

Pagdududa: An Initial Inquiry into Filipinos' Experience of Doubting

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A qualitative inquiry was conducted to gain an initial understanding of Filipinos' experience of doubting and to arrive at a working definition of duda and an interim conceptual framework for studying pagdududa further. Using non-structured, in-depth interviews, six participants, 3 men and 3 women, were asked to talk about a "karanasan ng pagdududa" (experience of doubting). Participant narratives revealed thematic lines along which further investigation and inquiry can be made: the interconnected elements of the pagdududa story and juxtaposition of context and language of description. From these came a working definition of duda as a psychological condition involving uncertainty, a transitional condition that temporarily stops a person and situates him or her in between two seemingly incompatible states. Recommendations were made for studying duda further and for elucidating the duda-wellbeing link using an interim conceptual framework that views pagdududa as a basic, meaningful, experience that can be harnessed to help people achieve gains in wellbeing.

That everyone doubts, perhaps, brooks no disagreement. Uncertainty pervades daily life and with it comes doubt. Much has been said and written about a subject that evokes different thoughts and feelings. Fiction abounds with characters confounded by doubt. The priest in "The Woman Who Had Two Navels", about a young woman who wreaks havoc in the lives of those she encounters by asserting that she has two navels, expresses a particular sentiment:

that doubt is not good, that with it come fear and distrust, and that those who sow doubt are “the Devil’s fifth columnists” (Joaquin, 1961/1991).

However, doubt can also be that which life is made of. In 2007, more than 40 letters written by Mother Teresa, published in a volume entitled “*Come Be My Light*”, revealed the private life of a saint who for nearly half a century felt, keenly, an absence of God, a spiritual “dryness” and “darkness” that she likened to hell and that drove her to doubt the existence of God (Van Biema, August 23, 2007, “Mother Teresa’s Crisis of Faith”).

Closer to home, 2009’s super typhoons, Ondoy and Pepeng, shook not just houses but people’s fundamental beliefs regarding their safety. Revelations about excesses of government and military officials continue to erode Filipinos’ trust in these institutions. These can be seen as occasions for doubting for any Filipino concerned about integrity of government, truth, and the basic need for security.

Doubt is often commonly perceived as an unpleasant experience that ought to be avoided. Yet my experience as a clinical psychologist in training has often made me wonder whether our understanding of doubt is complete, whether there is another side to doubt, one that also facilitates personal growth and wellbeing. I have had opportunities to listen to painful stories about trying to build a new life from the ashes of an old one, learning new ways of being that don’t necessarily bring the same comfort as old ways.

Without my explicitly inquiring into people’s experience of doubt, this theme has nonetheless come out in my clients’ life narratives.

One of them, Mark¹, had paranoid schizophrenia, a psychotic disorder characterized by “preoccupation with one or more delusions [false beliefs] or frequent auditory hallucinations” (Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, DSM-IV-TR, 2000, p. 155). When lucid, he was a vulnerable man, artistic but socially inept, dealing with the insecurity and loneliness of schizophrenia. He would voice his doubt that he would ever establish and maintain relationships and make a life for himself outside of the recovery center. Some of his clearest insights into himself and his current condition would come when he was unsure and insecure.

On one occasion, Mark had not been taking medication since funds to replenish it were running low. Without it, he was “*sinusumpong*”, i.e. becoming

symptomatic, again, sliding into a delusional state where he believed he was a chosen one like Jesus Christ. This delusional system incorporated his fundamentalist Christian beliefs and was fueled by his need to be recognized and loved as a person. There was no breaking this delusion; no amount of reasoning could make him doubt that he was as special as the Christian messiah.

Stories like Mark's make one wonder about the relationship between doubt and wellbeing. Why was it that this man, at the height of his delusion and fractured view of reality, exhibited not doubt but certainty, displayed a distinct lack of doubt about the veracity of his beliefs? There must be more to the experience of doubt than that it is unpleasant and must be avoided.

The link between doubt and wellbeing has yet to be clearly established. There is a need to understand the beneficial and detrimental aspects of the experience of doubt and how people can be guided through this experience to achieve gains and, at least, minimize detriments in wellbeing.

