

## The Subjection of Disability to the Subaltern in the Philippine Landscape

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**Abstract:** The impairment of persons with disabilities (PWDs) does not lie in a self-evident, physiological, natural, or biological human characteristic but rather lies in the power structures of history and society that normalize certain bodies to abnormalize others in service to the dominant state. This system of power is produced and shaped toward strategic and political ends that create an alienating exclusion to PWDs that are *agency-less*. PWDs as a minority group are evidently underscored in Philippine laws; despite this, their subjection to the subalternity remains through legislators and government agencies that downplay, if not remain blind, to the partial execution of infrastructures and healthcare policies that should have been brought to completion if its framework was motivated by the welfare of PWDs. As a result, they are robbed of their agency because of insufficient health services and ableist infrastructures; these are formulated through the societal norm of a standard body understood as an abled body. Despite the enactment of disability laws, this paper claims that the backbone of its partial materialization draws from the convenience of inaction, incorporating action into the materialization of these policies is a step outside the comfort zone of abled persons and into the reality of discrimination against PWDs that have faded into fiction. This paper will utilize Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's subaltern theory to analyze their subalternity as defined as their removal from all lines of social mobility by global, academic, economic, or political structures of power. In this, the underlying barrier of the public perception of inconvenience of any perimeter beyond ableist comfort prevents the embodiment of disability rights from theory into reality. Systems of ableism materialize in the Philippine landscape to replace the lack of full actualization of disability laws. The movement for disability inclusion demands to be situated beyond ableist convenience, its fruition must come from the recognition of the disability as one of the elucidations of the human body. This empowers engagement in disability discourses that will transform society into an environment that is inclusive of human variations.

**Keywords:** *disability, Philippines, Spivak, inaction, laws*

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### Introduction

The inequality in the disproportionate balance between persons with disabilities (PWDs) and abled bodies is analogous to the inequality in their ability to make their perspectives known to themselves and others. Disability cannot be excluded from the human experience; however, it is not included in the whole equation of what constitutes culture as a whole. More so, in the discussion of cultural representations wherein PWDs are excluded from a full share of its making, the lack of disability as the ideal human condition is treated as a positive and universal experience, whereas the experience of disability symbolizes negativity, limitations, impairment, and lack of reciprocity. Such experiences are isolated and individualized, thus denying their right to speak on their subjective reality.

Therefore, the experiences of PWDs are inseparable from the preconditions set by the society from which they belong because of the disablism and discrimination that are embedded in the social framework and the public attitudes that it associates with. Ultimately, PWDs are surrendered to the subaltern, which makes it difficult for them to incorporate their experiences in research, theories, and philosophies outside the discussions of how abled people perceive disability. The Philippine legal landscape has enacted laws such as Republic Act (R.A.) 7277: The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and the *Batas Pambansang Bilang 344: An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Disabled Persons by Requiring Certain Buildings, Institutions, Establishments and Public Utilities to install Facilities and Other Devices or Accessibility Law* to champion disability rights, however, it is yet to fully materialize into reality as accessibility to infrastructures, health and rehabilitation centers, and auxiliary services remain inadequate.

The paper will use the definition of disability as utilized in Republic Act 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons. It states that disability is (1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more psychological, physiological, or anatomical functions of an individual or activities of such individual; (2) a record of such impairment; or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment.<sup>1</sup> The laws that serve as the primary policy framework for disability inclusions are R.A. 7277 and *Batas Pambansa Bilang 344*. On one hand, R.A. 7277 states that it is the duty of the state to: (1) ensure the attainment of a barrier-free environment that will enable persons with disabilities to access public and private buildings, and features and devices that promote the mobility of persons with disabilities, (2) provide auxiliary devices and services to restore the functioning and participation of disabled people to the community, (3) provide access to quality education and opportunities to develop the skills of persons of disabilities and take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all persons with disabilities, (4) promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities to access health services at an affordable cost; ensure that the national health program provides services for prevention, early identification and intervention, and establish rehabilitation centers in the government hospitals, (5) ensure that persons with disabilities are not denied access to employment opportunities because of their impairment, persons with disabilities have equal access to employment opportunities, remuneration and benefits and promotions; and that persons with disabilities be given proper accommodations in the workplace, and (6) recognize and promote the rights of persons with disabilities to exercise their political and civil rights by being able to vote, and assemble and organize to advance their welfare and interest. It also highlights the provision for the appropriation of program implementations of respective government agencies and the penalties for the violation of the act.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, *Batas Pambansa Bilang 344* promotes the access of persons with disabilities to the physical environment in order to allow them to realize their rights as active participants in society. It provides the minimum requirements for accessibility for buildings, institutions, establishments, and public utilities for persons with disabilities through the installation of accessible features and facilities such as graphic signs. Public transportation systems in the Philippines, such as national agencies, are required to comply with the accessibility requirements for PWDs.<sup>3</sup>

