

“Toxic Waste Trade or Toxic Colonialism?”

A Modern Colonial Process and the Struggles Against a Neoliberalist Agenda

Perspectives from the Philippines ca. 1980 - 2000



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Abstract

The toxic and hazardous waste trade is a complicated business involving several dimensions including, economic, social, political and environmental aspects. With a rising environmental movement, globalisation processes, industrial development in developing countries, the issues of the toxic waste trade began to evolve in the period from in. the second half of the twentieth century. This would lead to enhanced debates of the topic and a growing force opposing it in the period from 1980-2000. From these debates, the concept of toxic colonialism originated. It defined the practice of trading waste between richer and poorer nations, which enhanced the already established inequalities affecting the environment and human health.

That the concept incorporates the term colonialism provides an inherent historical dimension to it. From this dimension, the thesis explores the historical context, from the old colonial and imperial structures and their persistence leading to a new form of colonialism. Further, it will examine the context of environmentalism and the international environmental agenda in the 80s and 90s and link the alterations of the practice to highlight why and how the concept of toxic colonialism could develop and what it entails on a political level.

To study toxic colonialism on an individual level, the thesis discusses perspectives from the Philippines. The country, a formerly colonised country for almost 400 years by the powers of Spain, the United States and Japan, has significant historical aspects which will emphasise the understanding, definition and meaning of toxic colonialism. Additionally, the Philippine's case of environmental engagement in the 80s and 90s provides for how a developing nation affected by toxic and hazardous waste import resisted the new colonial practice.

Preface

Through my studies, I have specialised in both postcolonialism and nationalism. When I first read about the concept of toxic colonialism, it immediately attracted my attention. It was an innovative modern historical concept that encompassed my interests in international politics, environment and development. Choosing the topic of my master's thesis was, therefore, not a difficult decision to make. As a child, I lived in Iloilo, Philippines, and still have family in the country. My interest in the Philippines has always been a part of me, and I choose the opportunity of my thesis to incorporate it into the concept, which turned out to provide significant perspectives and dimensions. Unfortunately, COVID-19 interrupted my original plans of archival research in Manila. However, enhancing the thesis' focus on the concept turned out to be as interesting as I had hoped this semester would be.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dominik Collet, who has given me thoughtful advice and guidance since last spring. I would also like to thank the Oslo Center, where I have worked as an organisational intern for the last year. The Oslo Center has provided me with great guidance, learning and knowledge in international politics, human rights and sustainable development. It has been a place where I have had the opportunity to discuss and mature my topic. I would like to thank my supervisor, Roberta Vilela, for always motivating me, giving meaningful advice and discussions on related topics. I am grateful to my fellow student, Andrine Spets, who has shared her wisdom and knowledge with me. I am thankful for having you by my side since day one of our bachelor studies, for inspiring me, for the endless of historical discussions and for being my best friend. To my boyfriend and cohabitant, Lars Moe, who has stood by my side since the age of 16, thank you for giving me unconditional love, support and patience through 9 years, and especially throughout the last year. Lastly, I would like to thank my brother Otto Ernst Ababao Backer, my parents, Lars Backer and Ruby Ababao Backer, for always supporting me.

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List of Acronyms

BAN	Basel Action Network
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
EDSA	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
EMB	Environmental Management Bureau
IMF	International Monetary Fond
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRI	Philippine Recycling Inc.
UNEP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
US EPA	United States Environmental Agency
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

Chapter One

Introduction

“Just between you and me, shouldn’t the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs (Least Developed Countries)? ...I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that...I’ve always thought that the under-populated countries in Africa are vastly under-polluted...”¹

- Lawrence Summers, Chief Economist of the World Bank, excerpts from confidential memo, December 12, 1991

SUBJECT

When Lawrence Summers was Chief Economist of the World Bank, one of his memos was leaked to the press in 1992. The memo reflected trade liberalisation on pollution shipment from industrialised nations to “Third World” countries.² Summers’s quote is a pertinent exemplification of the issues on transboundary toxic and hazardous waste movements between richer and poorer nations. It has served as a symbol for the opposition’s confrontation for international control and regulations on the waste trade. Although most of the production and the trading of toxic wastes can be traced to industrialised countries, a consequential portion was transported to regions of the Global South in the second half of the twentieth century.³ The problematic aspect of this practice is the threats and risks to the environment and human health if not properly managed.⁴ The risks increase in countries that are financially unable to establish proficient facilities and systematic programmes for handling the toxic substances. For vulnerable and fragile societies, the risks pose an increased reality. This proposes questionable stances in regard to ethical and moral dilemmas in the practice of waste trade.

¹ John Bellamy Foster, “Let Them Eat Pollution” in *Invisible Crises: What Conglomerate Control of Media Means for America and the World*, ed. George Gerbner, Hamid Mowlana, Herbert I. Schiller (New York: Routledge, 2018) 221. The memo was first publicly printed in *The Economist*, February 8, 1992, 66.

² Foster, “Let Them Eat Pollution”, 222.

³ It is necessary to note that the transboundary movements of toxic waste did take place both prior and after the mentioned period. I refer to the second half of the twentieth century as a period for when waste shipment and the consequences of it peaked and became more recognised. For more information about the history of waste, see e.g., Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash*, 1999; and John Scanlan, *On Garbage*, 2005.

⁴ Jennifer Clapp. *Toxic Exports: the transfer of hazardous wastes from rich to poor countries* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010) 1-3.

With a growing environmental movement and that several alarming cases becoming known to the international audience in the 1980s, a new concern and awareness arose - the issue of toxic and hazardous waste trade between poorer and richer countries. It culminated into a comprehensive debate between parties from all sectors of the society, including state, non-state and private actors. It was a debate questioning the need for accountability, controls and regulations of the transboundary movements of toxins. These discussions would pave the way for the topic to enter on the international agenda and for multilateral cooperation to begin a course of action.⁵ An international agreement that has been regarded as a milestone for environmentalists and social justice activists was the Basel Convention of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste Trade and Their Disposals of 1989, initiated by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).⁶ The treaty would enter into force in 1992. However, this did not create an absolute settlement. Several inadequacies and loopholes were to be found in the treaty, and the trading of toxic waste would rather progress in new manners, both legally and illegally, and it would continue to impair the less advanced nations.⁷

With the continuance of toxic waste trade after the Basel Convention, the debates heightened. From the framings of these circumstances, a new concept was connoted, *toxic colonialism*, by Jim Puckett from Greenpeace in 1992.⁸ Toxic colonialism initially reflected and described the “dumping of the industrial wastes of the West on territories of the Third World.”⁹ It indicates that the practice of toxic waste trade was systematic trade characterised by strategic economic and political forces. It is a connotation that encompasses a practice affecting several dimensions on a global, international, national and local level. For the practice of toxic waste trade to be an actuality, it is conditional on the globalisation process of the modern era. It relies on external forces, dynamics and relations between countries and a power struggle to transpire. Furthermore, the concept’s inclusion of colonialism in toxic colonialism, presents an inherent historical dimension to it. Through this dimension, theories that will explicate its uprising and definition accompanies. Although the concept proposes a description of a distinct trade, questions of its elucidation and interpretation remain disputed and open to answer.

⁵ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 5,22.

⁶ Laura A. W. Pratt, “Decreasing Dirty Dumping? A Reevaluation of Toxic Waste Colonialism and the Global Management of Transboundary Hazardous Waste”; *William and Mary environmental law and policy review* 35, no. 2 (2011), 156.

⁷ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 3, 46-47.

⁸ Tam Dalyell, “Thistle Diary: Toxic wastes and other ethical issues”, *New Scientist*, 4 July 1992. Accessed January 15th, 2021. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg13518285-900-thistle-diary-toxic-wastes-and-other-ethical-issues-comment-from-westminster-by-tam-dalyell/?ignored=irrelevant>

⁹ Pratt, “Decreasing Dirty Dumping?”, 1.

EMPIRICAL PROJECT

The topic of transboundary toxic and hazardous waste movements is abundant and may be studied under several dimensions. This thesis will draw from the historical lines in order to understand the toxic and hazardous waste trade in its apogee, 1980-2000. Further, it will be necessary to demonstrate the meaning and the conceptualisation of toxic colonialism through specific historical and theoretical framings. In order to analyse the topic on a deeper level, it will be necessary to conduct a case study. One of the signatories of the Basel Convention of 1989 was the Philippines. The country was also qualified to ratify the amendment, which was a necessity in order for the Basel Ban to enter into force.¹⁰ This gives the thesis a perspective from a developing nation and a formerly colonised country, which is fundamental to correlate the practice of waste trade to toxic colonialism. With this, the research question discloses: In what ways can we interpret the historical challenges of toxic and hazardous waste trade to the concept of toxic colonialism? Through the case of the Philippines, how does toxic colonialism engage with the historical structures of imperialism and economic liberalism?

To partake in international discussions in order to empower developing countries' position in the global market became vital as a means to handle the management challenges of waste hazardous to human health and the environment. International engagement, such as the Philippines participated in suggested an agenda towards protecting their own nations from toxic colonialism. However, it is more complicated than a tale of the Philippines becoming a victim of toxic and hazardous waste import and richer nations targeting poorer nations. It is possible to find drivers and barriers of both sides, actors and powers of which have both undertaken or resisted the practice. The dichotomy of continuity and change also provides for several historical links to comprehend the intention of toxic colonialism. Additionally, an examination of economic and political relations lays a foundation for the topic; nonetheless, they are also to be found in the historical timeline.

From the 1950s, the Philippines experienced an escalation in industrial development due to economic growth. This led to an increase in the production of toxic chemicals for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. At the same time, globalisation, neoliberal policies and environmental regulations in industrial countries led to an increase in waste export to the

¹⁰ Richard Gutierrez, "International Environmental Justice on Hold: Revisiting the Basel Ban from a Philippine Perspective"; *Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum*, 24, no. 2 (2014), 399; For more information about the Basel Ban Amendment, see also chapter 3, page 33.

Philippines. The concurrence of domestic production and importation of toxic waste caused challenges to the Philippine's waste management capacity. After the People Power Revolution in 1986, the new government took action and reorganised the Department of Natural Resources into the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and created the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB). Like many other developing countries, the Philippines had encountered several incidents and cases of toxic and hazardous waste transfers, with an intensification during the 1980s.¹¹ In 1990, the government of the Philippines implemented the *Toxic Substances Control Act of 1990*. This proposed state control of activities regarding toxic waste import and management.¹² The national and international political engagement to the issues validates the Philippines' relevance to the concept of toxic colonialism. Having argued for why the Philippines will serve as a solid case, it is necessary to stress that the country alone cannot give one comprehensive answer, as different factors may occur in different cases. However, the case of the Philippines will present valid evidence by bringing its colonial links, neoliberal policies and environmental awareness to the connotation of toxic colonialism.

The given timeframe in this thesis is periodised from 1980 to 2000. This epoch represents a period where awareness and attention to the practice of transporting toxic and hazardous waste between richer and poorer countries were significant and for the practice to reach its apex. The timeline includes the presence of an emerging international community and cooperation such as the mentioned Basel Convention and continues further in the timespan to 2000. Furthermore, the Philippines was experiencing a democratic transition with a new government taking new means and actions on the environmental front. Additionally, the new industrial development will present historical changes which shaped their experience in the waste trade. The Philippines engaged both on the international and national front to manage toxic and hazardous waste and restrain import. From 1980-2000 it is possible to analyse the situation and challenges of the issue through a transitioning period at both levels. Through this, we will find alterations that contribute to a broader understanding of the link between the practice of waste trade and the concept of toxic colonialism.

¹¹ A. S. Tolentino, A. T. Barabante, M.V. David. "Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines", *Waste Management & Research*, 8, no. 2, (1990), 123.

¹² Tolentino, Barbante, David, "Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines", 126.

In the bigger scope of waste trade, solid waste is a large contributor to issues of its transboundary movement. However, for the purpose of the thesis' limitations, the topic is delineated to toxic wastes. I will shortly elucidate what toxic waste is in order to comprehend the practice of toxic waste trade. What scientifically classifies toxic and hazardous waste is the characteristics of substances that potentially cause a risk to the environment and human health.¹³ Toxic waste is often a by-product produced through industrial processes such as agriculture, fish farming, construction, infrastructure, transportation, laboratories, medical industries and manufacturing, including textile, leather and furniture. In addition, several household items cause toxic and hazardous waste. Consumption from households can, for instance, include batteries, electronic products, cosmetics and detergents.¹⁴ Toxic waste comes in different shapes and reaches us through countless travels through the society. There is a wide scope of industries producing a tide of toxic waste, which can be traced to a large quantity of objects touching the daily lives in the modern world. The classification of what implies as toxic and hazard varies between countries and years; therefore, this thesis will mainly focus on the classifications by the enlisted definitions in the Basel Convention of 1989.

STATE OF RESEARCH

There are several great contributors to the historiography of waste and its connection to industrial development and social history. However, in terms of waste and international trade, there is a limited amount of historiography. Toxic colonialism is of a recent origin, giving one of the main reasons to why it has not undergone much research. Additionally, there is especially little to be found in terms of toxic colonialism in the Philippines. Therefore, this thesis will use literature from other academic disciplines, such as environmental law, political science, economics and developing studies, where several significant contributions are presented. Although there is more literature from the mentioned academic fields, they have not engaged the topic historically. My contribution will, for this reason, combine the topic in correlation with related theories and present it in a historical perspective by drawing from the appropriate historical lines.

There are several great contributions on the connection between humans' activity and environmental consequences in correlation with imperialistic dimensions. In order to elucidate

¹³ Asanta-Duah, Nagy Imre V, *International Trade in Hazardous Waste*, (Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2002) 1.

