's "buy local" slogan. Evidence of the attempt to crystallize NEPA's pro-Filipino messages are shown in the last section. It presents the

article's analysis of the articulation and circulation of the pro-Filipino brand, as well as the 'pro-Filipinoness' of certain projects.

ADVERTISING AS PROPAGANDA

The Cambridge Online Dictionary (n.d.) defines advertising as "the business of trying to persuade people to buy products or services." Oxford Dictionary (n.d.), meanwhile, defines it as "the activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services." Following these definitions, advertising can be understood as a commercial activity or industry that promotes and motivates consumption. Propaganda, on the other hand, is "the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2006, 7).

Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) argued in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that advertising's manipulative nature makes advertising indistinguishable from modern propaganda (129). Sublime advertisements in radio broadcasts involve indirect deception that makes consumers take the recommendations of advertisements as "command" (128-129). Advertising, like propaganda, involves the "blind and rapidly spreading repetition of designated words" (135) and "turns language into an instrument" of "manipulation of human beings" (212). It solidifies a signification of certain symbols to influence and direct the behavior or attitude of a population.

Commercial advertising can be classified as a type of propaganda because it operates through a "principle of systematic, purposive repetition" of a message (Vatsov 2018, 77). This principle is crucial in understanding advertising as propaganda, for it is through repetition that advertisers or propagandists are able to manipulate symbols and redefine collective attitudes. Conversely, despite propaganda's association with politics, it functions and operates like advertising. It is an activity that engineers opinion, a text that influences emotions, or even an industry that systematically manufactures consent.

The Importance of Looking Back

NEPA's obsolescence notwithstanding, studying the history of the brand and the association that created it can demonstrate the blurring of the line that demarcates advertising and propaganda. In problematizing NEPA's conception and projection of pro-Filipinoness, the article suggests that campaigns that influence people's affect (in particular, campaigns that invoke and feed on nationalistic feelings) should be placed under scrutiny, for such campaigns usually serve not the welfare of the

general population but rather the state or the elite. Through a critical analysis of a campaign message and the investigation of the actors who articulated and circulated the said message, a campaign's agenda can be better understood.

Although this study revisits old issues, an analysis of advertising as propaganda remains relevant up to this day. The calls for protectionism and pro-Filipino consumption persist despite the decline of NEPA in the post-WWII years. Filipinos are encouraged to purchase Philippine-made products, eat in local restaurants, sleep in Philippine hotels, or buy life insurance from Filipino companies. It is still common practice to associate patronage with patriotism, as local advertisers and businesses mobilize nationalist sentiments in their campaigns with pronouncements that supporting local industries can help propel the Philippine economy forward.

With all that said, this article raises the following questions: How does advertising affect consumer behavior? In particular, how did advertising attempt to influence Filipino consumption behavior in the 1930s? How did NEPA (and the companies that sponsored it) construct, project, and promote a pro-Filipino attitude to the public? What purposes did NEPA's nationalistic branding serve? For whom exactly is this form of nationalism beneficial? Answering these questions will not only make apparent the attunement of propaganda campaigns to elite interests (Herman and Chomsky 1988/2008, 93) but also facilitate the understanding of the political economy of advertising in the Philippines.

Situating the Research Agenda

There is a large corpus of research on economic nationalism and protectionism in the country. Several historical works by local and foreign historians explored the popularization of the "Filipino First" mentality, as well as the rise and decline of pro-Filipino associations such as NEPA. For instance, Agoncillo's (1960/1990) *History of the Filipino People* discussed Manuel L. Quezon and NEPA's role in breaking the American dominance in domestic trade and industries (366). Hayden's (1950) *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* narrated Quezon's attempt to bolster the Philippine economy through nationalist rhetoric and protectionist policies. Hayden described NEPA as an organization sponsored by private institutions that aimed to strengthen the production and use of locally produced goods sold by Filipinos (707). Meanwhile, the imminent cessation of the American-Philippine 'special relations' in the 1930s (Corpuz 1997, 253-262), which caused the need to beef up the Philippine economy, was an issue explained comprehensively by Corpuz in his book *An Economic History of the Philippines*.

Similarly, Gopinath's (1987) description of Quezon's leadership in the 1930s covered narratives about the Commonwealth government's endorsement of self-sufficiency – a 'national philosophy' perceived

as the solution to the economic challenges of the Commonwealth government. Apart from noting Quezon's push for self-sufficiency, Gopinath also observed that Quezon's promotion of the creation of NEPA was indicative of his recognition of the need to change Filipinos' perspective on Filipino products (129). These pieces of literature illustrate the prewar beginnings of the "Filipino First" slogan, which would later resonate in various economic programs and policies in the postwar Philippines.