The experiences of PWDs as the subaltern are alive and working through the power structures of society that will continue to be a struggle as it is not limited to social relationships but infrastructures as well. It is essential to discern cultural, economic, and political struggles through the lens of disabled

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<sup>1</sup> Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, Republic Act No. 7277 (1992).

<sup>2</sup> Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, RA 7277.

<sup>3</sup> *Batasang Pambansa Bilang 344: An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Disabled Persons by Requiring Certain Buildings, Institutions, Establishments, and Public Utilities to Install Facilities and Other Devices*, BP Blg. 344 (1982).

subalterns to attain an authentic liberation that ultimately envelopes the liberation of all. The Philippines has decreed a number of policies and laws that align with the rights of PWDs and nurture their independent agency. However, I argue that these policies advocate for the rights of disability but halt at the culmination of its full institutionalization because it becomes inconvenient, and pointing one's finger at the advocacy for disability rights causes the concept to vanish. The vibrance of the spectrum of disability depicts its conglomerate of different identities that make unjust treatment harder to resist. Therefore, using the subaltern theory of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the paper aims to address how public attitudes and the legal landscape of the Philippines inhibit PWDs from fully attaining civic agency. It argues that the lack of priority and understanding of disability in the Philippine legal landscape that protects the ideologies of abled bodies led to their sense of superiority and dehumanization, not only within themselves but also dehumanizing PWDs to inferiority through the ableist conditions that operate against them. This argument will be supported by (1) the analysis of Spivak's subaltern theory through the lens of disability, (2) the injustices that Filipino PWDs experience through the lack of actualization of disability laws as mandated by the Philippines, (3) and finally, the underlying barrier of inconvenience of any perimeter beyond ableist comfort that prevents the embodiment of disability rights from theory into reality. Power has always been in the grasp of abled people. Thus, they hold the flow of discourse that takes away the voice of disabled subalterns. Likewise, they hold the power to create opportunities to learn and engage in disability discourses that can help transform themselves and society into an environment that is inclusive of human variations.

### Analyzing Spivak's Concept of the Subaltern

The subaltern is generally understood as the marginalized group or lower classes that are alienated from society's institutions for political representation thus, they are left unheard. They are subjected to the inferior rank, may this be because of their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion. Through this, they are denied their agency because of their social rank. The term "subaltern" was first coined by Marxist philosopher and theorist Antonio Gramsci to refer to the proletariat or the working class that stands on unequal power against the dominant ruling or bourgeoisie class. It is any group or person of low status under the hegemonic domination of the bourgeoisie that denies them the right to the total share of contribution in the making of history and culture. Nothing can escape the ruling class's eyes insofar as it exists within their language of history, Gramsci refers to the ruling class's assertion that their history is considered legitimate and official, whereas the history of the subaltern is redefined, reconstructed, and rewritten in the lens of the ruling class. According to Gramsci, the history of the subaltern groups is sporadic, periodic, and disintegrated as they are subject to histories of the dominant classes.<sup>4</sup> He centered his attention around the study of the subaltern classes of consciousness and culture to ensure that they would not be left unheard instead of focusing on the historical narrative written by the state, which truly consists of the history of the ruling and dominant classes that hold power.