¹⁴ Claire Wolters, "Toxic waste, explained", *National Geographic*, 26 June 2019. Accessed March 2020.
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/toxic-waste>

the topic of toxic colonialism, useful literature will be Rob Nixon's book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Nixon presents the concept of *slow violence*, meaning the violence through climate change, toxic drift, and deforestation, which often takes place invisibly, hence, in a slow process. Nixon engages the term slow violence to imperialistic notions. He connects the practice of shipping toxic waste to underdeveloped or developing nations as a form of invasion and compares it to military invasion. The latter would create a larger opposition, and that the former needs a rethinking of what violence entails. The term concerns as well the capitalistic drive and motivation of the exploitation of poorer nations, which concludes to a long-term environmental impact on the societies.¹⁵ This contribution presents further theoretical historical framings of postcolonialism and neoliberalism, giving similar theoretical perspectives as the thesis. Mike Davis' contribution, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of The Third World* may in the same sense be used theoretically in the understanding of toxic colonialism. Davis interprets and elucidates how the "Third World" is a product of imperialism and a consequence of capitalist modernisation. The contribution has been regarded as significant and innovative in the way imperialism is connected to environmentalism. However, Davis centre the historical and classical concept of imperialism, whereas this thesis will take focus on a "new" imperialism in the postcolonial period.¹⁶ Both Nixon's and Davis' contributions will be central in correlating colonialism and environmentalism. Furthermore, to correlate it directly to the hazardous waste trade, Jennifer Clapp's publication *Toxic Exports: The Transfer of Hazardous Wastes from Rich to Poor Countries* will be central. It will give a comprehensive overview of the problematic aspects of the topic on a global and international level, giving rise to both environmental, social and economic issues. The book draws from the historical lines by shedding light on critical cases which have led to political questions and discussions.¹⁷ These three contributions will collectively be used in the interpretations of toxic colonialism.

It will be important to use literature that connects the practice of toxic and hazardous transboundary waste to specific cases. There is more to find on Africa within this topic than Asia. However, it is still relevant and useful in the way that they theorise it to the connection if the global waste trade and toxic colonialism. Laura A. W. Pratt's article *Decreasing Dirty*

¹⁵ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011) 2-3.

¹⁶ Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocaust: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2022) 139,279.

¹⁷ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, VII, XI.

Dumping? A Reevaluation of Toxic Waste Colonialism and the Global Management of Transboundary Hazardous Waste published in William and Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review uses the case of toxic waste import in the Ivory Coast to highlight the meaning of toxic waste colonialism as an “out of sight, out of mind” method within waste management, resulting in land exploitation. The Basel Convention is also a central element in the article, setting international cooperation’s in relevance to specific cases.¹⁸ Interpretations of the Basel Convention to the development of waste trade in nations in Africa will also pertain to the perspectives of the Philippines, as the treaty’s protocols applies to all signatories.

To study the case of the Philippines, it will be relevant to use not only literature that is directly linked to waste trade but also literature on poverty and the Philippines’ economic, environmental, and political aspects through the relevant historical context. One contribution, by Walden Bello, *Neoliberalism as Hegemonic Ideology in the Philippines: Rise Apogee, and Crisis*, presents both economic and political aspects of the Philippines neoliberal economic development.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Philippines rising environmental focus is central to discuss, as it may be linked to the resistance of the waste trade. This can further be correlated to the resistance of colonial structures or neoliberal policies. An important book on this is *The Green Tiger: The Costs of Ecological Decline in the Philippines*, written by Barbara Goldoftas. The author highlights how the country has pursued an agenda on environmental safeguarding in light of the encountered environmental degradation.²⁰ As presented, several contributions are highlighting the historical dimensions relevant to toxic colonialism. Further, there are important publications on the practice of the waste trade itself. However, there are not many contributions that links both the toxic waste trade and the historical perspective. In this thesis, these perspectives, such as historical imperialistic structures, slow violence and rising environmental awareness, will be connected to the trade, which further will elucidate the historical concept of toxic colonialism.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to discuss the historical conceptualisation of the term toxic colonialism, the theoretical notions of neo-colonialism and neoliberalism will provide for the analysis to demonstrate and

¹⁸ Pratt, “Decreasing Dirty Dumping?”, 1.

¹⁹ Walden Bello, “Neoliberalism as Hegemonic Ideology in the Philippines: Rise, Apogee, and Crisis”, *Philippine Sociological Review*, 57 (2009) 9.

²⁰ Barbara Goldoftas, *The Green Tiger: The Costs of Ecological Decline in the Philippines* (New York: Oxford University Press) X, XI.

illustrate the definition of it. The theories are both labelled under the rubric of development theories and present paradigms in a historical context to a global, economic and political system. From a critical point of view, the theories will serve as tools to unfold the term's strengths and shortcomings. They will, in some stances, either provide for the development of these claims or show viewpoints of interdependence. Furthermore, they will give an attempt to answer the questions of why actors engaged in this trade and what or who were the drivers and barriers? Lastly, it can guide us to the answer of who won and who lost? For the theories to partake a central role in the analysis, it will be necessary to elucidate the main characteristics, the history, its nature, ideology and the role of the theories.

Scholars have conceptualised neo-colonialism as a radical-political-economic approach with a holistic focus, where moral and social dimensions are included. The paradigm has been identified as rooted in Marxist theoretical frameworks and builds on the terms of external control, exploitation and dependency. It presents notions of where developing countries' sectors have entered the capitalist market, where a historical structure of colonialism has created the possibility for institutions to partake in international capitalism. It is, therefore, the success of the colonial system that has given the pathway for the derived assembled components of neo-colonialist beliefs to take form through creating a global division of land and labour.²¹ To put it in a more direct description, colonialism finds its continuance through the imperialist system of neo-colonialism.²² The colonial implementation of direct political and economic control laid the premise for indirect domination over resources through a strategic or mechanic system in what is commonly known as the postcolonial era.²³ This leads us to an overarching characteristic of the paradigm. Neo-colonialism refers to states that are identified officially as independent or sovereign; however, they are influenced or, to some extent, controlled through external sources, affecting their political and especially economic systems. The institutional foundation that colonial rulers have developed created the opportunity to gain a certain level of influence, generating an unequal economic exchange and trade in the global market.²⁴

²¹ T. V. Reed, 'Toxic Colonialism, Environmental Justice, and Native Resistance in Silko's "Almanac of the Dead"', *Melus*, 34, No.2 (June 2009) 27.

²² Nagesh Rao 'Neocolonialism' or "Globalization?": Postcolonial Theory and the Demands of Political Economy" *Interdisciplinary literary studies*, 1, No. 2 (1 April 2000), 167.

²³ Ankie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) 29-30.

²⁴ Paul Hopper, *Understanding Development Cambridge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012) 36.

Evidently, the administrative independence does not compose adequate principles for developing states to gain equitable conditions as higher-income countries in the capitalist market. Former President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah has written a crucial contribution to the theorisation of the notion in *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), where he refers to the external involvement, often through monetary means, as a requisite to achieve control and exploitation, rather than a purpose to support development in less developed nations.²⁵ Further, Nkrumah correlates neo-colonialism in Karl Marx's prediction of colonialism as the root for an increase in economic inequalities into the level of "individual capitalist state".²⁶ Neo-colonialism introduces, therefore, notions of individual economic inequalities conflict between states on the international stage.²⁷

The external control of internal economic systems and political policies is described as a strategy within a world economic system. In other words, a control, strategically with the purpose of maintaining a certain position globally, leading to impoverishment of neo-colonial states.²⁸ These beliefs are to be identified in conjunction with the dependency theory. dependency theory is a core in the theoretical framework of economic neo-colonialism.²⁹ It is necessary to note that the dependency theory was developed into a critical paradigm, from neo-Marxist theories, presenting several notions and discourses. However, the characteristics of the Dependency theory is claimed to have grown towards and into the notions of neo-colonialism. What dependency theory and neo-colonialism share are the perspectives on the global capitalist marked under the mechanism of the twentieth century world economic structure. In the form of centre-periphery relations, the structure of world systems, where countries, such as developing or neo-colonial states, are categorised under a peripheral status, wealthier nations are identified as the core. Additionally, there are some nations that have the status as semi-peripheral.³⁰ The relation between core and peripheral countries in the world system leads to an enrichment of the former, as it obtains the hegemonic position whilst the latter encounters exploitation. This is what the thesis will attempt to address through the practice of transboundary waste movements. Despite that there was official administrative equality, inequality was persisting.

²⁵ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, (New York: International Publishers, 1966) X.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, XVII.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, X.

²⁹ Rao, 'Neocolonialism' or "Globalization?" 168.

³⁰ Elaine Hartwick, Richard Peet, *Theories of Development: Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015) 197-199.

Toxic colonialism may be interpreted as one of the postcolonial era practices to forward and continue a nominal political power relation.

A critique of the theory neo-colonialism is neoliberalism. It became a dominant ideology among several scholars in the 1980s, in coherence with the “New Right” movement.³¹ It is identified as a classical-traditional approach that includes aspects of economy, politics and governmentality.³² It became widespread for approaching the dynamics of the state and marked in both industrialised and industrialising nations.³³ The essence of neoliberalists beliefs is the role of the state power, which, through its minimum involvement, provides economic freedom in the sense of free market and trade. Transforming this in the context of development, the condition of economic freedom is the avenue for sustainable development, as it vitalises individual freedom and participation in the global capitalist market.³⁴ There are several scholars that have contributed great work to the notions of neo-liberalism. Among them are Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedmann, theorists that also have been acknowledged as founders of the paradigm. Hayek believed in the neoliberal policies as the “one truly progressive policy” that would enable individual freedom.³⁵ Friedman shared a similar belief. He argued for economic freedom as a prerequisite for human freedom and that history has proved that the centralisation of power leads to violations of liberty and independence.³⁶

In terms of export and import between nations, including waste trade, neo-liberalists emphasise the need for trade liberalisation. It highlights that protectionist measures, such as tariff and subsidies, are barriers in order to generate both economic and social development. According to neo-liberalists, political involvement by the state led to suppression of economic growth and entrepreneurial initiatives, as it produces excessive bureaucratic processes. In other words, state involvement engenders inefficient economic systems and conditions. Through the means of financial liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation and austerity, the economic system would enhance and grow. Along with that, socioeconomic factors in developing countries, such as employment and poverty reduction, would also benefit from the neo-liberalist ideology.³⁷ For

³¹ Robert Potter, et al. *Geographies of Development*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2008) 103.

³² Hopper, *Understanding Development Cambridge*, 39.

³³ Simon Lee, Stephen McBride, *Neo-Liberalism, State Power and Global Governance*. (Dordrecht, Springer Netherlands, 2007) 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hartwick, Peet, *Theories of Development*, 94.

³⁶ Milton Friedman, Rose Friedman, *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement: The Classic Inquiry to the Relationship Between Freedom and Economics*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1980) 309.

³⁷ Hopper, *Understanding Development Cambridge*, 40- 41.

instance, through trade liberalisation, developing countries would need to become a strong competitor in order to achieve success in the international market. Competition, further, seeks to improve progress, advancement and efficiency.³⁸

Neo-liberalism has been criticised for presenting a coercive economic system. Its structure does not take the unequal and unbalanced financial fundament in the different states into consideration. Whilst wealthier nations participate in the global market that favours supremacy, developing countries encounter an economic structure characterised by socioeconomic insecurity.³⁹ Where neo-liberalism argues for an economic system where developing countries engagement in the capitalistic market will produce social and economic growth, neo-colonialism vindicates developing countries' entrance into global capitalism as an arena for new imperialistic systems to enter. The theories provide for fundamental counterparts in the analysis of the concept of toxic colonialism. They will present framings for the confrontation of the term and to answer the abovementioned questions. Furthermore, through their ideology, the theories will present several aspects and perspectives on how toxic colonialism can be understood, both in the view of exporters and importers engagement in the trade of toxic and hazardous waste. From this viewpoint, we will be able to draw from the historical lines and the then-contemporary context and analyse how toxic waste trade encompasses the notion of toxic colonialism.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The main aim of this thesis is to discuss and conceptualise the interpretations of the term toxic colonialism, further, to connect it to the practice of toxic and hazardous waste trade. I will operate from a historical approach by using the theories in correlation with the historical context to elucidate toxic colonialism as a new form of colonialism. However, I will lean on other academic disciplines, such as environmental, development studies and political science, as supplements for understanding the trade's practice, development, and evolution. The concept of toxic colonialism originated almost 30 years ago; however, it is highly relevant in the contemporary issues of the practice of global waste trade. I will not deny the contemporary concerns as an inspiration for the thesis; however, to clarify from any form of *presentism*, the thesis will not question the past. Nor will it use contemporary understandings to discover the phenomenon of toxic colonialism. It is a concept from the past that needs to be identified and

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Potter, et al. *Geographies of Development*, 104.

conceptualise from the appropriate historical materials and theories in order to engage with its then-contemporary understanding. Noteworthy to mention is that it is neither an attempt to connect the term with parallel characteristics from the past to the present day.⁴⁰ It is rather an endeavour through the dichotomy of change and continuance to analyse the problematic aspects, its strengths and shortcomings. Based on the Nietzschean concept *genealogy*, Michael Foucault presents the historical approach “history of the present”, which for this thesis will serve as the overall method.⁴¹ By tracing the meaning of the concept through its historical context and theoretical framings, it will present a historical condition and comprehension for it to be pertinent to the past, present and future.