An extended examination of the politics of "Filipino First" was offered by Cristobal and Cristobal (1961) in their book *Filipino First: An Approach to the "Filipino First" Policy and Selected Readings*. Cristobal and Cristobal explored the potentials of the political slogan "Filipino First" in resisting the prevailing neo-colonial economic system in the Philippines (52-53). In a similar vein, Lichauco's (1988) *Nationalist Economics: History, Theory, and Practice* scrutinized the country's adoption of the *laissez-faire* principle, the 1962 decontrol program, and the preference for sending skilled workers overseas as he advocated for economic nationalism and industrialization.

Only Velasco's dissertation *Fifty Years of Filipino Economic Nationalism: The National Economic Protectionism Association (NEPA) 1934-1984* zeroed in on NEPA's programs and activities. Velasco's study emphasized the factors that contributed to the formation and decline of NEPA, which he attributed to the change of perspective on economic protectionism from the 1930s until the early 1980s. According to Velasco (1985), the elite supported protectionism in the 1930s mainly because it initially served their economic interests. However, NEPA's role diminished when economic protectionism was no longer deemed beneficial to big corporations' growth. Thus, a few decades after WWII, most Filipino business magnates abandoned NEPA. The management of the association was left in the hands of entrepreneurs who ran small and medium-scale businesses (iii-iv).

Finally, an article about NEPA and women published by the author analyzed the advertisements and activities of the female members of the association in an attempt to explain how gender and identity were presented and performed in the 1930s (Talamayan 2013).

It must be noted that none of these works examined the techniques employed in promoting protectionism to the general population. Further, there is yet to be a thorough analysis of advertisements that attempts to generate a pro-Filipino signification in the 1930s. This research seeks to fill this gap, as it introduces an understanding of how advertising could take the form of propaganda through textual and historical analyses. It investigates the strategic framing and systematic repetition of NEPA's notion of nationalism – a nationalism centered on the internalization of pro-Filipino consumption behavior.

The author conducted archival research to address the said gap. Advertisements, bulletins, speeches, and radio broadcast scripts published in the 1930s were collected and examined. The *NEPA Handbook*

published by the association in 1938 was a valuable source of advertisements, as were bulletins and pamphlets regularly circulated before the Second World War broke out. Other advertisements analyzed in this article were published in the *Literary Song-Movie Magazine* and *The Philippines Herald*.

Analyzing Advertisements and Propaganda

Exploring the social values and meanings attached to the late 1800s and early 1900s advertisements of kitchen appliances and technologies for the body, Reyes (2012, 194) raised the questions: "How far do advertisements reflect actual behavior, consumer values, and preoccupations? Do they create fantasies or fuel already present aspirations?" The former was a question that media scholars could not accurately answer due to the lack of historical data on consumption behavior (particularly in the early 1900s), limiting historical narratives to conjectures on the degree of a trickle-down effect. The latter could be partly satisfied by examining advertising's potential to change consumer attitudes.

It is in this regard that semiotic analysis proves useful. Semiotics can shed light on the construction and projection of a product's desirability. By examining signs inscribed in an advertisement, media scholars can go beyond advertisements' denotative meanings as they unpack different possible connotative meanings that are "routinely carried 'on the back of' seemingly simple units of explicit information" (Morley 2005, 49). Meanings can be fleshed out, too, by paying attention to the framing and context of a message. This implies semiotic research that considers "the interests and needs of a historical period, a given type of social institution, or a specific kind of participant in a social institution" (van Leeuwen 2005, 23). Also, determining the communicative codes of advertising and the modes in which advertisements are circulated may unravel the manipulative power of mass media. These approaches are especially helpful in examining advertising campaigns as propagandas.

The next section establishes the historical and institutional contexts of the texts that this article intends to analyze.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC PROTECTIONISM ASSOCIATION

The Philippines was so Americanized that it had become one of the biggest consumers of American products outside the United States in the earlier half of the twentieth century (Robb 1939, 42). Nevertheless, this did not mean that the Americans have quashed the popular desire for immediate independence. In fact, the 1920s and 1930s were punctuated by Filipinization and a "surge of popular protest" and "insurgencies from below" (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 147-148).

When the American colonial government enacted the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, it became inevitable that the Philippines would be granted self-government. For the economic elite, this meant that the country would have to end its dependence on the American market. However, American colonialism never prepared the Philippine economy for economic independence. Local industries in the 1930s did not have adequate capital and facilities to compete with foreign corporations (Talamayan 2013, 53). Worse, the Philippines did not even have the power to control the volume of American imports (Guerrero 1998), which overwhelmed the domestic products. For these reasons, Quezon recognized the need to promote local industries and patronage for Philippine goods and services. It was in this context that NEPA was founded.