However, Indian feminist critic and post-colonialist theorist, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's theory on the subaltern became applicable to the expansion of disability studies as she went beyond boundaries and criticized cultural texts that the Western culture had shifted their attention away from. Since the 1970s, the term "subaltern" has been used to refer to the colonized people in Southern Asia as it analyzed their narrative, or lack thereof, in culture, history, human geography, sociology,

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<sup>4</sup> Hemangi Bhagwat and Madhavi Arekar, "On the Margins: Theorizing Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", *Ars Artium: An International Peer Reviewed-cum-Refereed Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6 (2018): 38-44, <https://vpmthane.org/jbcapp/upload/m6/30.pdf>.

anthropology, and literature. Marginalized groups such as peasants, laborers, and workers were subjected to the subaltern position. She disapproved the first place of Gramsci's assertion of the autonomy of the subaltern groups. Spivak believes that this autonomy results in the homogeneity of the subaltern group and the subaltern subjective identity.<sup>5</sup> She developed this by drawing on the life and experiences of the subaltern women that Indian history has consciously ignored and failed to recognize. Moreover, her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" analyzes the ability of subalterns to speak but focuses on whether they can be *heard*. She states that there are various influences that restrict this, such as when those who hold power in society—politicians, academics, religious leaders, or the privileged—speak for and over them. Through this, the elite take away the voice of the subaltern and replace it with their own. The word "speak" is not limited to having something to say but also to having one's message acknowledged. Moreover, any efforts made by whoever holds the dominant hand to recognize subalterns as one group or to contain a collective speech will further misrepresent their needs, again preventing the subalterns from their right to speak for themselves.

Spivak focuses her theory on the subaltern on issues of gender, specifically Indian women during colonial times, such as the ritual system of *sati* women as abdicated by the British colonial rule. The ritual of *sati* represents the extraction of the widow's identity because she exists within her husband only, deceased or not, who maintains his power beyond death. The friction between two polarities spurred through the humanist arguments of the British for individual freedom and the Hindu law that states that the woman's decision to take part in the ritual system is voluntary through the hope that she may have a happier and better incarnation. Stephen Morton, echoing Spivak's stance that Western perspectives are only justifications of colonialism, "By representing sati as a barbaric practice, the British were thus able to justify imperialism as a civilizing mission in which [...] they were rescuing Indian women from the reprehensible practices of a traditionally patriarchal society."<sup>6</sup> The West perceives their voice as critically superior to that of the subaltern—they must use their power to speak for those who cannot. In the lens of subaltern and colonial discourse, white men are not "saving brown women from brown men" but are denying their right to speak. As the development of subaltern studies progresses, it has grown to become an umbrella concept that ranges from a marginalized person or group being rendered to a subaltern position as they are being silenced. Their voices are being replaced by so-called intellectuals as they are being denied their agency and rights because of their inferior rank.

Spivak argues that the ethical problems that arise when representing others or speaking in their place, especially when it comes from a voice outside of their own space, are also a problem. This is a controversial take because representation of the subalterns is imperative to attain a better footing in society. However, she expands her argument by highlighting that an individual, specifically one with privilege, speaking from the outside space of the subaltern removes the voice of the subaltern for self-representation. Speaking from a subaltern's position in society dismisses the actual subaltern's opportunity to be heard. This problem is aggravated in the situation of PWDs when policymakers who enact laws for their rights not only speak for their needs and craft one-for-all bills that do not recognize the need for explicit provisions but do not urgently see its full actualization to reality.<sup>7</sup> Disabled people occupy the space of intersectional minorities by virtue of being doubly disadvantaged

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<sup>5</sup> El Habib Louai, "Retracing the Concept of the Subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: Historical Developments and New Applications," *African Journal of History and Culture* 4 (2012): 4-8, doi: 10.5897/AJHC11.020.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chkravorty Spivak*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2002): 63.

<sup>7</sup> Cruz et al., *Philippine Disability Sector Research: An Initial Analysis of Access to Social and Public Services, Education, Work, and Employment, and Civic Participation and Governance* (Mandaluyong City: The Asia Foundation, 2022): 68.

not just as a result of their impairment but also from the ‘disabling’ experience of having their voices being left out of the politics of impairment, which must be recognized and understood within their own social dynamics.<sup>8</sup> Spivak’s work highlights the value of the humanities while also recognizing problems that affect the economically disadvantaged and marginalized.<sup>9</sup> Her theory on the subaltern fittingly identifies PWDs as subalterns who have no access to resources that fulfill their civic agency as the implementation of Philippine disability laws is left incomplete.