Through the presented theories, in correlation with historical materials, the term toxic colonialism will be discussed on a deeper level in the case of the Philippines. As a term, the theories provide an analytical framework to it. They will be used to situate and conceptualise toxic colonialism historically. In order to do so, I will engage with primary sources to build a foundation for the historical material and context. Useful sources will be policy reports and analyses on sustainable development, such as the Brundtland *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* from 1987, which will situate the political, environmental and economic state.⁴² Another central policy document is *The State of Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines* by the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources, The Pacific Basin Consortium for Hazardous Waste Research and the World Economic Center in 1993, which disclosed the current state, handling and challenges of toxins in the country.⁴³ Additionally, the *Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposals*, United Nations 1989, is a fundament for the framings of what the challenges addressed in the international stage entailed, and how toxic

⁴⁰ David Garland. ““What is a “history of the present”? On Foucault’s genealogies and their critical preconditions”” *Punishment & Society*, 16 no. 4, (2014-10), 367-368.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 373.

⁴² United Nations, “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future”, 1987. Accessed March 9th, 2021, https://www.are.admin.ch/are/en/home/sustainable-development/international-cooperation/2030agenda/un_-milestones-in-sustainable-development/1987--brundtland-report.html?fbclid=IwAR3aUd3tfHGBHjbV0Bms_x2d9HKc0GHcmPmazNEXZtKvbhpAuOTsDUuXtdY

⁴³ The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources, The Pacific Basin Consortium for Hazardous Waste Research, The World Environment Center, “The State of Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines”, 1993, Accessed November 14th, 2020, <https://nswai.com/docs/THE%20STATE%20OF%20HAZARDOUS%20WASTE%20MANAGEMENT%20IN%20THE%20PHILIPPINES.pdf>

colonialism, despite these protocols, could be developed.⁴⁴ Together, the thesis will seek to build a discussion on how the term presents relevance to the practice of toxic and hazardous waste trade from the historical contexts.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis will be two-folded, with two chapters for each section. The thesis comprises, therefore, four main chapters, which will guide us through the main aspects for analysing the dimensions of toxic colonialism. The first part will take a stand on analysing the concept of toxic colonialism, detached from a specific case. The first chapter will provide for a closer analysis of the conceptualisation of toxic colonialism, its definition, and further correlation to the historical structures of colonialism and its link to environmentalism. Further, in the second chapter, the aspects of a rising environmental awareness and the international action that emerged are of importance to highlight in order to detect why a concept such as toxic colonialism has developed. It will also emphasise how the international community perceived the practice of trading waste. In the second part, we will move from an international view into a national dimension, presenting perspectives from the case of the Philippines. To view the practice of toxic waste trade on a domestic level provides for a closer examination of a targeted country and the encounters of toxic colonialism. The third chapter of the thesis will mainly answer the question of why the Philippines was to be regarded as a target and victim of toxic colonialism. We will, therefore, examine the historical structures from colonialism and its persistence, more specifically, the U.S.-Philippines relations, before uncovering the challenges of becoming a dumping site. Finally, I will enter the Philippines' aspects of opposing the toxic waste trade. This chapter will, similarly to chapter three, however, on a national level, provide for perspectives of waste trading to be connected to colonialism from a resisting point of view. From all chapters, I use elements that challenge or highlights the connection of toxic waste trade with toxic colonialism. Its historical relevance through all chapters builds a foundation for why the toxic waste trade has been regarded as a system of toxic colonialism.

⁴⁴ The United Nations, "Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposals", Basel, March 22nd, 1989, Accessed April 2nd, 2021, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1992/05/19920505%2012-51%20PM/Ch_XXVII_03p.pdf

Chapter Two

Toxic Colonialism Revised

Waste is not necessarily an object that is inherently waste. Nothing is. The perception of waste is, therefore, relative. It is an object that generates a format of what individually may serve as purposeless or unwanted.⁴⁵ It is from there, discarded, and further, for the majority of waste, sent to waste management facilities. The cycle of waste creates it, therefore, to be a dynamic object. Waste has unarguably been given a greater role through the growth of industrial societies. It has developed a longer chain and a significant characteristic in the modern world. A change in the historical timeline, *the consumer revolution*, signifies the prominence of waste in the modern life. It represents a period in the eighteenth century when the consumption and possession of material goods among the industrialised societies increased.⁴⁶ Following, as the quantity of individual material increased, waste production followed. Waste has, therefore, been recognised as the shadow-tale in the history of the modern societies.⁴⁷ It symbolises a pattern of human's activity and consumption. As we discard waste, we leave a footprint on our earth. The history we can trace from waste is, however, more than the environmental and social dimension. Waste has, as toxic colonialism presents, given a new dimension to the history of waste, one that entails international economic and political aspects. Hence, the extent of our perceptions of waste affecting the world's societies is comprehensive.

In the modern society, toxic and hazardous waste is inevitable and seems to have come to stay. It is linked to the modern conditions of quality and life and the function of societies. Tracing the link between toxic substances and society, historian William Cronon introduces “a new age of toxicity”, representing the second half of the twentieth century.⁴⁸ The historians Thomas Le Roux and François Jarrige carry this further in their contribution to environmental history in *The Contamination of Earth*. The historians describe the period from 1914-1973 as the *Toxic Age*. The period proposes several factors for increased and new scales of pollution, including a

⁴⁵ Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019) 9.

⁴⁶ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, J. H. Plumb, “The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England”, *The Economic History Review*, 36, no. 3 (1983) 2-3.

⁴⁷ John Scanlan, *On Garbage*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2005) 36.

⁴⁸ William Cronon, Brett L. Walker, *Toxic Archipelago a History of Industrial Disease in Japan*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010) IX.

higher consuming world and energy systems. The industrial revolution, together with technological innovation and adaptability, may be argued as factors creating the avenue and space for a mass consumption culture in the scene of an increasing population and economic growth.⁴⁹ These factors have collectively created the standard that sustains life in the modern society.

When waste is generated in massive quantities, the question of how to manage it arises. With the increased production of toxic and hazardous waste, challenges follow. The management of waste is a complicated task, however, an essential element to clear away toxins from the earth's nature. The facilities of waste management have even been depicted as the kidneys of industrial societies - an element of the modern industrial system providing for sustainability.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the mandatory requirements to establish proficient management are costly. It is easy to think that the richer the country, the better equipped to provide for these facilities, which furthermore stimulates the leading part of mass consumption. However, a consequential portion of waste takes the travels to the port. The logic and motivational drive behind this are grounded in several areas, whereas political and economic reasons are the dominant forces leading the way for waste to be shipped. Harvey Yakowitzs, a consultant to the Environment Directorate, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, has presented various factors resulting in transboundary movements of toxic and hazardous waste in *The Management of Hazardous Substances in the Environment* (2005). Among the elements is 1) the economic cost of disposal rising in the country 2) decrease of facilities with the capacity to manage specific wastes in the country producing it 3) reinforcement of legislation, regulation, control and policies on waste disposal and management.⁵¹ These factors represent overarching changes in high-income countries in the period of the 1970s, leading the way for waste to be shipped as the less uncomplicated and economical method.

A part of mass consumption in industrialised societies in the modern world, the phenomenon, *out-of-sight, out-of-mind* became a dominant mentality. Waste does not necessarily affect our daily lives directly, and it stays, for the most part, invisible or hidden. It is the easy solution to something unwanted. With the challenges of toxic and hazardous waste management, the

⁴⁹ François Jarrige, Thomas Le Roux. *The Contamination of the Earth: A History of Pollutions in the Industrial Age*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020) 13.

⁵⁰ Asante-Duah, Nagy, *International Trade in Hazardous Waste*, 1.

⁵¹ Man Yakowitz, "Monitoring and Control of Transfrontier Movements of Hazardous Wastes", in *Management of Hazardous Substances in the Environment* (Essex: Elsevier Science Publishing, 2005)141.

solution of shipping waste becomes advantageous for the actors in industrial countries. The quick fix of shipping it off beyond borders, avoiding the problems domestically, may have been regarded as efficient and an inexpensive solution. Nonetheless, it provides an extension of the waste cycle and an introduction of the wastes' role in the global economic and political platform. It is at this stage of the cycle; waste serves the potential to become an object of violence in terms of trading. The violence is, however, not unconditional. This is where toxic colonialism enters. The violence performed under the notion of toxic colonialism is multilayered. In this chapter, we will first look into how and why toxic colonialism presents a narrative for violence and, further, draw from the historical dimensions and structures. With the presence of violence, a target is created. The target of which toxic colonialism engenders is very much within the world's systems, giving either a continuance or change in history. Therefore, in order to understand the meaning of toxic colonialism, we will link the concept's perception to the topical elements of history.

VIOLENCE OF WASTE

Contingent on that the international toxic and hazardous waste trade is underlyingly driven by the logic of *out-of-sight, out-of-mind* mentality, the shipping of toxic wastes presents relevance to Rob Nixon's concept of *slow violence*. "By slow violence, I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all".⁵² The symbolism of Nixon's term aims toward a political, imaginative and theoretical re-evaluation, as the human consciousness about *slow violence* is scarce. Violence does not merely entail something dramatic or immediate. Rather, Nixon stresses the need to understand violence as something that may also occur incrementally, gradually, and out of sight. Moreover, the term is not limited to environmental degradation. It aims as well for the people deprived of resources to attain the necessary conditions for sustainable living – *the environmentalism of the poor*. These are the people serving as the primary victims of slow violence.⁵³

Toxic colonialism is a quite suitable practice in the definition of Nixon's concept of slow violence. If we look up the definition of toxic colonialism in Oxford's *A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation*, it is written to be: "General name for the export, usually by

⁵² Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

shipping of toxic wastes to a weaker or poorer nation.”⁵⁴ Although the definition of the term describes the practice of the trade itself, it is possible to interpret slow violence as the aftermath of the trade, which further leads to toxic drift on the environment and human and social ecological system. This takes place at the final destination of the waste cycle. The shipping of toxins represents one specific operation among the many environmental challenges affecting the most vulnerable societies and people. The practice of this trade is, thus, to be perceived as a strategically planned endeavour in the global market, making consequential repercussions towards the recipient end of the trade. The consequences of toxic waste trade encountered by poorer nations are, therefore, where violence takes place.

Continuing on the note of toxic waste trade as a strategical system of violence, the sociologist Johan Galtung’s theory on structural violence is relevant to examine, which is closely linked to Nixon’s term. In both concepts, the definition and meaning of violence stand at the core and is performed silently. However, the question of how silent violence occurs has a difference. For Galtung, structural violence does not show and is hence invisible. Structural violence is undetectable and is perceived as static occurrences in the surroundings of the society.⁵⁵ It is, thus, performed by the structures of society. For Nixon, the violence is gradual and is a part of the movements in the society.⁵⁶ Time is a key element for understanding slow violence and *shows*, therefore, the changes and movements of violence.⁵⁷ In terms of toxic colonialism, the violence is possible to detect in terms of environmental degradation, physical and psychological costs of animals and human health. The aftermath of the toxic waste trade is, therefore, compatible with the meaning of slow violence. Although some consequences of toxic drift may not be visible or hard to validate, which may be due to a lack of studies and research, toxic colonialism does not fully share the same perception of violence as structural violence.⁵⁸ In contrast to Galtung’s dichotomy, toxic colonialism can be traced through time, changes and movements.⁵⁹ Slow violence is in this sense encompassing a larger scope of violence, which makes toxic colonialism to be more applicable.

⁵⁴ Chris Park, Michael Allaby, *A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 437.

⁵⁵ Johan Galtung, “Violence, and Peace Research”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, no. 3 (1969) 173.

⁵⁶ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Liam Downey, Marieke Van Willigen, “Environmental Stressors: The Mental Health Impacts of Living Near Industrial Activity”, *Journal of health and social behavior*, 46, no. 3 (2005) 289.

⁵⁹ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 11.

Structural violence is by Galtung identified as equivalent to *social injustice*.⁶⁰ The key ingredient creating this form of violence is, therefore, inequality, rooted in an unequal power distribution.⁶¹ This perception is also shared by Nixon. The asymmetrical structure of power is the vehicles for structural violence to eventuate.⁶² An example that is highlighted by Nixon to be applicable to these structures is the neoliberal economic and political order which shares a system of mechanism that favours the strongest actors and increases the gap between poor and rich.⁶³ A specific case in the history was the debt crisis of developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s, where the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's involvement created requirements and policies for nations in weaker positions to be encompassed to a larger extent in a neoliberal global market. The structures of debt and policies created a systematic burden for the developing nations.⁶⁴ This caused an impediment to socio-economic development, which is a principal element that aligns with both terms of violence and is also central to how the practice of toxic colonialism could develop.⁶⁵ This will be presented further in the next chapter. Nonetheless, structural violence does not result from actors' direct operations or endeavours. The actors are in structural violence absent as violence is formed by the society's structures or institutions. The term is, therefore, also known as institutional violence.⁶⁶ This is where toxic colonialism differs. The unequal power distribution is used by the actors between export and import of waste, incorporated in an uneven world order based on economic differences. Holding power are the richer countries exporting, whereas poorer importer of toxic waste becomes the target exposed for violence. The unequal power structure of society is, however, a necessity for toxic colonialism to develop. However, actors cannot be eliminated from tracing the cause of violence. This perception is also shared by the meaning of slow violence.⁶⁷ Additionally, as presented above, the out of sight, out of mind mentality presents a human logic for why waste is shipped to other nations, a mentality by humans and, hence, by actors. Toxic colonialism may, therefore, be recognised as a human strategically endeavour formed by the structures of societies, however, launched by actors.

⁶⁰ Galtung, *Violence, and Peace Research*, 171.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶³ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 10.

⁶⁴ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 11; Kalim Siddiqui, "Developing Countries' Experience with Neoliberalism and Globalisation", *Research in Applied Economics*, 4, no. 4 (2012) 15.