NEPA embodied Quezon's call for the adoption of the principles of economic nationalism in the Philippines. On 9 November 1934, Filipino business magnates who were then members of the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands (CCPI) established the association. The original members of the association included L.R. Aguinaldo & Co., Inc., Ang Tibay, C. Tuason & Hijos, Inc., San Miguel Brewery, Gonzalo Puyat and Sons, Elizalde and Co., Inc., among others (Quirino 1939, 15). Although the founders of NEPA mainly came from large-scale industries, it must be noted that NEPA expanded its membership from entrepreneurs of small and medium-sized enterprises to ordinary Filipino consumers.

Aims and Principles

NEPA was envisioned to provide the spirit for the nationalistic agenda of its members. The core of its pro-Filipino campaign was centered on the strengthening of the national economy through protectionism—an economic philosophy they believed could successfully spark growth and sustain an economy independent from the United States (Razon 1935, 6). It aimed to engage and educate Filipinos of their supposed obligations to the country, which was to support the nationalist movement and embrace their Filipinoness through pro-Filipino patronage. It also advocated for the protection of Filipino industries from the biased competition that the colonial regime had established in the country (Quirino 1937, 6).

Despite NEPA's seemingly anti-colonial and xenophobic approach, it clarified that it neither fostered hatred toward anything foreign nor boycotted foreign products. As head of NEPA Benito Razon (1935) informed:

Let our aims and purposes be plainly understood. We aim not to encourage the system of boycott as a means of attaining our economic stability. Rather, we aim to foster our relations with foreign suppliers of those of our necessities which we do not produce on

the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit. We aim not to encourage profiteering as a consequence of national patronage. We aim, on the other hand, to encourage efficiency in production and management which would result to the relief and benefit of the consumer. We further aim not to adopt the policy of isolation as a mild form of self-sufficiency. But we do aim, and it can never be expressed too strongly, to develop our own industries as a basis for national discipline and social security. (13-14)

The promotion of industries and national patronage as enunciated by Razon resonated in different radio broadcasts and advertisements in the 1930s. For instance, Camilo Osias echoed Razon in an address delivered at station KZRM on 20 June 1935, as he emphasized that being “pro-Philippine” is not anti-foreign (in Quirino 1960, 87). Osias added that protectionism in the context of “Filipinism” fostered patronage of Philippine goods “provided they are good in quality and reasonable in price” (88).

All these principles and goals were symbolically inscribed into the NEPA brand. Hence the need to learn about the association itself, since the details about the association’s principles and activities are key to understanding the symbolic and propagandistic meanings of incorporating the NEPA brand into Filipino products or services.

Explaining the relationship of propaganda and symbols, Laswell noted that propaganda is concerned with the manipulation of the signification of “significant symbols” through the standardization of referential meaning within “the web of a particular culture” (627). It involves the “multiplication of those stimuli which are best calculated to evoke the desired responses and the nullification of those stimuli which are likely to instigate the undesired responses” (630). It is a technique that modifies and crystallizes the collective “valuational dispositions or attitudes” or “stimulus-response” through the multiplication of altered “significant symbols” (628-630). That said, how did the association systematically produce symbols that evinced a pro-Filipino signification?

Structure and Operation

To execute NEPA’s campaign efficiently, the association decentralized its operations and divided its tasks into two: first was the overall management of the logistics and affairs of NEPA, and the second was the systematic communication of its advocacies and activities to the public. A general manager headed the former while various editors led the latter.

The tasks within the communications team were divided into 1) the management of the association’s publication in print that explained its activities; 2) the delivery of pro-Filipino speeches by orators (*mananalumpati*) in school and town meetings (*pulong pangbayan* [sic]) and various radio programs; 3)

the initiation of research that focused on trade and translation; and 4) the dissemination of advertisements, bulletin, notices, and programs that involved consumer sales promotion of industrial and trade goods. NEPA's board of directors, who were mostly business owners themselves, handled the promotion of their products and services (Quirino 1937, 2-5).

NEPA distributed to its agents, writers, and speakers the tasks of communicating the association's principles and activities to the public. The agents were in charge of consumer sales promotion in different festivals held in villages or towns. To reinforce the nationalistic branding of NEPA in local feasts, agents conducted activities and put up decorations that bore the name or logo of NEPA to generate a 'truly Filipino' and 'nationalistic' atmosphere. Also, they were in charge of distributing the association's promotional materials and various product samples from its member companies ("Scope, Nature and Object of the NEPA" 1935, 4).