### Disability as the Subaltern in the Philippine Landscape

The inconvenience of implementation that is seemingly the core reason for the non-fulfillment of disability rights is geared towards ingraining the mindset that disabled people must prioritize realigning themselves and undertake life-altering adjustments with existing institutional and economic conditions to indulge the society that created and grew comfortable with ableist norms. Economic rehabilitation appeared possible only because it had been thoroughly deracinated.<sup>10</sup> It is sustained that the language of disability is overlooked in the distribution of public resources that may be an excess to some bodies but has historically and contemporarily been scarce for disabled bodies. The experiences of poverty, race, and gender are included in the assemblage of disability issues.

The claim of inconvenience is built on the discriminatory attitudes that PWDs experience in the Philippine public and private spheres that resulted in their alienation from society. These attitudinal barriers may seem to be factors that can be ignored; however, they are tangibly felt and weaponized as PWDs are forced to stay within the limitations of their homes because of shame and/or fear of judgment from people that dehumanize disability.<sup>11</sup> Derogatory attitudes toward PWDs materialize into physical barriers that block them from their right to accessibility, support, and services from infrastructures and institutions. For example, Organization of Persons with Disabilities (ODPs) expressed that service providers from Philippine institutions refuse to create a disability-inclusive environment because it is *additional work*.<sup>12</sup> The void of this recognition is filled with the derogatory notion that anything beyond the standard-abled body is additional work. The space of difference in bodies and the distinct needs they require connect to a negative perception of additional needs that are seen as unnatural and inhuman.

Disability studies and the approach to laws, infrastructures, and proposals are imperative in discerning the misalignments of the Philippine landscape that condemn PWDs as subalterns. May it be that disability is perceived as an individual anomaly, they should be identified as a minority group that has the right to live in independence, comfort, and integration. However, discrimination and the lack of action toward the rights of disability are so normalized that, occasionally, their experiences of prejudice are no longer seen with discomfort or anger that should be their drive to correct such injustices. In effect, policies are left unfulfilled, suspended, and unsigned. Without proper access to the physical environment, modes of transportation, information and communication, education, employment, health and rehabilitation, and participation in the enactment of disability rights, their agency is hindered. A disability-inclusive environment should include accessible roads, sidewalks,

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<sup>8</sup> Prayathna Kowitz, “Spivak and Rethinking the Agency of Disabled Children,” *The International Journal of Disability and Social Justice* 2, no. 1 (June 2022): 32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48676195>

<sup>9</sup> Kowitz, “Spivak and Rethinking the Agency of Disabled Children,” 33.

<sup>10</sup> J. Logan Smigles, *Queer Silence: On Disability and Rhetorical Absence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022), 15.

<sup>11</sup> Cruz et al., “*Philippine Disability Sector*,” 68.

<sup>12</sup> Cruz et al., “*Philippine Disability Sector*,” 68.

transportation, and buildings. The Department of Public Works and Highways issued the Enforcement of the Accessibility Law in 2009 to ensure that PWDs would have access to all public spaces and buildings. It provides for the inclusion of braille symbols in signs located in public places and safety routes creation of sidewalks that follow “straightforward routes with right angle turns,” installation of audible signals used for crossings that are easily recognizable from other sounds in the environment to avoid confusion and to guide persons who are blind, and use international symbols for access are used in designated routes and facilities.<sup>13</sup> Apart from these policies running short and only serving the minimum for the requirements of accessible infrastructures and facilities, despite the legal structure that has been stated for its implementation, PWDs continue to live in a disabling environment because of the consistently present narrow sidewalks that bar those using wheelchairs, the lack of tactile provision for PWDs with visual disabilities, and public roads that utilize tall and narrow overpass bridges.<sup>14</sup>

The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons should be aligned with the transportation system to fulfill the aim of the Department of Transportation’s 2014 Task Force on Accessibility which aims to provide an efficient, secure, and accessible transportation system for PWDs; however, years have already passed, and these policies are still not fully implemented. This forces PWDs to surrender to being the subaltern subject as they continue to face challenges in accessing public transport. The inability of blind and those with hearing disabilities are forced to be dependent on navigating through transport facilities which further aggravates their disability.<sup>15</sup> Forced dependency becomes the most viable option for human rights to be accessible, especially when the line becomes blurred between a right and a privilege. This is a forced dependency that PWDs unwillingly embody not to live but to survive. The barrier that causes misunderstandings and division between abled and disabled persons is the impossibility of abled people to empathized with the experiences of disablement because they have never experienced being a minority or being at the receiving end of inequalities in infrastructures,

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<sup>13</sup> Cruz et al., “*Philippine Disability Sector*,” 22.