However, to articulate the doubt-wellbeing link requires, first and foremost, a purposive elucidation of the concept of doubt and an equally deliberate, systematic, investigation of the experience of it. The first task, then, is to ask: How do people understand and define doubt? What other words and concepts are related to doubt? How do people experience doubt? How does this experience affect them?

The Filipino word for doubt is *duda*. Its origin is the Spanish word *dudar*. Both doubt and *dudar* are cognitive verbs that originate from the Latin *dubitare*, which means "to waver" (Doubt, thefreedictionary.com) and "to be of two minds" (Doubt, Online Etymology Dictionary). We cannot assume, therefore, that *duda* is an entirely different concept from doubt given that it derives from a foreign word that shares its origins with the English term "doubt". Rather, we assume that the word "*duda*" must have resonated well enough for Filipinos to use it to describe a particular experience of uncertainty. Such experience might share features in common with doubt even as it has been adapted to local conceptions.

Studying Filipinos' experience of doubt, then, should be made through elucidation of the concept of *duda* and the phenomenology of *pagdududa*, the experience of *duda*. This paper details the results of a first step towards such elucidation. It presents thematic lines surfaced from an initial inquiry made into

Filipinos' stories of *pagdududa*. It then makes some recommendations for investigating the *duda*-wellbeing link using an interim conceptual framework based on insight from participant narratives and the extant literature.

MEANINGS OF DOUBT

Etiologically, doubt is seen as a “state between belief and disbelief” involving “uncertainty or distrust or lack of sureness of a fact, an action, a motive, or a decision” (Doubt, askdefine.com). Its synonyms are *uncertainty*, *incertitude*, and *dubiousness*. As a verb, doubt means “to consider unlikely” and/or “to lack confidence in” (Doubt, askdefine.com). In Spanish, doubt translates to *dudar*, which as an intransitive verb means, “to hesitate” and as a transitive verb means, “to dither” or “to vascillate” (Dudar, Spanish-English Dictionary, bab.la). Denotations indicate that doubt is a cognitive condition that manifests behaviorally as *hesitation*.

The notion of doubt as a cognitive condition of being in between knowing or believing states is also reflected in philosophy and theology. Doubt is seen as a “transition between states” (De Carvalho, 1996), i.e., of belief and disbelief, truth and falsity. In philosophy, doubt is seen as a requisite to inquiry and a precondition for gaining knowledge, famously articulated by Descartes as *dubito*, methodical doubt as a “logical first” (De Carvalho, 1996) and a means by which “the self... asserts itself as truly capable of an autonomous thought” (Hoffman, 1986, p.xiii). Philosophers, and scientists, are taught to value skepticism and adopt a probing attitude that requires systematic investigation to discover the truth or falsity of a proposition.

In the Western religious literature, doubt has been discussed in relation to belief and faith. One kind of articulation pits doubt against faith: doubt is seen as mutually exclusive to faith and knowledge, since both faith and knowledge imply certainty and doubt undermines certainty (Sharpe, 1909, The Catholic Encyclopedia). Another articulation places faith and doubt side by side, with doubt viewed as an “element” of faith. Faith that denies doubt is not truly unshaken because in critical moments, the “underswell of doubt... surges up to the surface” (Tillich, 1963, online edition). Varadaraja (2004) suggested that faith and doubt have different “*shades of meaning*” and that one type of faith dominates in religion while one type of doubt dominates in science.

The foreign psychological literature on doubt is composed of disparate threads of inquiry where, apart from some studies on obsessive-compulsive disorder (see Aardema, O' Connor, Pelissier, & Lavoie, 2009), doubt has largely been defined simply as uncertainty playing out in different contexts.

Religious doubt

Perhaps the most obvious context is religion. Many studies have noted that *religious doubt* is related to less orthodoxy, lower fundamentalism and intrinsic religiousness, an inclination to apostasy, greater openness to experience, lower authoritarianism, less dogmatism, and increased complexity of religious thought (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2002).