The writers produced the materials and coordinated with the local press, newspapers, magazines, and other major print companies to publish and distribute NEPA's advertisements and articles. They also composed the text for brochures, pamphlets, or leaflets that contained information about NEPA and their member companies. Data in 1937 show that NEPA produced 205 press releases and 58 speeches and articles about protectionism. In the same year, it also published and distributed 30,000 copies of NEPA bulletins; 20,000 copies of pamphlets that shared facts about NEPA in English; 10,000 in Visayan; 10,000 in Ilocano; 10,000 in Bicolano; and 30,000 in Tagalog (Corpus 1938, 22). The speakers, meanwhile, promoted NEPA in school and town meetings or through radio broadcasts. They discussed with their publics the principles and objectives of NEPA and the challenges the association was facing in the 1930s ("Scope, Nature and Object of the NEPA" 1935, 4).

NEPA also organized provincial shows and performances in different carnivals and public parks. It conducted meetings that were open to the public to increase people's knowledge about NEPA and expand its membership (Quirino 1937, 7). On these occasions, NEPA members exhibited its pro-Filipino mantra by wearing indigenous costumes, performing Filipino songs and dances, and promoting local products. In some instances, elected government officials took part in such activities, expressing their support for the association's nationalistic projects ("Scope, Nature and Object of the NEPA" 1935, 12-13).

While NEPA promoted its advocacies in public spaces, it also understood that it was equally important to influence families and households. Like the Americans, NEPA believed that education should play an essential role in the promotion of nationalism. In August 1938, Cecilio Putong, the chief of the curriculum department of the Bureau of Education during the Philippine Commonwealth, shared in his speech that the public school system "readily placed itself behind the NEPA in its effort to promote native industries and to foster the use of Philippine-made products" (in Quirino 1960, 108). As

evidence, he informed that in the course of study in “character education” for the primary and intermediate grades, loyalty and patriotism are taught with the following objectives in mind: “[T]o feel it a duty to buy the products of Filipino industries without sacrificing thrift and sound economy” and “to form the habit of buying from Filipino merchants when their merchants and prices compare favorably with those of others” (110).

Parents were also encouraged to take an active part in promoting a nationalistic behavior. In a poem titled “NEPA,” Enrique Shinyo (in Quirino 1937) expressed:

*Ngayon, hanggang bukas, magpakailan man
Likas nating ani’y dapat parangalan,
Sa tungkuling ito pag tayo’y nagkulang
Babagsak ang ating sinisintang Bayan.*

Today, tomorrow, and forevermore,
Our harvests we must honor,
If we fall short on this endeavor,
Our country’s downfall is sure.

*Edukasion muna’t pagpapatalino
Ang marapat gawin nating Pilipino,
Parangalan natin ang ating komersio
Iyan ang tungkulin ng lahat ng tao.*

Education and learning ability
Must be the Filipino’s priority,
Commerce should be held highly
Since it’s everyone’s responsibility.

*Pakiusap ito sa Ama at Ina,
Na sa bunso’y ipangaral nila
Tangang kabataan ang siyang pagasa
Ng lahing aliping ibig guminhawa.*

A plea to the fathers and mothers,
To give the young ones constant reminder
The youth is our hope, remember
If the slaved race desires to get better.

*Ang pakiusap ko sa mga kapatid,
Huwag nang ilayo ang inyong pagibig
Ibigin ang lupa at sariling langit
Ang aral ng NEPA’y itanim sa dibdib.*

To my brothers and sisters, a request,
Don’t keep your love away from the rest
Love your land and your own skies best
Keep the lessons of NEPA in your chest.
(41, translated by the author)

Since NEPA represented the national advocacy for imbibing and performing a pro-Filipino behavior, all individuals and families were encouraged to love their country and “keep the lessons of NEPA” in their hearts.

FRAMING AND ARTICULATING THE 'PRO-FILIPINO'

Semiotics suggests that one should always question the claim to or supposition of "transparency of 'normal' communications" (Morley 2005, 49). For this reason, the article seeks an answer to the question: How did NEPA frame and articulate its pro-Filipino brand in different promotional texts and broadcasts?