<sup>14</sup> As stated in the Philippine Disability Sector Research of October 2021, The Department of Public Works and Highways issued Department Order No. 37, series of 2009 or the Enforcement of the Accessibility Law along National Roads that stated numerous requirements for inclusive infrastructures and facilities such as ensuring international symbols for access in designated routes and facilities, braille symbols in signs in public roads and safety routes, and tactile blocks in sidewalks and crossing vicinities for people with visual disabilities. However, members of the ODP stated that they continue to experience obstacles such as (1) narrow sidewalks which do not accompany persons using wheelchairs, (2) non-availability of tactile provision for persons with visual disabilities, (3) inaudible and often dysfunctional, stoplight signals, (4) public roads which prioritize inaccessible overpass bridges, and (5) car-centric public roads which prioritize private vehicles rather than accessible public transportation.

<sup>15</sup> Tactile paving is a combination of ridge patterns, elevated lines, bumps, and other textures that inform persons with visual disabilities if there is a change in the area. These are vital to the daily routines of PWDs as it enables them to safely maneuver through their environment especially if it is an unfamiliar one that contains potential hazards. However, commuters of persons with visual disabilities in the Philippines continue to experience obstructed sidewalks, slippery overpasses, and dangerous pedestrian crossings to be able to arrive at their place of work. According to ABS-CBN News’ series on persons with disabilities commuting in the Philippines, husband and wife, Lorna and Jerry Padilla, regularly experience difficulties in commuting from Barangay Holy Spirit to their work in Tandang Sora, Quezon City. They experience daily challenges as the former is visually disabled while the latter has low vision. Lorna Padilla relies on her husband and co-worker to be able to pass the pedestrian crossing because tactile pavings are not available on their routes to work. They encounter multiple hurdles, such as narrow sidewalks that make it difficult for them to properly walk through because of the obstruction of utility poles, parked vehicles, and litter. Their route lacked audible signals that provided no length of time to cross the streets, resulting in the Padillas being stuck in the middle of the road as they were unsure when to cross safely. They had to rely on other commuters who would give way to them upon the realization of their disability. On their way home, they encounter various overpasses that lack elevators, steep steps, and darker paths, which leads them to rely on one another more especially on days where they encounter rain to avoid slipping and stumbling.

policies, education, wealth, and civil rights. They will never fully understand the impact of a disabling environment that is used to reinforce dominance in political power, economic resources, and unregulated civil rights.

Section 19 of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons states that the Department of Health (DOH) must establish rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities. It extends to section 20, wherein it states that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) must establish auxiliary services, including rehabilitation in community-based settings and residential care centers for persons with disabilities. The DSWD Central Office has three (3) major types of programs that cater to the rehabilitation and habilitation needs of persons with disabilities, (a) community-based, (b) residential care facilities, and (3) non-residential care facilities. The community-based programs include Early Detection, Prevention, and Intervention for Disability, Auxiliary Social Services for Persons with Disabilities, and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program for Children/Persons with Disabilities. DSWD established two residential care facilities, the Elsie Gaches Village and the Accelerating Minor Opportunity for Recovery (AMOR) Village.<sup>16</sup> The AMOR village provides a 24-hour service for rehabilitation, recovery, and development for disabled and non-disabled children who were abused, abandoned, and neglected. These were established to create an environment for PWDs to become productive and independent members of society; however, the department representatives of AMOR village shared that their facilities are under-funded. There is a limit to the number of PWDs that can receive the benefits of the services. More than this, a marginal number of provinces have non-residential care facilities, which leads to an imbalance in access to services. DSWD offices have numerous and overlapping mandates that administering rehabilitation and habilitation services are not always prioritized, thus limiting the capacities and opportunities of PWDs. As such, this can be seen in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao-Ministry of Social Services and Development is currently at the initial stage of developing their Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, which is set to provide for the establishment of rehabilitation centers in all cities or municipalities still in the process.