Krause and others (1999, as cited in Hunsberger et al., 2002) found a doubt-depression association, strongest in young adults, making doubt more problematic for this age group. However, it has also been found to have positive associations, for instance, as a component of what Batson and colleagues (1993, as cited in Hunsberger et al., 2002) termed *religious quest orientation*, an open-ended, questioning approach to religion, which parallels the "doubt as an element of faith" perspective previously discussed.

Gauthier et al. (2006) found an interaction between religiosity, religious doubts, and need for cognition in influencing life satisfaction: for highly religious individuals, having doubts could be detrimental only to those who are predisposed to ponder such doubts. These findings may be limited to its Christian sample. A different picture may arise from non-Christian samples and/or less religious cultures where religious doubts may, in fact, connote mental health (Gauthier et al., 2006).

The common thread in these studies is that religious doubt, and the tendency to have such, seems tied to attitudes towards religion and also styles of responding to such doubts. Different religious traditions may also differentially influence people's attitudes toward religion and doubt in that some traditions allow greater room for doubt (Cohen, Koenig, & Meador, 2005).

The need to disavow doubt finds expression in religious fundamentalism. The term refers to diverse phenomena. It has many different faces within different cultures that share a distinctly "oppositional nature" (Caplan, 1987) that insists

on absoluteness, infallibility, and exclusivity of truth (Caplan, 1987; Woods, 2002). Hence, doubt is not valued and is considered detrimental.

Doubt in social psychology

Shifting our attention to the self, studies on self-doubt in performance and evaluative contexts, such as those by Reich and Arkin (2006) and Hermann and colleagues (2002), specify the content of self-doubt to be about one's ability, specifically whether good or bad performance can be explained by qualities internal to the person, i.e., ability, or external, i.e., the situation. This is associated with lesser self-confidence.

Self-doubt is also linked to less satisfying relationships and is one of three sources of doubt conceptualized within the broader rubric of relational uncertainty (Knobloch, 2008). Research on relational uncertainty is founded on Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), which assumes that uncertainty is an aversive state and humans are fundamentally motivated to avoid and/or reduce it (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, as cited in Knobloch, 2008). The main assumption is that people are motivated to dispel doubt in order to gain a sense of conviction that one's less-than-perfect partner is the "right" person (Murray, 1999).

Doubt and Wellbeing

Much attention has been given to the study of wellbeing, a multi-dimensional concept. Empirical and theoretical endeavors representing Western conceptions have converged around two related but distinct concepts (Keyes, Schmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). *Psychological wellbeing* (PWB) emphasizes the importance of psychological growth and optimal functioning (see Ryff, 1989a, 1989b; Keyes et al., 2002 for examples). *Subjective wellbeing* (SWB) focuses on subjective estimation of one's life based on life satisfaction and the tendency to feel positive or negative emotions, i.e., positive and negative affect (Feist et al., 1995; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Keyes et al., 2002).

Sycip, Asis, and Luna (1993), in their large-scale study of wellbeing in the Philippines, used the term *magandang buhay*, i.e., good life, since it encompassed material and non-material components of wellbeing. This study revealed that Filipinos deem spiritual and social relationships important to having a

magandang buhay (Sycip et al., 1993). An earlier multi-method investigation also showed that the interpersonal domain was deemed important to good psychological health and personality functioning (Church, Katigbak, & Castañeda, 1984-85), which are also aspects of wellbeing.

While the broader doubt-wellbeing link has yet to be deliberately studied, strands of research show that doubt can be linked to positive and negative consequences to mental health, which can be seen as an important aspect of wellbeing, and can be viewed in terms of a normal/pathological dimension. Obsessive-compulsive disorder, traditionally viewed as “*manie du doute*” or “disease of doubt” (Janet, 1903, cited in Shooka, Al-Haddad, & Raees, 1998; Aardema, O’Connor, Pelissier, & Lavoie, 2009), and paranoid behavior patterns offer a view of how doubt plays out in psychopathological conditions.