Thus far, the article has presented the association's core doctrines that tell of NEPA's hankering for patriotism, social and economic security, and patronage of local businesses. Its text followed a syntax that linked progress and success with patronage. According to NEPA, patronage was an obligation that every Filipino must realize and fulfill, for it is a prerequisite to economic development. Quirino (1937) wrote in a leaflet that explained NEPA's principles:

Ang Tangkilikan ay siyang kaluluwa ng bayan, at ang pananagumpay ng Tangkilikan ay pananagumpay ng ating kabuhatan. Ano ang magagawa ng isang tao kung ang kanyang katawan ay mahina? Ano rin ang magiging kaparakan ng isang tao kung ang dugo na nananalaytay sa kanyang ugat ay walang kalusugan? Ang taong iyan kahit anong gawin ay hindi pakikinabangan. Ganyan din naman ang nakakatulad ng isang bayan kung ang kanyang mga ani, kalakal at industria'y hindi nagkakaroon ng pagtangkilik ng mga mamamayan.

Patronage is the soul of the nation, and its success is the success of our livelihood. What can man do if his body is weak? What will happen to him if the blood that runs through his veins has no vigor? No matter the effort, nothing can be gained from that person. It is the same with a country when its people do not patronize its harvests, goods, and industries. (41, translated by the author)

Quirino imagined patronage as the "vigorous blood" that runs through a country's vein. Citizens must patronize their products and industries to keep their nation secure; for patronage, according to NEPA, is the nation's key to success.

Success was always associated with patronage or a pro-Filipino attitude. To inspire the people, success stories of NEPA's founders were linked to their love for their Filipinoness, zeal for Filipinization, and capacity to adapt to changing economic conditions (Galang 1958, 213, 222).

As it can be observed, these core ideas that NEPA repeatedly promoted provided a rather simple formula for success as they suggested a direct correlation between nationalism, adaptability, and success.

At the same time, NEPA's call for patronage was communicated to promote the welfare of the poor. A poem by Florentino T. Collantes (in Quirino 1937), a popular member of NEPA, perfectly captured such an articulation:

*Di kung gayon, tayo rito'y nararapat
magtulungan
At itanim sa gunita ang aral ng tangkilikan,
Halimbawang tayo rito'y may hangad na
kasarinlan
Ang mayama't maralita'y pumagitna sa labanan,
Hindi tamang ang mahirap ang siya lang
mamamatay*

Therefore, all of us must help each other,
And embrace the lessons of patronage
For example, the independence we all desire,
The rich and the poor take their place in the
battle

But it is not right if only the poor suffer,

*At ikaw na may salapi'y maghihilik sa hihigan,
Kung may pasan akong baril, ikaw may dapat
magpasan
Magsalo kita sa tuwa't magdamay kita sa
lumbay,
Sa mais na inihaw ko'y kung kakai'y ikaw lang
Susunugin ko ang balat, susupukin ko ang
laman.*

While you, the rich, sleep soundly in the
rafters
If I carry arms, you must do the same,
We must share the joy and share the pain,
But if only you were to eat the corn I grilled,
I will burn the husk and destroy the remains.
(26, translated by the author)

Notice how the text also upheld the value of compassion and sharing. Collantes proposed that everyone must embrace patronage to achieve complete independence that the people supposedly desire. These concepts and principles in persuasive literary pieces found resonance in NEPA branded advertisements.

Following Vatsov (2018), propaganda messages that are normalized through strategic repetition and dissemination transform advertising slogans into "grammatical benchmarks of behavior" (78). Propaganda changes slogans to a framework of individual actions by implanting meanings in them. In the case of NEPA, for almost half a decade, slogans such as "we serve the Philippines," "as a member of NEPA, quality is offered and guaranteed to you," "we are for NEPA," "made-in-the-Philippines: your guaranty of satisfaction," and "Filipino housewives prefer to buy and use made-in-the-Philippines products for economy use" were repeatedly injected in different publications and broadcasts with the intention of normalizing their idea of patriotism. The mechanical repetition of 'support-your-own' messages manifests NEPA's desire to transform its slogans into benchmarks of behavior.

The following are examples of NEPA branded advertisements that repeatedly used the same propagandized symbols and messages.



Figure 2. Elizalde and Co., Inc.'s advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.

Figure 2 conveys a more obvious promotion of a NEPA-endorsed slogan: "We serve the Philippines." The advertisement informs consumers that all businesses of the Elizalde and Co., Inc. are one with NEPA in advancing the economy and industry of the Philippines. Figure 3 presents an advertisement from Aguinaldo's, a famous shopping center in the pre-WWII Philippines, which embraced NEPA's nationalistic spirit by (pro)claiming it has faithfully served the Filipino people for many years, being "the shopping center of the nation."