⁶⁵ Bruce Rich. *Mortgaging the Earth: The World Bank, Environmental Impoverishment, and the Crisis of Development*. (Washington: Island Press, 2000) 8.

⁶⁶ Galtung, *Violence, and Peace Research*, 187; Johan Galtung, *The specific Contribution of Peace Research to the Study of Violence: typologies* (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo. Professoratet i konflikt- og fredsforskning, nr.:30, 1975) 5.

⁶⁷ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 11.

In terms of structural violence, exploitation is to be avoided in the interpretations of the term, as it is too representative for the political environment.⁶⁸ For toxic colonialism, on the other hand, exploitation is an unavoidable correlation, as colonialism presents a different but yet systematic structure of violence, *including* exploitation, dominance and control. These elements are centred closely in the practice of waste trade in terms of targeting victims, and it emerges through political matters. The origin of the phrase toxic colonialism has even been created in a political framework, as it was developed by Greenpeace International's Toxic Director Jim Puckett. The organisation was an active advocate for a total ban of toxic trade between industrialised and less-industrialised countries in the years after the Basel Convention of 1989.⁶⁹ In similarity with slow violence, the political dimension cannot be excluded when analysing the topic of toxic colonialism. The political dimension presents a crucial element for its uprising, operation and repercussion. Although there are several kindred traits between structural violence and toxic colonialism, Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence is to be found as the term encompassing the practice of shipping toxic waste from richer to poorer nations. However, in contrast to slow violence, the incorporation of the term colonialism provides for historical structures to be consolidated to the meaning of these waste violations.

COLONIALISM'S STRUCTURE OF VIOLENCE

As toxic colonialism integrates the term colonialism with toxic waste trade, it automatically presents a historical dimension. The question to ask is what is meant by colonialism in this regard. From the term colonialism, it is possible to draw from the historical dichotomy of continuity and change in order to elucidate its correlation with the toxic waste trade. Colonialism can be used to understand the creation of an unequal world order which prolongs into the period of toxic waste trade in the 80s and 90s. It can be interpreted in the way that the historical structures of imperialism have established the power distribution between nations when trading waste. As we see toxic waste trade leading to slow violence, a creation of a target becomes a reality, with the importer as the victim. What is actually meant by targeting is the strategically selected objective that will provide the exporter economic or political benefits. By elucidating the historical structures of colonialism, the dynamics of a world order may highlight the development of a target through its continuance and persistence of policies and operations. Colonialism itself is an abstract and much-debated topic, which goes beyond the scope of this

⁶⁸ Galtung, *Violence, and Peace Research*, 171.

⁶⁹ Charles W. Schmidt, "Trading Trash: Why the U.S. Won't Sign on to the Basel Convention" *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 107, No. 8, (1999) A412.

thesis, whereas I shall not enter the academic discussions much. However, as modernisation attracts advanced and innovative practices relating to colonialism, the concept remains dynamic and actual. Hence, toxic colonialism brings a new dimension under the rubric of colonialism. History may further serve as a fundament for its conceptualisation. Toxic and hazardous waste trade proposes, therefore, a new way for the imperialistic structures and colonisation processes to be revitalised, even in a postcolonial period.

As mentioned in the concept of colonialism, the terms exploitation, dominance and control are principal elements. The history of colonialism has often been structured in the framework of political struggles, accelerating the inequalities in an uneven world.⁷⁰ The pursuit and quest of colonialism have, therefore, by postcolonial thinkers often been correlated to political structures.⁷¹ The philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre is of a similar opinion, however, emphasising that the concept of colonialism is not exclusively a political matter. It is an abstract concept and presents numerous traits in different cases. The level of it is driven politically, economically or socially varies. It is, furthermore, not something that takes place by coincidence, nor the result of continuous individual actions even though triggered by the same motives as colonialism. Colonialism is first and foremost a system intentionally driven by systematic forces of exploitation and dominance. To emphasise, it needs to be performed deliberately and systematically for it to be present.⁷² It is a system that constitutes the endeavour for political, economic and social exploitation, which is further a pillar for capitalism to succeed and which creates a dependency between the exploiter and the exploited.⁷³ An appropriate question to raise further is how toxic colonialism is to be regarded as a colonial system. Firstly, toxic colonialism can be interpreted as it is not referring to the individual actors that are shipping toxic wastes. It takes a step back and overlooks it from a holistic perspective. It takes into account the principal elements of mentality, policies, capitalistic drive and ideology of its operation. This is what further creates the system and mechanism for exploitation, dominance, control and lastly, violence to occur. Secondly, toxic colonialism does not appear by itself. There are actors that deliberately take the practice into force, which for toxic and hazardous waste trade has led to a call for international regulations and control in order to restrain its undertakings. Toxic

⁷⁰ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005) 232, 236.

⁷¹ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 16.

⁷² Jean-Paul Sartre, "Colonialism is a System", *Interventions*, 3, no.1 (2001) 128.

⁷³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2001) 30-31; Mark Boyle, Audrey Kobayashi, "Metropolitan anxieties: a critical appraisal of Sartre's theory of colonialism", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36, no. 3 (2011) 413.

colonialism presents through this, patterns of a colonial system to appear in the toxic waste trade of the 1980s and 1990s and a continuance of systemic exploitation.

Another pertinent view portrayed by Sartre in regard to toxic colonialism is the inevitable rise of anti-colonial forces. This perception is built on the idea that violence creates colonialism and conversely. The process of colonialism was accomplished through dominance and exploitation, however, with the force of violence and also maintained by violence. Sartre stated that ‘Colonialism denies *human rights* to people it has subjugated by violence, and whom it keeps poverty and ignorance by force, therefore, as Marx would say, in a state of “sub-humanity”’.⁷⁴ This violence is seen as the restrictions encountered by the colonised, of which the element of freedom arises.⁷⁵ Frantz Fanon described this view in a similar sense: “The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence”.⁷⁶ Violence is, thus, a fundamental and necessary element when understanding the development of anti-colonial movements. The term toxic colonialism represents a momentum of the parties opposing toxic waste trade between developed and developing nations. The rise of resistance of the practice validates a movement of a resisting force, including poorer nations subjected to the practice. It is a resistance to protect their country, people and independence, which develops from the violence encountered by the targeted victims.

Digging up the roots of the creation of the targets and victims, the age of High Imperialism is an opening gambit. The period which dates from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, is characterised by a driving expansion of the Western European colonisation where the link between imperialism and capitalism became forceful and a prime ambition. It became what is also known as capitalist imperialism.⁷⁷ The already dominant western powers sought beyond the domestic borders to enlarge the economic profit, which through industrial capitalism, accelerated the process. The rise of the new imperialism paved the way for a world system, expanding the gaps between consumers and producers, the Occidental colonisers and the colonised. Notably, the capitalist system in the earlier stages of imperialism was driven by liberal capitalism, however with the increased export of capital in the global market, aiming for dominance, the free capitalist competition transformed towards a capitalist monopoly in the

⁷⁴ Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, 21.

⁷⁵ Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, 82, 86; Neil Roberts, “Fanon, Sartre, Violence, and Freedom”, *International*, 10, no. 2 (2004) 143-144.

⁷⁶ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1963) 86.

⁷⁷ Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, (Sydney: Resistance Books, 1999) 14, 91.

new imperialistic era.⁷⁸ In *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Vladimir Lenin emphasises the export of capital as the factors for rearranging a world division among monopolist capitalist associations.⁷⁹ He continues by emphasising the process of monopoly as the creator of a higher system of capitalism, whereas “...imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism.”⁸⁰

While elucidating the era of High Imperialism as a cornerstone for the world project on political, economic, social and territorial division, historian Mike Davis’ *Late Victorian Holocaust: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (2002) is a focal contribution to the objectives. Davis raises elemental questions about not only the making of the third world but also the making of a modern world. His notions on the “modern world system”, gives reflections on how “third world” citizens forcibly embodied in the process of dominant western economic and political processes became victimised.⁸¹ Although the main topics addressed are in regard to famine, epidemiology and demography, the narrative is applicable to understanding the targets of toxic colonialism. It is the correlation of the Victorian history setting the stage for the presence and future, the legacy and furtherance of the imperialistic structures, that are to be found in the context of toxic and hazardous waste trade.⁸² For Davis, it is the colonised enforced in economic and political systems that encountered the severe consequences of famine. Through the capitalist modernisation in the High Imperialist era, the link between ecology and imperialism becomes more visible than ever.

For Davis, this link between the environment and the imperialistic structures is what can be labelled *political ecology*. It is the perspectives of ecological history structured in Marxist political-economic notions.⁸³ In terms of toxic colonialism, this term can be forwarded. Within political ecology, we see a making of the vulnerable. There are clear indicators and traces of an increasing ecological impact on the communities that underwent direct colonial restructuring, becoming more vulnerable to environmental crises. In other words, it is the forcefully implementation of their production to enter the global economy.⁸⁴ Within toxic colonialism, the

⁷⁸ Lenin, *Imperialism*, 91.

⁷⁹ Lenin, *Imperialism*, 75.

⁸⁰ Lenin, *Imperialism*, 91.

⁸¹ Davis, *Late Victorian Holocaust*, 9.

⁸² James Epstein, “Late Victorian Holocaust: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World: Article view”, *Victorian Studies: an interdisciplinary journal of social, political, and cultural studies*, 45, no. 3 (2003) 530.

⁸³ Davis, *Late Victorian Holocaust*, 15.

⁸⁴ Davis, *Late Victorian Holocaust*, 288.

persistence of imperialistic economic and political structures gives an extension of how external forces creates a perpetuation of the vulnerable societies. When toxic waste is sent to poorer nations, its impact on the environment and the local population's health construct a cycle of poverty. The inadequate capacity for handling waste, leading to waste mismanagement, forces forward the question of who to be responsible. Nonetheless, poorer nations have continued to be a target in other aspects, such as famines, war and international economic crisis, which are factors where these nations are already trapped in the global economy and where the means to survive is deposited. These are all three factors that often can be traced in their own path to the imperialistic structures. Nonetheless, with awareness of knowing the poorer nations need for foreign exchange as the global market after the high imperialist era was inevitable, the developing countries remained a target for where the violence of waste occurred, silently and slowly.

CHAPTER FINDINGS

In this chapter, I have firstly highlighted the dynamics and cycle of waste. The point is to show the comprehensive tale waste provides, especially in the modern and contemporary history. From when waste is produced and until it leaves the ports of industrial nations, it enters a systematic process. The societies' legal, political, social and economic structures have, especially since the 1970s, paved the way for waste shipment to be one of the most effective solutions to handle waste in industrial societies. From this, we have highlighted how waste shipment from wealthier nations is developed by the out of sight, out of mind mentality.

From when waste is shipped, it serves the potential to exert violence. In terms of toxic colonialism, we have highlighted the meaning of violence that waste precipitates. It is a violence that develops through time, from when it arrives at the destination of a poorer country that does not have the capacity or capability to handle hazardous wastes. The violence that affects the environment and human health is most often slow and gradual, and hence, slow violence. The concept of slow violence is applicable to what colonialism presents. It enters the structures of exploitation, violence and dominance in the global world order.

From the concept of colonialism, we have not just drawn from its definition but also from the history of the old colonialism and imperialism. We have also highlighted the connection between imperialism and ecology. It has shown how its structure persisted into the postcolonial period through the toxic waste trade. Toxic colonialism is, therefore, to be perceived as a new

form of colonialism, which carried on the historical systems and structures of the old colonialism.

Chapter Three

Resisting a Waste Invasion

The transfrontier movements of toxic and hazardous waste have developed into a billion-dollar business. When poorer nations often in the Global South situated in a weaker position in the global economic market, they became the prime target for the solution of getting the waste out of sight. When the historical lines have heretofore created the avenues for where the target was, globalisation processes found their way to actually use these trade routes. In the 1980s, the shipment of waste from industrialised nations was to be witnessed in almost all corners of the globe's developing regions.⁸⁵ Several specific cases were revealed to the public. There are two incidents that are worth mentioning, which reached international headlines in the 80s. The first is the incident and garbage bargain of the cargo ship *Khian Sea* in 1986. The ship was loaded with 14,000 tons of incinerated household garbage, predominantly consisting of ash from Pennsylvania. Previously, the state had a deal to send the ash to New Jersey. However, from 1984, New Jersey had to restrict import themselves, as they struggled to manage local waste increased. The cargo of the *Khian Sea* was originally shipped to the Bahamas; however, the country refused the cargo to unload. The ship continued further to search for a new destination for more than a year. Finally, 4000 tons of the waste was dumped on a beach in Haiti as they said it was fertiliser. However, the government of Haiti was informed by Greenpeace of the wastes' origin and ordered it to be re-loaded off the beach, but the *Khian Sea* had already sailed away. For the rest of the 10,000 tons of ash, with several nations rejecting the waste, including the Philippines, it was dumped at sea in 1988. The Koko incident shared a similar destiny of rejection where 3,884 tons of toxic waste was sent from Italy between 1987 and 1988 with the destination to Koko in Nigeria.⁸⁶ The toxic substances were originally labelled as building materials.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, as locals in Koko were getting ill after the waste arrived, an investigation began. It was revealed that the cargo was toxic waste, including "X-ray waste, methyl melamine produced by Dana Cyanamid of Norway, dimethyl and ethyl acetate

⁸⁵ Jennifer Clapp, "The Toxic Trade with Less-Industrialised Countries: economic linkages and political alliances", *Third World Quarterly*, 15, no. 3 (1994) 506.

⁸⁶ Oluwafemi Alexander Ladapo, "The Contribution of Cartoonists to the Environmental Debates in Nigeria", *Rachel Carson Center: Perspectives*, in *Eco-Images Historical Views and Political Strategies*, no.1 (2013) 61.