In studies viewing obsessional doubt as content of beliefs (see Tallis, 1993; Shooka, Al-Haddad, & Raees, 1998; Ghassemzadeh et al., 2002), excessive doubt is seen as hindering functionality. However, as seems to be the case with paranoid behavior patterns—such as Paranoid Schizophrenia, Delusional Disorder (Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, DSM-IV-TR, 2000), and Paranoid Personality Disorder (Personality Disorders, DSM-IV-TR, 2000)—a *lack* of doubt may also hinder functionality.

The main features are delusions, false beliefs “based on incorrect inference about external reality, not consistent with patient’s [*sic*] intelligence and cultural background, and cannot be corrected by reasoning” (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998, p. 283). The person who holds a delusion does not doubt the veracity of his or her belief. If OCD is a disorder of (excessive) doubt, pathological paranoid behavior patterns are disorders of doubtlessness.

Another way of looking at doubt and paranoid behaviors is to link doubt to distrust (see Kramer, 1998). DSM descriptions imply that doubt and distrust are the same. In a way, the paranoid person is one who does not doubt the truth of his or her beliefs but consistently, persistently, doubts others’ loyalty and motives.

Normal paranoid thoughts and behaviors are ordinary, more commonly represented in populations, benign, and situation-based. Pathological paranoid thoughts and behaviors are inflexible, rigid, and unalterable across situations (Kramer, 1998). In this sense, the doubt-wellbeing link may be viewed

conceptually as an inverted U: too little or no doubt, on one hand, and too much doubt, on the other hand, may be psychologically unhealthy and underlie some disorders.

More recently, however, studies implicating doubt in OCD have looked at it not just as a matter of belief content but as a dynamic cognitive process that separates people with OCD from non-clinical samples (Aardema et.al., 2009). Specifically, it has been observed that people with OCD seem to possess an inductive inferential style whereby they reason that unpleasant outcomes are probable based on irrelevant associations rather than factual evidence or perceived reality (Pelissier & O'Connor, 2002, cited in Simpson, Cove, Fineberg, Msetfi, & Ball, 2007). OCD samples are separated from non-OCD samples by their tendency towards inferential confusion (Aardema et.al., 2009) where imagined possibilities are given credence over perceived realities. Indeed, in Aardema, et.al.'s study, participants with OCD displayed higher levels of doubt than non-OCD participants especially after presentation of possibility-based information, i.e., what could be, rather than reality-based information, or what is.

In these studies, it was not absence of doubt per se that separated non-OCD from OCD samples. Rather, it was degree of doubt with OCD samples displaying higher levels. Furthermore, if doubt is a dynamic reasoning process, then evaluations of "normal" or "pathological" rest not simply on degree of doubt but also on appropriateness to a particular situation or context given what the person perceives vis-à-vis what he or she imagines.

MEANINGS OF DUDA

The term *duda* originated from the Spanish *dudar*, which, in turn, derived from the Latin *dubitare*. In Spanish, *duda* is the third person present tense conjugation of *dudar* and translates in English to *doubt*, *uncertainty*, and *hesitation* (Duda. Spanish-English Dictionary, bab.la).

In Tagalog, a synonym of *duda* is *alinlangan*, a word that in English means uncertainty and/or hesitation. *Mag-alinlangan* is to hesitate, to be unsure, probably to hesitate because one is uncertain. Other synonyms are *pag-aalangan* or *pag-aatubili*; *pangangamba*, which denotes apprehension; and *paghihinala* or *pagsususpetsa*, which refer to either believing that something wrong is happening

but having no proof of it or being skeptical about another's motives. While *duda* as *alinlangan* does not necessarily evoke strong negative feelings, *duda* as *pangamba* and *hinala* evoke negative emotions such as fear/anxiety and anger (Diksyunaryong Ingles-Filipino Filipino-Ingles, 2005; Tagalog Dictionary, tagalog-dictionary.com).

The local literature on *duda* can be described as scant at best. In fact, it was in a sociology dissertation on *tiwala* where *duda* merited a passing reference. In Mangubat's (2008) investigation of *tiwala* as a multi-dimensional Filipino construct, *duda* was implicated in erosion or loss of trust. Absolute trust was characterized by being "*hindi dedoso*", i.e., not having doubts about each other. *Duda* was seen as *walang tiwala*, even an active *di pagtitiwala*, and being *dedoso* or *maduda* not a good personal quality to have because it undermines good relationships.