On the other hand, an advertisement for Binalbagan Estate, Inc., a sugar company headed by Quezon's former Executive Secretary Jorge Vargas, reiterates NEPA's advocacy to 'strengthen' the Filipino

people. In the example, the company tells consumers: "The use of more sugar in the Philippine dietary system will build up a more sturdy and much stronger Filipino race in the future" (Figure 4).

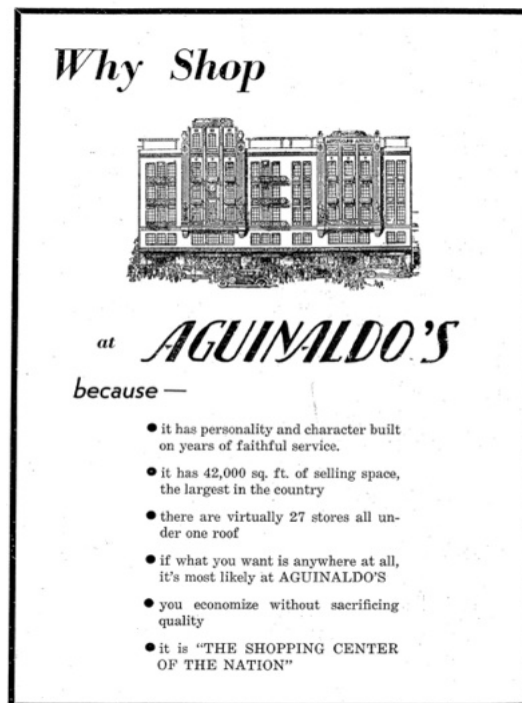


Figure 3. Aguinaldo's advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.

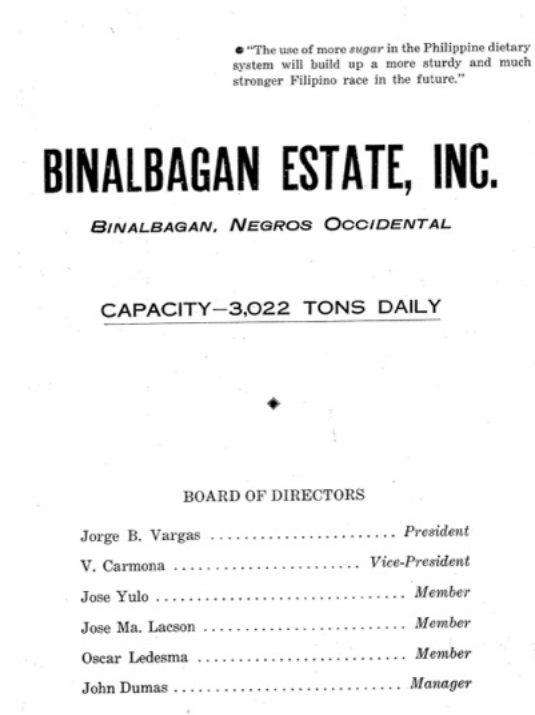


Figure 4. Binalbagan Estate, Inc.'s advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.



Faultlessly Attired
—WITH **ESCO** SHOES!

A perfect fit... because it's made to fit the average Filipino's foot. Stylish... because it is fashioned to conform with the dictates of the style centers of the world. And they hold their shape... because they are made right, and are real quality shoes!

And The Double Wear You Get From A Pair Of ESCO SHOES
more than compensate you for the price you pay for the shoe!

ESCO SHOES FOR MEN
are now selling from
P5⁰⁰ to P6⁰⁰
Some exclusive models at P7.00

Proved-mileage
IN **ESCO** SHOES!

Buy A Pair Today At The
ESCO SHOE EMPORIUM
615 ESCOLTA — 333 LEGARDA

(ESCO Women's shoes are also selling from P5 to P6.00. Children's from P2.20 to P3.75)

Figure 5. Escoshoes advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.

Figure 5 is another NEPA branded advertisement that sells locally-made Escoshoes by communicating messages, such as this one: "A perfect fit... because it's made to fit the average Filipino's foot. Stylish... because it is fashioned to conform with the dictates of the style centers of the world. And they hold their shape... because they are made right, and are real quality shoes!"

Similarly, Figure 6 orients consumers that if they are after quality, style, and durability, Olympian shoes, which were also made in the Philippines, should be their choice of footwear.

An example of an indirect promotion of pro-Filipino consumption behavior can be observed in Figure 7. While the ad does not directly tell consumers that Ang Tibay serves the Philippines like Figure 1, it includes a sketch of a man and woman happily wearing Filipiniana clothes. It also exhibits modern shoes and slippers with indigenous designs. The logo of NEPA acts as a seal of approval—like an assurance that the company promotes not only the purchase of locally made products but also good quality.