⁸⁷ Sylvia F. Liu, "The Koko Incident", *Journal of Natural Resources & Environment Law*, 8, no. 1 (1992), 136.

formaldehyde from multiple Italian manufactures”.⁸⁸ The tale goes on with the hazardous substances being sent back to Italy in 1988, after several failed attempts to find new destinations for the waste in Europe. Both incidents, and several more, collectively created public awareness and led to consequences of restrictions and bans on all levels, from local to international regulations and legislations. It has through these incidents, and the stream of waste corroborated a demand for international cooperation on regulations.

The business of trading waste presents an intricate process that entangles economic, political and social aspects, which has intensified the gaps of socioeconomic inequalities on a world scale. Through the practice of trading toxic waste in the 1980s, there has been a growing understanding of the correlations of trade, development and environment, leading the way for a change of directions in its interpretations. This chapter will first examine the growing environmental awareness and the focus leading to what eventually would be known as *environmental justice*, which further led to international regulations. These elements provide a crucial landmark on how the perceptions of toxic and hazardous waste trade altered, with an increasing focus on the targets and victims exposed for slow violence. Although imperialism was not the main topic whilst the ongoing international discussions in the 80s, the role of trade and the free-market ideology was a then-contemporary matter. It is, however, important to bear in mind the already discussed imperialistic forces on the trade when examining the awareness of the second half of the twentieth century, as it presents a fundament in the structures of the dynamics between the nations in these trades.

RISING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

“It is not my contention that chemical insecticides must never be used. I do contend that we have put poisonous and biologically potent chemicals indiscriminately into the hands of persons largely or wholly ignorant of their potentials for harm. We have subjected enormous numbers of people to contact with these poisons, without their consent and often without their knowledge.”⁸⁹

- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1962

Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* was a great contribution to environmental literature, published in 1962, which has been regarded as revolutionary. The book has been seen as the source for

⁸⁸ Ladapo, “The Contribution of Cartoonists to the Environmental Debates in Nigeria”, 61.

⁸⁹ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 50th Anniversary Edition, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002), 12.

when the word *environment* became widespread and often used from the vocabulary and the perceptions of it. It is even regarded as one of the main contributions to grassroots environmental movements in the second half of the twentieth century. Carson presents a powerful picture of the threats posed by toxic and poison and includes its process of being violently dangerous in a slow and silent way. She questioned the dominant structures of society and the human's impact on the world's nature and environment, the human ecology. Although she did not emphasise the role of imperialistic dominance, class or race, she uncovered for the vulnerable and targeted.⁹⁰ Carson called for the lack of research, awareness and attention of the toxin's threats and emphasised how economic gains overruled these much-needed elements for the general public, the citizens affected, to achieve protection and their rights. Toxic and hazardous substances were from this point, threatening every human being in the world more than ever.⁹¹

The growing environmental awareness of non-state actors had been quite operative since the 1960s and showed even a pre-war visibility.⁹² In the 1960s, in the scene of the Cold War, environmental organisations, especially in western countries, shared a concern about pollution, more specifically, the testing of nuclear weapons and how it could potentially be damaging towards human health and had especially a focus on protecting their children's health. From this, the environmental movement grew parallel with the movements for peace. This became a driving force for environmental organisations to emerge, such as Greenpeace in 1970 in Canada. The organisation found its inspiration and motive from the nuclear testing in Alaska and grew rapidly with their agenda already through their first years.⁹³ Their activity provides not only for raising the publics' voices but also for the pressure on governments to take action and for environmentalism to expand.

When entering a new decade, the environmental movement developed new directions. The 1970s became the beginning of correlating environmentalism with cultural diversity.⁹⁴ It was a question about the link between developmentalism of the less developed economies and environmentalism and its compatibleness. When nations became more developed and

⁹⁰ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, xi.

⁹¹ Carson, *Silent Spring*, 12 - 13.

⁹² Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002) 57.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

industrialised, they would experience more of the environmental challenges industrialised nations already had encountered.⁹⁵ The aim of developmentalism in the 1970s was primarily to bring economic growth and further industrialisation development among poorer nations.⁹⁶ However, it did not reflect sustainable development. This was also the case for the Philippines, as highlighted in the introduction, which became more industrialised from the 1950s, forcing new challenges of how to manage waste of domestic production.⁹⁷ However, countries like the Philippines would still hold the position as less advanced compared to countries of the global North and be the destination terminal for “exporting dirty air”.⁹⁸ The challenged capacity for managing environmental protection intensified and increased heavily when imported pollution continued in the 70s and 80s. At the same time, with environmental organisations growing, more research, data and information became available, disclosing the consequences and threats of these pollutions, and the exports of it entered as a concern within international affairs and for movements on opposing toxic waste trade to thrive.⁹⁹

The concerns of environmentally exploiting poorer nations continued further in the 80s. This continuance would further lead to compounding the amalgamation between racism, social justice, human rights and environmentalism.¹⁰⁰ This is what would be known as the environmental justice movement. As toxic colonialism, the environmental justice movement aims at illuminating the social and environmental inequalities between richer and poorer nations, as well as environmental injustice based on cultural diversity.¹⁰¹ However, within this movement, the focus on injustice grew, whereas inequalities functioned as the fundament. The main agenda became more extensive and comprehensive towards the right of environmental protection regardless of social, economic or racial status.¹⁰² This movement would sharpen the pressure from the public and the third sector of the international community for multilateral cooperation to take action towards environmental safeguarding, including the case of trading pollution.

⁹⁵ Ibid.,144.

⁹⁶ Immanuel Wallerstein, “After Developmentalism and Globalization, What?”, *Social Forces*, 83, no. 3 (2005), 1264-1265.

⁹⁷ Tolentino, Barabante, David, “Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines”, 123.

⁹⁸ Irye, *Global Community*, 144.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Francis O. Adeola, *Hazardous Wastes, Industrial Disaster and Environmental Health Risks:Local and Global Environmental Struggles* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 171 – 170.

¹⁰¹ Sacoby M. Wilson, “Environmental Justice Movement: A Review of History, Research, and Public Health Issues”, *Journal of Public Management & Social Policy*, 4, no. 3, (2010) 19.

¹⁰² Martin Melosi, “Environmental Justice, Political Agenda Setting, and the Myths of History”, *Journal of Policy History*, 12, no.1 (2000) 43.

AN INTERNATIONAL AGENDA ON TOXIC WASTE TRADE

In harmony with a growing environmental awareness during the 1970s, the global community's activity toward environmental protection increased significantly. The numerous cases, including water and air pollution, illuminated in media coverage enhanced this pressure for global action to emerge.¹⁰³ The proliferating of environmental NGOs in the 70s grew parallelly with the governmental awareness of the issue, impacting each other's momentum in the field. With a growing national and international community approaching environmental safeguarding, the pressure on a call for international action to take place became uncontainable. It is not difficult to interpret why regulations became part of the international agenda, but for clarity's sake, it signalled an indispensable act for controlling the stream of waste toward developing countries. This emerged from the end of the 80s. The issue of trading toxic wastes became a notion about a trade for the environment, a trade previously without proper supervision, which then became a necessity in order to protect not just the environment but also human health. It became clearer how environmental injustice intensified the gaps between the underprivileged and the advanced nations. With this perspective, the abovementioned correlation between the global economy and the environment fortifies with financial development as an accelerating force on the global ecological predicament.¹⁰⁴

Before we move into official international regulations that emerged from the end of the 80s, it is necessary to take a closer look at the financial background of the trade in its then-contemporary timeframe. The trade presents an intricated business, and to gain a fully understanding of the international community's agenda, the international economic dimension is fundamental. The trade of toxic and hazardous waste between developing and industrialised countries did not transpire in equitable circumstances. The financial state in the world division was initially from the time being asymmetrical. The 1980s recession is a central characteristic of the economic picture, which was originally rooted in the collapse of the Bretton Wood system in the 70s. The recession period led to a debt crisis among less-industrialised regions, also known as the "Third World debt crisis".¹⁰⁵ For these nations, it additionally became a decade of developmental backsliding.¹⁰⁶ Dominating the international economic community, the

¹⁰³ Akira Iriye, *Global community*, 143

¹⁰⁴ Clapp, "The toxic waste trade with less- industrialised countries, 505.; *Rich, Mortgaging the Earth*, IX.

¹⁰⁵ Rich, *Mortgaging the Earth*, 8.; Jeremy Bulow, "Cleaning Up Third World Debt without Getting Taken to the Cleaners", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 4, no.1 (1990) 40-41.

¹⁰⁶ Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), "World Economic and Social survey 2017: Reflecting on seventy years of development policy analysis", 2017, Accessed January 6th, 2021,

United States Treasury, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were centrally located on top of the hierarchy. The last two were, however, were the ones more active in the debt crisis.¹⁰⁷ The multilateral organisations' countermeasures to gain stabilisation involved primarily provisions of more loans. In return, this would entail certain policies such as increase the level of export, lower the domestic expenditures, contract trade barriers and enlarge foreign investment.¹⁰⁸ These requirements had consequential repercussions, including a drastic decline of real wages and decreasing levels and facilities from public sectors such as health care systems and education.¹⁰⁹ Developing nations, such as the Philippines and Brazil, encountered a predicament of the constraints towards a higher level trade export, which in turn led to long-term environmental repercussion on tropical forests, fishing banks and fertile land in order to attain the given conditions.¹¹⁰

The measures implemented towards the developing countries' debt crisis represent ideologically driven neoliberal economic policies. The mentioned main influencers, the United States Treasury, IMF and the World Bank, were all Washington based institutions. Their combined influence became known as the Washington-Consensus. Grounded in the objectives of stabilisation, liberalisation and privatisation, the elite consensus advanced a reform for market fundamentalism in the global economy.¹¹¹ The ideology of implementing the neoliberal policies was not just an answer to the debt crisis but to recommence the development, which would diminish the economic gaps between the world's regions.¹¹² By the 1990s, several countries implemented in the reform of the Washington Consensus had transformed their economic structures into a more neoliberal doctrine. Although the Washington Consensus, to some extent, mitigated the crisis in the way of stabilisation and reducing high inflation, the reform would paradoxically be accompanied by increasing inequalities, environmental damages and socioeconomic repercussions.¹¹³ In the appearance of an emerging neoliberal policy across the globe, the transboundary movement of toxic and hazardous waste experienced a fertile settlement to expand its business.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/WESS_2017-FullReport.pdf, 50.

¹⁰⁷ DESA, "World Economic and Social Survey 2017", 51.

¹⁰⁸ Rich, *Mortgaging the Earth*, 8; DESA, "World Economic and Social Survey 2017", 60.

¹⁰⁹ Rich, *Mortgaging the Earth*, 8.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.; Robin Broad, John Cavanagh, "The Death of the Washington Consensus?", *World Policy Journal*, 16, no. 3 (1999), 81.

¹¹¹ DESA, "World Economic and Social Survey", 62.

¹¹² Broad, Cavanagh, "The Death of the Washington Consensus?", 79.

¹¹³ Ibid., 82.

Although the international community on the issues of finance influenced developing regions toward a free enterprise economic system, the international community with the agenda for environmental protection began to observe the impact the global economy had on the environment. The United Nations' Brundtland Commission, also known as the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), submitted their observations and results from the period of operations 1984-1987.¹¹⁴ In the Brundtland Report of 1987, the correlation between the world economy and environment, especially in developing nations, was one of the cardinal points. It is necessary to stress that the report does not reject the ideology of a free market, however, it emphasised the need for easier access to the market for developing nations.¹¹⁵ The report highlights the economic growth and increasing industrial production as the factors wounding the environment and sees the necessity for industrialised nations to find a balance of both economic and environmental sustainability, emphasising a demand for less-material and energy-intensive production and rather enhance efficiency and productivity in regard to the use of material and energy.¹¹⁶ In terms of toxic wastes, the report acknowledged its significant danger to the environment, following a call for action. Although the transboundary movement as a practice impacting the development of regions in the South is not shed any light on, it is rather the Global North that is regarded as the region facing the sufferer of toxic drift, however, impacting the whole globe with their challenges.¹¹⁷

While creating the space for a neoliberal market, the international community saw concurrently a need for restraining the international toxic and hazardous waste trade. It was a paradox, which, therefore, the emergence environmental and "Third World" NGOs became crucial. The role of NGOs in enhancing awareness of toxic waste trade's impact in weaker economic regions cannot be overestimated. The mushrooming of environmental NGOs and the enhanced political goodwill on engaging in global challenges through these organisations have also been argued for being a reaction to the spread of global capitalism.¹¹⁸ As the Brundtland report uncovered, the awareness and knowledge of the risk, threats and consequences toward global change, deforestation and contamination were present, the international community, including nations governments, were, therefore, in any way not unascertained of the transgressing severe

¹¹⁴ Iris Borowy, "The Brundtland Commission: Sustainable development as health issue", *Michael*, 10, (2013), 198-199.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development", 66.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹¹⁸ Clapp, "Toxic waste trade with less-industrialised countries", 509.

environmental issues.¹¹⁹ On that account, the NGO's community experienced a delay in corrective actions and active measures from state governments. Due to this, non-state organisations became pushed to the role of advancing research, strategic analysis and monitoring the waste trade. By holding the position as the actor of specialised expertise and holding the information, they were not possible to overrule once state actors commenced their engagement in the 80s.¹²⁰ Non-governmental organisations could therefore play a key role in the strategical development and providence of recommendations, as well as a competent and strong negotiator.¹²¹ Additionally, some organisations, in particular, Greenpeace, actively pursued relations with developing nations, which would strengthen their momentum on a waste ban. From their central position, promoting the need for waste trade regulations, negotiations would eventually be pushed forward by the second half of the 80s. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was the appointed front runner to manage the negotiations on regulations on toxic waste trade.¹²² From these negotiations, the beginning of an international collaboration launched, which would lead to the Basel Convention of 1989.¹²³

The Basel Convention, initiated by UNEP, consisted of the involvement of 116 nations to partake in the discussions of controlling and regulating the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and was adopted March 22, 1989, and entered into force on May 5, 1992.¹²⁴ The conference was the first official attempt in promoting nations to take actions toward regulations of these wastes.¹²⁵ The main aims of the convention, which was constituted in several articles, was to safeguard human health and the environment from the threats following toxic waste. It is aiming especially towards recognition of developing countries' need for protection from such wastes and for nations to become responsible and accountable for these types of trade.¹²⁶ Although the convention was to be regarded as a milestone in the subject of restraining toxic waste trade, its product contained several flaws and ambiguities, including the absence of functionally regulate a decrease of waste generation in industrialised countries,

¹¹⁹ United Nations, "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development", 31.