The only fully functioning rehabilitation center for PWDs is the Cotabato Regional Center yet remains predominantly inaccessible because of the limitations in public transportation and excessive travel time. Despite BARMM-MSSD and DSWD consisting of rehabilitation programs that provide assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, canes, and hearing aids, they both recognize that there must be an increase in assistive devices and be customized to fully support PWDs to live freely and in comfort. Other rehabilitation and habilitation programs are partnered with DOH and provide support for children with disabilities such as assessment, evaluation, and physical and speech therapy. However, these are limited within Metro Manila only because hospitals in rural or less developed areas do not have the funds to implement such projects. This removes the access of PWDs in rural areas from adequate rehabilitation and habilitation services that disable them further from independence. More than this, a large population of PWDs are hesitant, if not refuse, to go to hospitals due to the additional expenses that add on top of their maintenance medication or assistive devices. The accumulated rehabilitation and habilitation projects that were left unfinished or underdeveloped, the slow progress toward institutionalizing mandates, and the apathy toward disablement slights prove the perception that abled people are not bothered or disturbed enough to use their power to be responsive towards the needs of PWDs that would have improved their quality of life. This renders the denial of the personhood of PWDs because abled people seem adamant in implementing more efficient health

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<sup>16</sup> Cruz et al., *"Philippine Disability Sector Research,"* 22.

systems. Despite the laws that have been enacted, its condition being locked at the starting point exhibits the hypocrisy of advocating for the rights of PWDs but falling short of the minimum execution because of the inconvenience and the manpower that it requires.

### **Ableist Convenience as the Barrier of Disability Rights**

Public spheres perpetuate disabling variations through the private and public voices that construct an oppressive environment. The lack of recognition of the diverse forms and inequality in the framework of disability immobilizes disabled bodies from maneuvering through the systems of oppression that shape them. Disabled bodies in the Philippines, especially those in the rural areas, have been the subject position of the subaltern because of the unfulfilled policies and the disabling infrastructures that perpetuate limitations to their agency. They are forced to surrender to the position of the subaltern as abled bodies outside of their own spaces speak on their behalf and do not emphasize the importance of reconstructing public and private spaces that are inclusive of the various contours and narratives of the body. It is problematic to sustain the continuum of violence or inadequacy in action that disabled bodies experience throughout history as the dominant power plays are controlled by people who do not recognize bodies outside of their own. Through this, they thrive off of their privilege that they do not recognize, have the power to maintain and define it as natural, beneficial, and standard to society. The Philippine government offices that are responsible for the protection of the welfare rights of Filipinos advocate for the fast implementation of these rights under the condition that it benefits the greater population and does not deviate from the standard. The justice that they define magnifies the discrimination against disabled bodies because of the lack of urgency that should take place in institutionalizing their policies. The existence of these policies is an act of resistance against ableism, but this resistance cannot be fully known unless it is acted upon with determination and the discrimination that disabled people experience is recognized.

With this, there is a rationalist conviction that all things can be understood, quantified, emancipated, liberated, or narrated. Behind every movement and objective for inclusivity is the conviction that all stones that are left unturned can be discovered and understood, and all pillars of injustices can be corrected to liberation. However, this is brushed under the rug because the undertone of this rationalist conviction is this irrational will in the language of the logic of accumulation, wherein there is no end in sight for the fight for emancipation or liberation. The rational conviction for an expansion of understanding and proliferation in the arsenal of knowledge on disability is grounded in the fight for liberation. However, this becomes overshadowed by the irrational will of the logic of accumulation wherein there is a finish line for the fight for liberation because the correction of heavily embedded discriminations in the system takes time and effort that may lead to an endless series of movements. As a result, time and effort for the disabled is additional work of inconvenience for the abled. This is the foundation of the inconvenience in actualizing disability rights in society.

The presence of these policies is an act of resistance, but it has not been fully institutionalized because of the fear that fully defining it may not succeed or it is too challenging to actualize. The creation of these mandates is for certain minorities to be “visible,” but it is utilized to complement obscure tactics and to make lack of action invisible—*creating spaces for public relations rather than the removal of subalternity*. The establishment of disability rights in the legal system of the Philippines eradicates any insinuations of ableism because the laws for disability inclusion, anti-discrimination, and accessibility are in the Constitution. However, the making of these strategies on paper is simple, and it is just as simple to refuse its actualization. The presence of these laws bares the notion that the theory of resistance is present; public spheres can advocate for the liberation movements of disability and the