Figure 6. Olympian's advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.



Figure 7. Ang Tibay's advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.

Figures 8 and 9 show advertisements with slogans that aspire to guarantee efficiency, suitability, and satisfaction. Figure 8, an advertisement for The Isabela Sugar Company, Inc., tells consumers that its “especially washed sugar” or Isco sugar is “adapted to Filipino taste and foods.” It also claims that the company’s Iscohol alcohol is “cheap and efficient motor fuel for taxis, trucks, cars, and motor rectified alcohol for beverage or mechanical purposes.”

Figure 9 shares that the matches of Philippine Match Co., Ltd. are “suitable for the climate conditions” of the country and that they are “economical in the sense that each box contains a great number of sticks that the good quality assures a minimum of waste.” Another selling point presented to consumers is the fact that the matches are “made in the Philippines by Filipino labor.”

Figure 8. An Isabela Sugar Company, Inc.’s advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.



Figure 9. Philippine Match Co., Ltd.'s advertisement. Source: *NEPA Handbook*.

An advertisement that sells a NEPA branded cigarette promotes consumption by appealing to the Filipino 'duty' to support Philippine industries. La Yebana Company, Inc. tells consumers: "You can promote the well being of the Philippines by patronizing the Philippine-made cigarettes. The Tobacco Industry is one of the oldest and largest industries in the Philippines and deserves your support and patronage" (see Figure 10).

It appears that most advertisements of NEPA branded products were concerned with communicating to Filipino consumers the promise of product quality. While they invoke nationalistic elements and sentiments in their advertisements, they assure that their products meet consumer needs and satisfaction. Such an assurance is vital for it helps strengthen and sustain their desired pro-Filipino consumption behavior.

People's affect is targeted in propagandistic repetition to retain and apply learned behaviors. As Marcus (2002) posited, emotions influence mental processes through "internal feedback." For instance, enthusiasm, joy, satisfaction, gladness, pleasure, and other emotions sustain habits that provide the brain positive internal feedback on a successful action (81). Marcus argued that "without such an internal feedback process, the brain would not have the means to differentiate the successful from the unsuccessful, nor would it have the capability to make midstream adjustments" (81). This way, NEPA's

attempt to influence affects becomes sensible. While it drew energy from supposed nationalist sentiments, it also encouraged selling quality and justly priced Philippine products so that the purchase would generate a positive experience and feedback among Filipino consumers.

The "ARISTOCRATS" of all cigars!
 . . . Made by LA YEBANA

- CORONA REAL
- ESPECIALES
- DE MELIN
- CONDE DE IXDAIN
- LIFE
- EXCELLENTES
- MANUEL QUEZON

All these high grade La Yebana Cigars are bound to make the best possible impression on your friends. No other gift is more appropriate, more appreciated and yet more convenient than a box of any of these high grade LA YEBANA CIGARS!

Cigarettes that have TASTE DISTINCTION!
 . . . CORTOS EXTRA!

SMOKE CORTOS EXTRA! You can promote the well being of the Philippines by patronizing Philippine made cigarettes. The Tobacco Industry is one of the oldest and largest industries in the Philippines and deserves your support and patronage.

La Yebana Company, Inc.
 CIGAR & CIGARETTE FACTORY
 57 GASTAMBIDE, SAMPALOC—P. O. BOX 442
 MANILA, P. I.

Figure 10. La Yebana Company, Inc.'s advertisement. Source: NEPA Handbook.

Aside from the circulation of NEPA text in print, NEPA's pro-Filipino advertisements were also broadcast in two radio stations (Enriquez 2008, 59), namely KZIB and KZRM-Radio Manila, both members of NEPA. In the 1930s, NEPA's radio programs were aired twice a week, and they mainly played Filipino music. In 1935, some members of the association such as the Hacarín Dairy Farm had been buying airtime or sponsoring programs to feature their products (Naftaly 1935, 11).

The tide of nationalism in the 1930s contributed to the popularity of pro-Filipino radio programs. The program of a NEPA orator, Remigio Castro, which featured stories of Filipino heroes in Tagalog, was one of the more popular programs among radio listeners at the time (Naftaly 1935, 8). More so, the broadcasts of NEPA in radio programs such as *La Liga Patriótica* (The Patriotic League) and *National Economic Protectionism Association* were regarded as "most inspirational" (Naftaly 1935, 11). These

programs echoed stories and discussions concerning the planning of the country's national economy and the need for pro-Filipino patronage.