¹²⁰ Clapp, "Toxic waste trade with less-industrialised countries", 509.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 510.

¹²³ Valentina O. Okaru, "The Basel Convention; Controlling the Movement of Hazardous Wastes to Developing Countries", *Fordham Environmental Law Review*, 4, no. 2 (2011) 137.

¹²⁴ Basel Action Network, IPEN. "The Entry into Force of the Basel Ban Amendment: A Guide to Implications and Next Steps." January 2020. Accessed February 10th, 2020. https://ipen.org/sites/default/files/documents/ban-basel-fact-sheet-v2_1-en.pdf, 3.

¹²⁵ Okaru, "Basel Convention", 143.

¹²⁶ The United Nations, "Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposals", 4.

deficiency of strategic and technically develop export controls and lack of enhancing environmental apprehension in developing countries.¹²⁷ Several actors continued, therefore, to challenge the interpretations of the treaty, of which the recycling industry was central in terms of avoiding the restrictions set by the Basel Convention. The recycling industry, a then relatively new concept, found a gap in the convention. Recycling waste was included in the treaty; however, objects for recycling could avoid the label of “waste for recycling”.¹²⁸ For instance, used batteries may not necessarily be regarded as waste, as they can still be used, or parts of it. However, when arriving at the destination point, the deconstruction of it may result in a recycling process in order to detach selected parts, which additionally further creates hazardous waste of which cannot be recycled or managed sufficiently. From cases like this, the Basel Convention did not succeed in restraining the transboundary movements of toxic waste. Rather the processes of the trade became more advanced.

Parties of the Basel Convention experienced that the original treaty was not sufficient enough and that a ban on exporting toxic and hazardous wastes to developing nations was indispensable. This was argued by several nations and environmental NGOs, which was a prolonged effort continuing for almost two decades.¹²⁹ The Basel Convention of 1989 was, however, a crucial steppingstone toward environmental justice for several stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, which further have created the space for more negotiations, collaborations and regulations to follow. The continued efforts after 1989, advocating for a Basel Ban amendment, would eventually give results. From the Second Conference of Parties, an agreement on banning hazardous waste from OECD to non-OECD countries was made. However, actors from developed countries attempted to challenge this agreement by questioning its legal status, as it was not included in the original treaty and was not ratified by the required numbers of 62 parties. This debate caused impediments for it to legally enter into force.¹³⁰ Following the prolonged struggles of restraining these trades and the inadequacy of the Basel Convention, NGOs continued their agenda. Simultaneously, new organisations developed, such as the Basel Action Network (BAN) in 1997, which was co-founded by the former Greenpeace International’s Toxics Director, Jim Puckett, and the inventor of the concept

¹²⁷ Okaru, “Basel Convention”, 162-163.

¹²⁸ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 3.

¹²⁹ Basel Action Network, IPEN. “The Entry into Force of the Basel Ban Amendment: A Guide to Implications and Next Steps.”, 4.

¹³⁰ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 3-4; Basel Action Network, IPEN, “The Entry into Force of the Basel Ban Amendment, 3-4. To note: the Basel Ban did not enter into force until 2019.

of toxic colonialism. It is through these continued efforts and circumstances that the concept was designed and through this finds its relevance to the situations.

CHAPTER FINDINGS

For toxic colonialism to be developed, the rising environmentalism and environmental justice movement were fundamental factors. In this chapter, these environmental movements have been highlighted. It has underlined the evolution of the movements from its connection to peace in the 60s and further its correlation to cultural diversity, human rights and justice in the 80s. In regard to toxic and hazardous waste trade, the actors of environmentalism have held a crucial role in enlightening the issues of the practice. Which have moved the subject to enter the international stage of which the Basel Convention of 1980 was a breakthrough. The development after the agreement of the Basel protocols proved the remarkable force of the actors lobbying for free trade on waste. It furthermore validated the strong position the structures of economic liberalisation held and how it maintained and strengthened the stronger economic nations' role in the global world order.

In a broad view, there are two main parties in the debates of the practice. It is firstly, the mentioned opposing side, the environmentalists advocating for safeguarding the environment and human health in underprivileged societies. From this point of view, the dynamics and relations between the environment and global economy were questioned. It was becoming clearer how economic growth, as well as trade liberalisation, impacted the human and ecological systems. As seen in developing countries, economic growth leading to higher energy activity and consumption has provided for challenges in how to manage waste within the frameworks of domestic environmental legislation. Trade liberalisation and globalisation, for nations still in a weaker position to encounter environmental degradation and slow violence. The counterpart of the debate were the actors supporting the liberalisation of the economy. They emphasised the necessity of liberalisation policies as a key to economic growth, which further would create the capacity to prioritise environmental safeguarding, in this case, proficient waste facilities.¹³¹ The enhanced neoliberal policies implemented in several developing countries, which in the 80s emerged through the Washington consensus, is what was mentioned in chapter one to be an example of structural violence. In the case of toxic colonialism, it serves as a prerequisite for the violence of toxic waste trade to develop. Despite the lobbyists for trade

¹³¹ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 6.

liberalisation, toxic waste trade has provided the international community with an example of a trade that needed to be restricted rather than stimulated, as the evidence of its violence has been disclosed through the international debates, negotiations, and policymaking's in the 80s and 90s.¹³² However, as presented at the beginning of the thesis, chief economist of the World Bank in 1991, Lawrence Summers ideology of the waste, illustrates how the ideological view supporting trade liberalisation were among top leaders, even after the Basel Convention of 1989.

¹³² Jen Baggs, "International Trade in Hazardous Waste" *Review of International Economics*, 17, no. 1 (2009-02-22) 1-2.

Chapter Four

A Dumping Site in the Pearl of the Orient Seas

Like all nations, the Philippines holds its own unique history. In the case of the toxic and hazardous waste trade, its history has shaped its own individual struggles, issues and occurrences in the subject. When the country experienced industrial development from the 1950s, the waste management capacity was challenged. Through globalisation and neoliberal policies, the Philippines also encountered an increasing stream of toxic waste import in the 1980s. This would intensify the pressure on the already insufficient waste management systems. On that account, the country cannot claim to be the largest importer of such wastes. However, the Philippines constitutes a comprehensive tale, that covers a representative perspective of what toxic colonialism entails and demonstrates its essence. As a formerly colonised nation by the Western powers of Spain in the period of 1565-1898 and the United States in 1898-1946 (and a short period with the Japanese occupation during the Second World War), remnants and legacies of the colonial rulers have been embedded in the nation's political and economic structures.¹³³ Additionally, the colonial powers developed crucial connections between the country and the global economy.¹³⁴ Through the centuries of colonisation, colonisers have had the opportunity to build the foundation of the country's administrative structures. Despite the decades of independence, the remnants of colonialism, Western influence in the postcolonial era often persisted. As the thesis is not about the Philippines colonial history, I will not proceed in this focus. Nevertheless, it is important to have in mind its prerequisites for the influence of the countries partaking in the toxic and hazardous waste trade. The relations and dynamics between the Philippines and the United States are especially relevant in this case. As we have highlighted toxic waste trade as a new process within colonialism, the relationship from the colonial period signifies in some ways a continuance in the historical timeline, which is essential to have in mind when analysing perspectives of the waste trade in the Philippines.

¹³³ Artemio R. Guillermo and May Kyu Win, *Historical Dictionary of the Philippines*, (United States of America: Scarecrow Press, 2005) xxiv, 6, 9, 59.

¹³⁴ Peter Krinks, *The Economy of the Philippines: Elites, inequalities and economic restructuring*, (New York: Routledge, 2004) 24.

This chapter will function as the first of two sections presenting perspectives from the Philippines. It will constitute the historical dimensions of how the Philippines became involved in the waste trade and why it was to be regarded as a target. It presents a continuance of historical elements that are leading up to a change in its history. The change, seeing it as a breakage in the perceptions of waste trade in the Philippines, will enter in the second chapter of the Philippines' perspectives. This chapter of the case will, therefore, look deeper into the Philippines' development, involvement and challenges with the waste trade and handling of toxins. It will discuss how the Philippines became a dumping site, and that slow violence was encountered. As a country on the rise from its independence, its evolution underwent a turbulent development and faced an unavoidable destiny of becoming a capitalistic product.¹³⁵ From the historical setting, we will attempt to highlight the neo-colonialism and neoliberalism aspects. The question that we seek to answer in this chapter is whether the Philippines' involvement and challenges in toxic waste trade stemmed from neoliberalist transformations and its agenda, or was it of a process of imperialism, hence toxic colonialism. Lastly, to have in mind before proceeding is that we should not exclude the idea of the theories to be interdependent nor that they amplify each other.

U.S. – PHILIPPINE RELATIONS AND THE TRANSITION FROM INTERNAL TO EXTERNAL CONTROL

From when the Philippines gained independence in 1946 and until 2000, the economic development has been described as oscillating.¹³⁶ After the country became a sovereign state, the newly established Philippine government made several assessments and transformations, both politically and economically, such as trade policies.¹³⁷ Additionally, the Philippines was left with severe damages after the Second World War, giving priority to rapidly restore production and industrialisation processes.¹³⁸ During the first decades after independence, the Philippines was amongst the strongest economies in Asia.¹³⁹ The country stood ahead with several potentials, including prospects of joining the Asian Tiger Club. However, whilst neighbouring countries exceeded and transitioned through *the Asian Miracle*, the Philippines

¹³⁵ Krinks, *The Economy of the Philippines*, 2.

¹³⁶ Florián A. Albuero, "Development dynamics in the Philippines historical perspectives: 1950 – 2010", *University of the Philippines, School of Economics (UPSE), Quezon City*, UPSE Discussion Paper, no. 14 (2015) 5.

¹³⁷ Krinks, *The Economy of the Philippines*, 33.

¹³⁸ Robert E. Baldwin, *Foreign Trade Regimes and Economic Development: The Philippines*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 1975) 1, 17.

¹³⁹ Hans Jarle Kind, "The Philippines – The Sick Man of Asia? Economic development in the Philippines after 1946", *Centre for International Economics and Shipping (SIØS)*, Working Paper, 24 (2000-05) 1.

became *the sick man of Asia*.¹⁴⁰ Following the nation's turbulent economic development, it provides for several elements contributing to an understanding of why the Philippines would partake in toxic and hazardous waste trade and hence, become a targeted nation.

Even though the Philippines gained independence from the United States, the relationship maintained strong. It might be of interest to note that the separation between the two countries was a peaceful process.¹⁴¹ After the Second World War, as part of rebuilding the country's economy, the United States implemented the Philippines Trade act of 1946, also known as the Bell Trade Act, which was passed and accepted by the Philippines only two days prior to the planned Independence Day.¹⁴² The enactment was to provide for free trade between the two of them in an eight-year period. Following the period, they would gradually pay a certain percentage of the full tariff. This agreement would last until 1973.¹⁴³ The Bell Trade Act is an applicable exemplification for illuminating the continuance of the United States economic and political influence in the Philippines. Although the trade act was opposed by many, especially the Nacionalista's party, the act became a reality, as the Philippine elite, which included the new President Manuel Roxas from the Liberal party's would support a policy for the Philippines to become more central in the global economy and pursued visions of maintaining a close relationship with the United States.¹⁴⁴ The bridgebuilding with the United States continued further. In 1947, the two countries signed the U.S.-Philippines Military Base Agreement. The agreement provided for U.S. military protection for the Philippines and demanded the U.S. to obtain military bases in the country with a free lease for 99 years.¹⁴⁵ Both agreements clearly showed that the Philippines followed policies that opened for Western influence, in particular, American influence. However, the agreements were met with several oppositional parties, as critics regarded them as unequal in the way they benefitted the United States and provided them more power.¹⁴⁶ In the post-war years, it was even stated by an American political scientist that "the United States is actually in a stronger position in the Philippines although the islands are

¹⁴⁰ Kind, "The Philippines – The Sick Man of Asia?", 2; Albuero, "Development dynamics in the Philippines historical perspective: 1950 – 2010", 5.

¹⁴¹ Krinks, *The Economy of the Philippines: Elites, inequalities and economic restructuring*, 1.

¹⁴² Baldwin, *Foreign Trade Regimes and Economic Development*, 19.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Stephen R. Shalom, "Philippine Acceptance of the Bell Trade Act of 1946: A Study of Manipulatory Democracy", *Pacific Historical Review*, 49, no 3 (1980) 501,504.