assertion of their rights; however, it would be simpler if there were none because the divide between theory and its application to reality is an inconvenience. Through this comes the intersection of the logic of accumulation as the collective goal of equality stops at its lack of a definitive end. Resistance is isolated and cannot be known unless someone acts on this determination or puts himself on the margins of injustices against disability. The pressure of the logic of accumulation wherein there lacks an end in sight in the fight for disability rights is frighteningly fading into fiction or simply words on paper insofar as the disability laws remain in the limitations of a mandate on paper. The picture of resistance can be split into different images, may it be that people are afraid to fully define it because of the fear that it might not lead to success or that people refuse to define it because defining it includes action beyond comfort. It may be that these mandates that wear the face of resistance against ableist injustices cannot be fully explained, characterized, or actualized because it is fueled by another motive or logic that intends to eradicate claims of prejudice against disability. Perhaps such laws were set in stone to evade the claims of an ableist country, though the refusal to see through its materialization justifies the claims that were supposedly avoided.

## Conclusion

Disability is vibrant as it takes shape in various forms. The liberation of one aspect, such as reconstructing tall overpasses or narrow sidewalks to cater to wheelchair users, will develop more instruments of access such that the demand to involve the production of costly auxiliary devices and services that will dim the chances of an end for the fight for equality. The lack of complication is the source of motivation to say one thing and project oneself to it, but it is just as simple to retract such claims to remain within the contentment of the lack of movement. The lack of care and under theorization of disability studies produces the perception of inconvenience in additional work because the recognition of every need in the dynamism of disability is a reflection of an infinite chain of movements for disability liberation. The perceived privation of a conclusion in the fight for disability inclusion is situated on the negative connotations of additional work and inconvenience. Disability needs are perceived as additional work to the Philippine society because it fails to acknowledge bodies beyond the abled. The absence of an end in sight overturns the human right to recognize disability as a part of one of the many narratives of the body.

People with disabilities are societally known as people who are dependent on the “goodwill” of professionals, medical experts, and lawmakers to manage, if not fix, their impairments. Despite this knowledge that has bled into a societal norm, the access of disabled people to proper health, habilitation, and rehabilitation remains inadequate<sup>17</sup>. Their physical environments continue to consist of barriers from infrastructures and transportation facilities that disregard the needs of people with disabilities. These barriers interfere with the participation and enjoyment of disabled people to live independently as these incapacitate them to the subject position of the subaltern. The laws that have been discussed must be translated into action to extricate the idea of privilege hiding in sheep’s clothing of a human right. Equitable access to public spaces and health services must be provided to realize the rights of people with disabilities. However, the partial compliance of government agencies to national laws can be recognized as non-compliance altogether for the blatant disregard for the imbalance of quality of life between the abled and disabled people.<sup>18</sup> The unfinished policies and programs translate to indifference toward the injustices that are deeply rooted in the lived experiences of disabled people as these tangible hurdles are weaponized against them. Non-disabled people’s

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<sup>17</sup> Cruz et al., “*Philippine Disability Sector Research*,” 10.

<sup>18</sup> Cruz et al., “*Philippine Disability Sector Research*,” 10.

inability to understand that humanity is netted with various biological and cultural forms allows them to maintain their position of dehumanization as they fortify their power in an ableist society that serves them. It is ironic that abled people established laws to advocate for disability rights with the underlying notion to remove ableist claims and to fortify these laws only insofar as they achieve the minimum enforcement that remains within the limitation of convenience. The establishment of these laws is a national claim of resistance against ableism; however, its fragmentary actualization is also a claim that its completion is bothersome and a nuisance. Those who dictate its operation are composed of abled people who have never been on the opposite pole of prejudicial hate crimes against disability, thereby lacking the urgency to see these laws to their fruition. Such withstanding beliefs deemed fixed and immutable must be removed to recognize every subaltern disabled person in the Philippines who has little to no access to the benefits of these laws. Liberation for people with disabilities will come with friction and conflict; however, the struggle must not shrink from inconvenience. In this, it must be asserted that emancipation must not come from the liberation from the violence of ableism because this is reactive and negative. Instead, emancipation must be grounded on liberation for disability because this is a clear goal built on positivity. The existence of these laws wears the face of resistance, but true resistance must be working towards something rather than acting in response to something. Disability inclusion does not consist of freedom *from* ableist destruction but freedom *for* emancipation.

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