Advocacies of NEPA were also shared in their program titled the *Voice of Industry*, which started airing in KZIB in 1937 (Corpus 1938, 19) and explained to Filipino listeners the current challenges local industries were facing in promoting an independent economy (Quirino 1937, 19-20). For instance, in a broadcast on 9 January 1936, Abdon Llorente, a NEPA administrator, discussed several hindrances to the country's promotion of the national economy. During that broadcast, he urged policymakers to free the country's economic planning from "special interests" (*The Philippines Herald* 10 January 1936, 2).

Among all the radio programs of NEPA, most noteworthy was *I am a Filipino*, which started airing in KZIB on 18 October 1941. *I am a Filipino* was instrumental in the promotion of 'Filipinism' by well-known educators, public officials, and businessmen. During the program's first broadcast, Juan Nolasco (*The Philippines Herald* 13 November 1941, 11), then the mayor of Manila, introduced its aspirations:

Verily, we would want every one of our countrymen to feel great in his being a Filipino; we would want to inspire among us love and respect for ourselves, our fellowmen, and our country; we would want to assert our individuality as a people; we would want to impart to our children who will be the future citizens of the country, the true ideals... and traditions of our race, and above all, we would want to forget sectionalism and regionalism among ourselves and remember that we belong to one... nationality.

Despite being aired in English, the program articulated a sense of nationalism that centered on Filipino's acceptance of their Filipinoness. It also aimed to inspire Filipinos to love their home and family and display unstinted and undivided loyalty to the flag and country (*The Philippines Herald* 13 November 1941, 11-12).

CONCLUSION

This article has provided an analysis of NEPA's discourse of 'pro-Filipinoness' by situating them in their historical and institutional contexts. In doing so, it has interrogated the connection between NEPA's notion of 'pro-Filipino,' their brand's evocation and feeding of nationalistic feelings, and their members' motivations. Various attempts of NEPA to transform advertising slogans to benchmarks of behavior were also reviewed. Such attempts were fueled by the popular desire for independence and the tide of nationalism in the 1930s.

Based on the presented evidence, it appears that NEPA had been active in implanting its notion of pro-Filipinoness in their production of various media texts. Nationalism was equated with loyalty and patronage. Adopting NEPA's endorsed pro-Filipino attitude would not only mean acceptance and promotion of their Filipinoness, but also the practice of assuring quality and economy to customers (for manufacturers and service providers) and the resolute support and patronage for Filipino industries (for Filipino consumers). The former endeavored to induce positive experiences for consumers, which may stimulate a habitual pro-Filipino consumption. The latter potentially completed the cycle, as consumers were encouraged to take an active role in NEPA's nationalistic campaign, especially since patronage was framed and articulated as a citizen's duty and obligation.

NEPA texts, including the advertisements which bear the association's seal of approval, were both political and commercial. They were political because they embraced Quezon's and other nationalists' call for loyalty and patriotism. They were also commercial because NEPA's pro-Filipino advertising campaign were inherently profit oriented.

Therefore, in answering the question concerning the purpose of NEPA's pro-Filipino campaign, the article concludes that NEPA's advertisements mainly served the interest of Filipino political and economic elites. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) said: "True resistance is without propaganda... The interests of industry and consumers do not harmonize even when the former seriously has something to offer" (212). While NEPA texts seemingly resisted the colonial rhetoric, its main intention was to promote a certain consumption behavior that would benefit Filipino business owners, particularly those who owned or had shares in big corporations that sponsored print and radio advertisements. While the presence of NEPA's seal in locally made products reminded the people that their purchase would not only benefit the economy but also improve the welfare of the general population, by looking at it as an advertising technique, it can be surmised that its primary intention was to stimulate financial gains for the member companies of NEPA. This explains why NEPA branded advertisements employed pro-Filipino elements in orienting the buyers about the existence and quality of NEPA branded products.

On a final note, studying the operation of advertising and the mechanisms that enable the resignification of signs and symbols in media texts could shed light on how modern-day propaganda works. For advertisements to be successful, like propaganda, they endeavor to change people's habits and behavior. Advertisers and propagandists alike attempt to manipulate people's affects and attitudes through the repetition and multiplication of campaign slogans. More than improving the lives of its target consumers, manipulation through advertising serves the purpose of those who pay for them.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

FERNAN TALAMAYAN is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Taiwan. He holds a Master's degree in History from the University of the Philippines Diliman (2014) and a second Master's degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology from the Central European University, Hungary (2018). His dissertation project investigates populist logic and political language games in Philippine social media.

✉: ftalamayan.c@nycu.edu.tw

