

**CONTINUITY & CHANGE: A GENERATIONAL COMPARISON
OF THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MARTIAL LAW IN
THE PHILIPPINES (1972-1986)**

LAARNI LEE V. BANDOY

EUNICE MARINELLE PAMELA C. MECENAS

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ABSTRACT

A nation's understanding of past events has implications on its national identity since it provides a point of commonality and continuation especially for nationally significant events. For the Philippines, this would be the Martial Law Period (1972-1986). Social psychological inquiries into the representation of military dictatorship were explored through the construct of collective memories, and previous studies on the representations of history have found that they are aligned with Mannheim's theory of generational effects. The current study intended to explore the generational differences in the social representations of Martial Law in the Philippines using a structural approach to Moscovici's Social Representation Theory. Employing a mixed-method approach, this study made use of the Hierarchical Evocation Model to analyze the data collected. The findings of this study show that there is both continuity and change in the social representations of the two generational cohorts who experienced and did not experience living through the Martial Law Period. The social representations of both cohorts were grounded on concepts like politics, power, and social values such as human rights and freedom. One difference was how their social representations of the Martial Law Period were structured since the younger cohort lacked a central core, indicating a gradual change of social representations of the period over time. The way the period was objectified also differed, as the older cohort mentioned a larger selection of socio-economic changes during the period, and the younger cohort mentioned concepts of democracy and the EDSA Revolution. This study supports the generational effects conceptualized by Mannheim (1952), reflects the convergence of social representations of two generations through time as observed by Montiel (2010), and may be useful in identifying the changes in the social representations of the Martial Law Period because of historical distortion.