¹⁴⁵ Krinks, *The Economy of the Philippines: Elites, inequalities and economic restructuring*, 34.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen R. Shalom, *Philippine Acceptance of the Bell Trade Act of 1946*, 501; L. Eve Armentrout Ma, "Treaty or Travesty?: Legal Issues Surrounding the U.S.-Philippines Military Base Agreement of 1947-1992", *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 10, no. 1/2 (2001) 94-95.

independent now”.¹⁴⁷ Instantaneously after the independence, there was a clear line of how the U.S. managed to gain more political influence and maintain their power position in the Philippines. These policies and development between the countries suggest how neo-colonial processes were introduced and how a former ruler of the Philippines immediately took action to develop agreements in the framework of nominal independence whilst holding political and economic leverage while persisting the power dynamics from the pre-independence period.¹⁴⁸

The economic influence laid over the Philippines in the pre-war period may be viewed as seeds for neo-liberal patterns to follow, with the Philippines becoming more involved in the global economy. It is necessary to stress that the Philippines had, in the period, also implemented several controls, regulations and policies on foreign investment and import. However, the majority of trade was with the United States.¹⁴⁹ The crucial stage of the neoliberalist processes and ideologies to emerge was in correlation with the earlier mentioned debt crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. For the Philippines, it was the worst economic crisis since the Second World War.¹⁵⁰ The Washington-Consensus policies became the program enforcing a wave of neoliberal doctrines. This entered in the same period as the Marcos administration came into power in 1986. The ideological beliefs on neoliberalism spread within the administration, whereas several elite members, both intellectuals and technocrats, were strongly inspired by the neoliberal movements of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom.¹⁵¹ Neoliberalists also sought to be inspired by the neighbouring countries success in the Asian Tiger Club. They interpreted neoliberal policies as the formula to their achievements.¹⁵² From these factors, neoliberal policies would evolve in the Philippines’ political agenda.

The Philippines’ link between colonialism, especially the United States’ ruling over the country, is to be regarded as a steppingstone in the Philippines evolution in the toxic and hazardous waste trade. The power dynamics between the powers and the United States’ prolonged economic, military and political leverage over the Philippines indicate both a neo-colonial beginning and for the Philippines to later enter a struggle against a neo-liberal agenda. The

¹⁴⁷ Stephen R. Shalom, “Philippine Acceptance of the Bell Trade Act of 1946”, 500.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 502.

¹⁴⁹ Krinks, *The Economy of the Philippines*, 34-35.

¹⁵⁰ Bello, “Neoliberalism as Hegemonic Ideology in the Philippines”, 10.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 11.

economic influence of financial liberalisation of the Philippines was, on the one hand, a struggle for the country to respond to, as an intensified and inevitable aspect in the modern globalised era. The fundamentalistic capitalistic marked overrules and dominates the global economy. Nonetheless, the liberalist policies and ideology grounded in the Philippines' economic and political structures became the beginning of becoming a target in the subject of toxic waste trade, sharpened.

WASTE MISMANAGEMENT AND SLOW VIOLENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Considering the financial crisis the Philippines experienced in the 70s and 80s, their political and economic position in the global market remained weak. Following that account, the Philippines was an ultimate destination for waste disposal for other nations holding a stronger economic status. However, being a target is not only defined by their global position. It entails as well, the country's capacity to handle the waste domestically. What signifies the Philippines' case is what we will take a deeper look into in this part. Exactly why the Philippine's as a dumping site was problematic in regard to slow violence of nature and humans were due to their inefficient capacity on waste management and the repercussion because of mismanagement.

To acquire specific data on the import of toxic waste to the Philippines prior to the Basel Convention of 1989 is almost impossible for several reasons. First of all, the Philippines did not have the means or organisational systems to control and monitor the import of waste.¹⁵³ Secondly, there are plenty of cases of toxic waste that has been traded illegally, meaning, for instance, that the government of the Philippines has rejected the waste, but the toxins have entered the country anyway. These cases have often not been uncovered. Some cases which have been investigated by Greenpeace have ended with the label "status unclear," with the questions remaining if the waste was rejected and not shipped or rejected and shipped. For instance, the American company Recycled Energy Inc. organised an export of sewage sludge to Bohol, Philippines, in 1988. The waste, however, was labelled as solid fuel. Another case of status unclear was the planned shipment from Ricoh Electronics with toxic waste in 1987, in which the United States Environmental Agency (US EPA) recorded the planned transfer of waste. However, later in 1987, the Philippines banned toxic and hazardous waste from the

¹⁵³ Tolentino, Brabante, David, "Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines", 123.

California based company. Both cases' status of arrival remained labelled as uncertain by Greenpeace.¹⁵⁴

Greenpeace International, which had a central role in investigating the transboundary waste movement, began officially with a global campaign on toxic trade in 1994, including cases of the Philippines.¹⁵⁵ The organisation also had a prominent role in advocating for the Basel Ban Amendment in the early 90s. Along with the increasing international awareness in the 80s, this intensified the research focus and to acquire more material and data on the transboundary movements of waste. Although the 80s has been regarded as the decade toxic and hazardous waste trade issues peaked, data from the 90s will still be relevant in order to get an idea of the scope of waste trade in the Philippines. The Basel Convention was approved by the Philippine Congress in 1993 and entered into force in 1994. Despite a multilateral agreement on the treaty, it has been regarded even right after it was signed as not efficient enough, which these cases also will signify. The main aim of elucidating these cases and the challenges of them are, however, to understand why the Philippines is to be regarded as a victim and how the toxic waste trade symbolises slow violence.

A significant amount of waste-type that was imported to the Philippines was lead-acid batteries.¹⁵⁶ Between 1991 and 1996, seventy-six thousand metric tons were imported from countries including Saudi Arabia, Australia, Singapore, Canada, United States, Germany and United Kingdom.¹⁵⁷ It is worthwhile to mention that some nations, such as Singapore, operated as connection points for waste to be in transit, meaning that import from Singapore originated from elsewhere.¹⁵⁸ In a press conference held in Quezon City in 1991 by Greenpeace, a Filipino campaigner for Southeast Asia Toxic Waste, Von Hernandez stated, "*We found that the Philippines has emerged as one of the favourite global destinations for scrap lead acid*

¹⁵⁴ United States. Congress House. Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Materials, *Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Materials of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives, One Hundred First Congress, First Session, on H.R. 2525*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989) 224, 229.

¹⁵⁵ Mitch Rosal, "Greenpeace Southeast Asia: How we began", *Greenpeace*, 25 November 2010. Accessed February 11th, 2021. https://www.greenpeace.org/southeastasia/story/848/greenpeace-southeast-asia-how-we-began/?fbclid=IwAR161sLwI3xcX30MkKMNsBoswxbeyk-39_yjHaXH_vzhHjDnXL_EQYKPAMc

¹⁵⁶ Lead-acid batteries is a type of battery that uses plates made of pure lead or lead oxide for the electrodes and sulfuric acid for the electrolyte.

¹⁵⁷ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 65.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

batteries”.¹⁵⁹ Another type of waste that caused several challenges and threats to nature and human health was plastic. Although plastic has not always been regarded as toxins, it depends on the type of plastic and the country of export’s definition.¹⁶⁰ In the same year as Greenpeace’s press conference in Quezon City, it was revealed that six thousand metric tons of waste were imported to the Philippines from the U.S. A last example of toxic import to the Philippines is toxins from the chemical industry, such as ammonia and soda ash.¹⁶¹ In a report on hazardous waste management conducted by the Philippine Department of Environmental Resources in 1993, it is stated that the Philippines import of chemicals was then worth 1.5 billion dollars. Further, in the report, it was estimated that twenty metric tons of the poisonous substance of organomercury were imported to the country each year (1993). Other imported chemicals enlisted was ten metric tons of organic arsenic compounds and two-three thousand metric tons of PCB-containing fluids, an industrial compound often used in electrical equipment.¹⁶²

The main issue with these imports was grounded in the management of waste. In the Philippines, the toxic waste in the period was often handled through 1) direct discharge of dilute wash waters from the drains of industries to watercourses such as the Pasig River, 2) storage and/or burial on the industry site or the land owned or leased by the industry, 3) collection by tanker and discharge to a solid waste dumping site like the “Smokey Mountain”, 4) collection by tanker and discharge to open land, often farmlands, and 5) collection by tanker and illegal discharge to sewer or drain.¹⁶³ The mentioned methods are to be regarded as deficient in preventing risk contamination to the environment and human health.¹⁶⁴ In the 1990s, Greenpeace estimated that Philippine Recyclers Inc. (PRI) handled twenty-four thousand tons of car batteries each year. The recycling company cooperated with the American company Ramcar Batteries.¹⁶⁵ This is also an example of how the recycling industry challenged toxic

¹⁵⁹ Hernandez, Von. “Philippines: Philippines is Becoming Dumping Ground for Toxic Waste.” APArchive.com. 22.08.1996.

http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/04cc4224efcf97825e368cb6b0602b94?fbclid=IwAR3cKYVB-kSvdh1YChy6FkoXPKqC7mZLGLfSO_5ii24aIMwIH1KgRDICzZU.

¹⁶⁰ Plastic waste was in 2019 defined as toxic waste by the UN.

¹⁶¹ The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources, The Pacific Basin Consortium for Hazardous Waste Research, The World Environment Center, “The State of Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines”, 7.

¹⁶² The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources, The Pacific Basin Consortium for Hazardous Waste Research, The World Environment Center, “The State of Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines”, 9. “Smokey Mountain” is the name of a landfilled that was located in Manila. It was previously a fishing villa until the 1960s, when it became a dumping site.

¹⁶³ Tolentino, Barbante, David, “Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management in the Philippines”, 123.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Clapp, *Toxic Exports*, 65.

waste trade and management after the Basel Convention of 1989 in the Philippines. Furthermore, it was revealed by Greenpeace that the areas and citizens in the area of PRI were affected by high levels of lead in plants and in humans' blood.¹⁶⁶ This presents a specific incident of what is to be labelled as slow violence. It is environmental degradation and threats to the human health.

CHAPTER FINDINGS

The historical colonial links between the U.S. and the Philippines have provided for both neo-colonial and neoliberal patterns to develop after the archipelago gained independence. Through these structures, toxic colonialism found an environment to develop. For the waste trade in the Philippines to encompass the term, the historical connection to colonial processes is one of the foundations. The persistence of influence from the U.S. paved the way for neoliberal structures to enhance. From this setting, we can interpret neo-colonial structures as avenues for an enhanced neoliberal doctrine in the political and economic systems. Through these framings, the toxic waste trade found an environment to evolve, despite the implementation of the Basel Convention of 1989. The forces of neoliberal trading stood strongly in the position of waste trade, also in the Philippines.

The Philippines' relevance to the concept of toxic colonialism enhanced additionally through the country's state and capacity of waste management. In Metro Manila, there were four main landfills operating until 2001, Smokey Mountain, Carmona, Payatas, and San Mateo, the latter being the last to be shut down. The main reason for the landfills to be shut down was due to overreached capacity.¹⁶⁷ The continuance of flow during the 80s and 90s of toxins led to the Philippines as to be regarded as a dumping site. The inadequate management of waste provides for slow violence to be encountered. For a poorer nation, such as the Philippines, the encounters of slow violence leading to poorer air and water quality, hazardous environmental locations can be linked to environmental poverty. Vulnerable people in the society experienced through this an increased poverty when slow violence took place.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Eugenio M. Gonzales, "Waste to Assets: The Scavengers of Payatas" *Political Economy Research Institute and Centre for Science and the Environment*, no.7 (2003) 8.

Chapter Five

Noli Me Tangere

“To My Country

...I will try to reproduce your current condition faithfully, without prejudice; I will lift the veil hiding your ills, and sacrifice everything to truth, even my own pride, since, as your son, I, too, suffer your defects and shortcomings.”¹⁶⁸

- Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not), 1886

The Filipino nationalist hero Jose Rizal’s significant contribution *Noli Me Tangere*, written in 1886, was the elemental work for the growing nationalist movement in the period of Spanish colonisation. It provided for the Filipino people to acquire a united identity, pride and consciousness towards their nation. It serves as the crucial backbone of the Filipinos peoples’ culture and heritage. It provided and still provides for the fundament of the peoples’ understanding of the country’s beauty, uniqueness, potential, and need to be protected from enemies. The enemies are those who will damage the Philippine’s beauty in nature and the people’s freedom, and bring, what Rizal describes as *social cancer* to the country. *Noli Me Tangere* has found its place in the Philippine’s historical legacy and has not been forgotten.¹⁶⁹ I believe that the book still serves its purpose even in the postcolonial modern globalised world and will continue to do so in the future. The book remains a reminder of how the Philippine’s land, nature, wildlife, and their people need to be safeguarded from others, not only in terms of autocratic rule or influence from the outside but also from poisonous impacts on the environment and citizens.

For citizens to gain ownership of their own country, their needs and voices must be taken into account by its leadership. In conjunction with the international environmental awareness and rising phenomenon of environmental justice in the 1970s and 1980s, the Philippine population followed the movement from a national to international level. The increasing import of toxic and hazardous waste became one of many cases the people would raise a call for. In congruence

¹⁶⁸ Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (*Touch Me Not*), translated by Harold Augenbraum. (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 3.

¹⁶⁹ Estaban A. de Ocampo, “Dr. Jose Rizal, Father of Filipino Nationalism”, *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 3, no. 1 (1962), 50-51.

with a democratic transition, the Philippine government sought to answer the call. The toxic waste trade had illuminated the unequal and unjust dynamics between the Global South and North. The toxic waste trade had enhanced the world order and unbalance at its core. The violence of waste became a violence toward the nation and its citizen, with the exporters serving as the enemy, threatening the nation's environment and citizens. The end of the 1980s became the significant stage for when the Philippine nation would change course. To avoid any misguidances, it does not mean the Philippines would eradicate their challenges of waste trade but rather enter a chapter of new means and new directions in the struggles against the toxic waste trade.¹⁷⁰

In this final chapter, we will take a closer look at the growing awareness of the Philippine people and the nation's actions towards it. It will attempt to answer if the opposition and resistance of waste trade by the people and the government can be traced and symbolise the struggles against external neo-colonial forces or are closer linked to a neo-liberalist economic and political agenda. Further, it aims for detecting the Philippine's intention in developing a sustainable nation, as President Fidel V. Ramos, at the beginning of the 90s, intended to partake in the Tiger Club along with their neighbours; however, be the first to accomplish the structures of a *green tiger*.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, the progress and way proceeding to achieve their goal and on what ideological foundation is necessary to highlight. Although the Philippines present a long history of political turmoil, challenged by the social issues of poverty, corruption, and environmental degradation, the people sought never to settle for unjust. The nations ways of achieving progress continued into the case of toxic colonialism.¹⁷²

THE ROOTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

In 1986, the Filipino people marched along the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA). It was a revolution aiming to bring down the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos, known as the People Power Revolution.¹⁷³ This event became the beginning of a new chapter in the country's history and the beginning of democratisation. The transition to democratisation has been acknowledged as an opportunity for environmentalism to spread through the support of mass

¹⁷⁰ Environmental Management Bureau, *The Philippine environment in the eighties*, (Quezon City: Philippines, Environmental Management Bureau, 1990) iv.

¹⁷¹ Goldoftas, *The Green Tiger*, x.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, xi.

¹⁷³ Guillermo, Win, *Historical Dictionary of the Philippines*, 136.

media.¹⁷⁴ However, the development of environmentalism did not emerge simultaneously as Marcos' administration. An uprising of environmental NGOs was to be witnessed even in the period of Marcos in the 70s and 80s. The martial law implemented, opened ways for environmentalism and environmental NGOs to grow.¹⁷⁵ The environmental issues in the Philippines began slowly to surface the public attention from the end of the 1970s. The country began to drive an agenda towards confronting environmental concerns and challenges.¹⁷⁶ In 1977, the National Environmental Protection Council began to monitor and control the environmental state of the Philippines. From this, the notion of promoting sustainable development began to spread into the consciousness of the Filipino people during the 1980s. The 80s reflects a prime decade for when the nation began to take action. The determination of preserving their natural heritage and the future of their home grew as a shared concern nationally.¹⁷⁷

The environmentalist movement in the Philippines emerged in the 1970s, despite that “early on, Filipino environmentalists learned that environmental protection was not compatible with authoritarian-technocratic forms of development”.¹⁷⁸ The environmentalism is acknowledged as rooted in need, hope, and idealism. In addition, the Philippines movement of environmentalism was influenced by western beliefs and grew alongside it. However, it arose with an element especially concerning the poor. For a developing country, like the Philippines, the need for environmentalism was linked to development and, hence, economy. This was not necessarily the case in western environmentalism. The environmental movement had, therefore, a greater role in the notion of protecting vulnerable and marginalised groups of society. It was recognised that environmental degradation only profited the elite of the society and forced rather the gap between the rich and poor to enlarge.¹⁷⁹ This perception is applicable to Davis's link between imperialism and the environment. The human, social and environmental ecology was the foundation in the Philippines. Nonetheless, it can further be linked to what Davis presents as political ecology, as the environmental impact presented forms of exploitation at the cost of the poorer, benefitting the rich.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Mariah Angelique Abella, et al. “Philippine Environmental Movements”, *University of the Philippines Baguio, College of Social Sciences*, (03-2014), 8.

¹⁷⁵ Francisco A. Magno, “The Growth of Philippine Environmentalism”, *Philippine Environmental Politics*, 9, no. 1 (1993) 12.

¹⁷⁶ Environmental Management Bureau, *The Philippine environment in the eighties*, v.

¹⁷⁷ Environmental Management Bureau, *The Philippine environment in the eighties*, iv.

¹⁷⁸ Magno, “The Growth of Philippine Environmentalism”, 12.

¹⁷⁹ Goldoftas, *The Green Tiger*, 13-14.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

VISIONS OF BUILDING A GREEN TIGER, 1990-2000

*The global merchants of poison are in deep bind, as our global ecological space has diminished in a big way. Saying that there is money in poison, they are now desperately searching for spaces to dump what they themselves reject in their own backyards.*¹⁸¹

- Gani Serrano – Vice President of the Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement, 1992

With an emerging environmental consciousness, the problematic aspects of the Filipino nation to serve as the world's dumping ground was confronted. This was only one of the many issues that the Filipino government would address. From 1992-1998, Fidel V. Ramos was leading the country.¹⁸² In the beginning of his presidency, he shared his visions for his nation, as the leading country to become a “green tiger”.¹⁸³ The members of the Tiger Club had proved its success, however, with an environmental burden following. Sustainable development had, therefore, become the country's agenda. In 1996, Ramos expressed to his people in a speech:

We Filipinos do not subscribe to the “grow now, clean up later” approach of some of the countries that have industrialized ahead of us. We are cleaning up as we grow: We intend to live up to the distinction given by *Newsweek International* last May of being the world's first emerging “green tiger.”...As leaders of our country and as its loyal sons and daughters, such is the pledge we must renew on this the 100th year of the Philippine revolution of 1896 and of Rizal's martyrdom. In the solemnity of this chamber—keenly aware of the tasks laid upon our hands by our people and by our fundamental charter—let us seize this chance to give flesh and realization to our national beliefs and aspirations.¹⁸⁴

The Ramos administration did not, however, intend to restrain the neoliberal policies as a means to safeguard the environment but rather enhance the neoliberal doctrine. This was the key to achieve the entrance of the tiger club. The pressure for the Philippines to accelerate globalisation processes continued, as Ramos saw it crucial for the Philippines to partake a central role in the global market.¹⁸⁵ The period of the presidency does from these interpretations not present a national struggle of the neoliberal agenda for protecting the environmental and social ecology. This can be seen as problematic for the Philippines to halt toxic waste import,

¹⁸¹ Ruchi Anand, *International Environmental Justice: A north. South Dimension*, (New York: Routledge, 2016) 88.

¹⁸² Guillermo, Win, *Historical Dictionary of the Philippines*, 454.

¹⁸³ Goldoftas, *The Green Tiger*, X.

¹⁸⁴ Fidel, V. Ramos, Fifth State of the Nation Address, July 22, 1996, *Official Gazette*, Accessed 20th April 2021. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1996/07/22/fidel-v-ramos-fifth-state-of-the-nation-address-july-22-1996/?TSPD_101_R0=3df6a5ce3c66306a93b24bc1a0c81902qt50000000000000009045d454ffff000000000000000000000060999bb400c76acd0908ac904ed5ab2000207cff32004b0e8a19a1e4f895e39026357644a0f81d3e5df706c75e74ff9365085b731e020a2800762b547e869a123b578aea34a51161d888f59c77cb83abfdc2190294c933fb88f0d44642500c9dcd

¹⁸⁵ Bello, “Neoliberalism as Hegemonic Ideology in the Philippines: Rise, Apogee, and Crisis”, 13.

as it supported the ideology of the parties opposing the Basel Convention and the Basel Ban Amendment.

Although Ramos was clear in his speech on his neoliberal agenda, the Philippines took a central part in the 90s that aimed for regulating trade, in particular toxic waste trade. This was through the discussions of the Basel Ban. The Philippines, a signatory to the first Basel Convention of 1989, had a crucial role in the amendment, as it was one of the countries where its ratification was fundamental in order for the Ban to enter into force. The Philippines' encounters with lead-acid batteries importation for recycling were a leading case in point, in the ongoing discussions on the Ban between the environmentalists and neoliberals.¹⁸⁶ As pointed out earlier, the sections on recycling in the treaty of 1989 presented loopholes, which progressed rather the toxic waste import in countries, such as the Philippines. Central actors, both politicians and non-state actors, continued the agenda in the 1990s for international trade to be restricted.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, in correlation to the Basel Convention, the Philippines implemented the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990, also known as the RA 6969. This legislation has served as a crucial landmark for the Philippines' measures in controlling the waste streams.¹⁸⁸

Both Ramos' political agenda on preserving the environment and the nation's engagement in both national and international regulations of toxic waste trading was crucial pillars for the environmental movements in the country. The change of directions and taking an active part in protecting the environment are important landmarks when interpreting toxic colonialism in the Philippines. The need for measures to be taken implies that the country needed to be protected from external forces. In this case, the exporters of toxic wastes. That there was a need to begin with, can be drawn firstly from the overreached capacity and struggles to handle waste proficiently, the waste mismanagement. Further, it can be drawn from the historical lines of dominance and exploitation embedded in the world structures of politics and economy.

¹⁸⁶ Gutierrez, "International Environmental Justice on Hold: Revisiting the Basel Ban from a Philippine Perspective", 416-417.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Vella Atienza. "Challenges in the waste management system in the era of globalization: the case of the Philippines", in *International Trade in Recyclable and Hazardous Waste*, ed. Michikazu Kojima, Etsuyo Michida. (Massachusetts: Edgard Elgar Publishing, 2013) 93.

CHAPTER FINDINGS

In this chapter, I have highlighted the environmental movement and the Philippine nation's action in protecting and pursuing an agenda in safeguarding the environment and human health. What we can draw from both topics is that they both present a dimension of *need*. The environmental movement did not emerge based on just an environmental focus; it held as well for the unequal economic and social dimensions in the society. This includes environmentalism of the poor, environmental poverty, the social and economic consequences of environmental degradation on the vulnerable citizens. In the Philippine's government, the measures on protecting the nations from toxic waste import did as well transpire from a need. This necessity was both grounded in the visions of protecting the nations nature and the citizens. It is from these perspectives possible to draw a line to Jose Rizal's *social cancer*, which is the state of the country exposed to hostile threats. The resistance of colonialism under the Spanish colonial rule, was as much as protecting the nation as in the elements in the 1980s and 1990s from toxic colonialism. Environmentalism and environmental legislations present, therefore, a new form of resistance to the new form of colonialism. It symbolises a modern anti-colonial resistance in order to protect the nation from slow violence.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The practice of toxic and hazardous waste trade in the 1980s and 1990s present one of many challenges that contamination poses. It is a business that affects the most vulnerable and fragile groups of society. The consequences and repercussions of the trade have led to the evolution of a new concept to illustrate the practice, toxic colonialism. This concept highlights the ecological, social, economic and political inequalities between nations as the foundation for why targeting becomes a reality in the waste trade. The practice of sending waste from developed to developing nations proposes several challenges, including the risk of waste mismanagement, which increases in poorer nations where the waste management capacity and infrastructure are insufficient. It is through these circumstances that violence of waste occurs, through injuries, harm and wounding on the human health and environment. This form of violence encompasses the concept of slow violence, as it exerts silently and gradually.

The concept of toxic colonialism is inherently historical, as colonialism is included in the term. Highlighting the aspects of economic inequalities grounded in the concept of toxic colonialism, its relevance to the historical concept of colonialism enhances. This is as the structures include exploitation, dominance and violence in the global scene. The difference is that colonialism is to be seen as an old practice, whereas toxic colonialism presents a new and modern colonial process. This is where neo-colonial theories enter. The practice of toxic colonialism suggests a new method for imperialistic structures to persist. This is what we have highlighted from the case of the Philippines in regard to its power relations to the U.S. The Philippines gained independence from the U.S. in 1946. However, there are clear patterns of nominal independence as the U.S. provided for political and economic influence through specific agreements such as the Bell Trade Act of 1946.

As a consequence of the Debt Crisis in the 70s and 80s, developing nations, such as the Philippines, encountered another doctrine to influence the economic structures, neoliberalism. The supporters of neoliberalism enhanced the free market and were often the parties opposing trade waste regulations. The Philippines underwent, however, the neoliberal policies in the 80s as an agreement with the Washington based organisations, IMF and the World Bank in return

for economic assistance during the crisis. This would force the country to take a more central role in the global market and in the globalisation processes. The Philippines remained, however, weaker compared to industrialised nations in both the 80s and 90s. The country would, therefore, still hold the position as a victim of toxic colonialism and become more visible as a target through indoctrination of neoliberal policies, including privatisation, deregulation and financial liberalisation.

On the other side of the toxic waste trade discussions were the environmentalists. The supporters of restricting and pursuing an environmental agenda saw the purpose of restraining these kinds of trade. Transforming the context of environmentalism, the need to safeguard the environment and people, a resistance is to be interpreted. From the perspectives of the Philippines, we can see clear connections on how not just the environmental agenda but also the uprising of environmentalism was rooted in a need to protect the nation. The resistance we can see of toxic colonialism shares the same visions as the resistance of colonialism, where the desire to protect their nations nature and people were the crucial elements.

From these historical lines, the neo-colonial patterns are to be interpreted as pathways for neoliberal policies in the Philippines to be enhanced. However, this can also operate conversely. With neoliberal economic policies, the global market would provide the stronger and richer nations to benefit from the threats on the environment and human health caused by toxic and hazardous waste trade. The neoliberal market is to be acknowledged as a doctrine that enhanced the gap between poorer and richer states. On that note, the unbalanced power dynamics between developed and developing countries intensified, which created space for neo-colonial structures to expand. As a concluding remark, toxic and hazardous waste trade is, however, to be precepted as a practice of neo-colonial framings rather than neoliberal notions. The neoliberal economic policies enhanced rather toxic colonialism's practice, progress and development.

Toxic colonialism encompasses, as mentioned, several dimensions, including politics, economy, human rights, social justice and the environment. It is a historical concept that presents rich levels of it to be studied. It presents a persistence of colonialism, a structure of violence and ideologies of economy. This thesis has focused on the historical framings of the concept and has shown the enriched historical dimensions that follows with it and that the trading of toxic wastes from the presented historical framings is to be perceived as toxic colonialism.

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