Doubt was also implicated in a multi-method historical study of religious fundamentalism in a rural Ilocano town. Woods (2002) found that needy, marginalized residents were drawn to "the fundamentalist message" of "undaunted belief in absolute, exclusive truth" (Woods, 2002, p.168), which often left them at odds with family and friends who subscribed to more mainstream religions like Roman Catholicism and Aglipayan. As with doubt, there has been no local attempt to describe nuances of meanings of *duda* and its experience with the goal of understanding how it can be used to help people develop and function more optimally. *Duda* can be an addition to the collection of constructs used to describe Filipino experience. Elucidating *duda* can also contribute to areas of existing study like those on uncertainty and trust. Furthermore, if *duda* plays out in contexts that are important to Filipinos' wellbeing, it would be interesting to see how *pagdududa* can bring benefit or detriment to these domains.

To address the main concern of gaining an initial understanding of *duda*, a qualitative inquiry was conducted into Filipinos' *pagdududa*. The goal was to gain insight on Filipinos' understanding and experience of *duda* and use such, along with insight from the literature, to articulate an interim conceptual framework to study *pagdududa* intensively and extensively.

Studying *pagdududa* assumes that it is meaningful to the one who goes through it. Hence, it was important not to confine this initial inquiry to any one context. Even though foreign studies have focused on doubt in specific contexts, no deliberate restriction was made in this inquiry because there is little local data

and theorizing to support such restriction. Instead, the question needed to be asked: "When Filipinos talk about *duda*, what do they mean?" Put another way, when Filipinos, say, "*Nagdududa ako*," we can assume that they are referring to a particular, meaningful, experience. Exactly what that experience is and/or means needs to be described.

METHOD

Methodologies using life histories and narratives are appropriate for research undertakings that value the "world of consciousness" (Bautista, 2000) that research participants, as sources of information, inhabit. The Philippine psychological literature is replete with attempts to make use of metaphors and methods that validate particularities of Filipinos' ways of experiencing and relating. Proponents of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* have long advocated use of culturally relevant *katutubong pamamaraan*, or indigenous methods (Pe-Pua, 1982; Enriquez, 1992), including *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (de Vera, 1976), sharing stories.

Decenteceo (1997, 1999) articulated *pagdadala*, the story of burden bearing, as a useful metaphor for understanding ordinary Filipinos' experiences. Bautista (2000) used a phenomenological methodology to "detect subjective and contextual realities" and "allow configurations and themes of resiliency to emerge" (Bautista, 2000, p. 29) from the life histories of abused children (see Bautista, Roldan, & Garces-Bacsal, 2001).

Since the aim was to elicit themes from the rich ground of participants' experiences, a methodology making full use of story was employed.

Participants

Six individuals were recruited through purposive sampling. The goal was to talk to people about their experiences of doubt without assuming what it could mean and how it could play out in different participant contexts. Hence, no restrictions were imposed in terms of variables such as age and socioeconomic and educational background. The resultant sample was composed of three men and three women, 29 to 58 years old at time of interview, and all middle-class. All have university education. Three come from an academic-religious background. One participant is a professed agnostic while another was an atheist before becoming a believer again. Three have corporate work experience while one is

involved in creative work. All are articulate in Filipino and English. Results of this initial inquiry are limited by characteristics of the resultant sample.

Procedure

Each participant was interviewed an average of 1.5 hours. There was no formal, structured, interview schedule. Instead, each *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (sharing of stories) began with an initial invitation to share his or her story about a specific “*karanasan ng pagdududa at/o pag-aalinlangan*.” Follow-up questions were based on what was shared. Valbuena (2009) employed this method of beginning with a particular experience in her research on *pagpapatawad*. The aim was to begin with a specific instance of *pagdududa* without imposing on the participant what to share.

In Mangubat’s (2008) study, participants viewed *duda* in a negative light. Given the concern that the term *pagdududa* might have a negative connotation that could put off people from talking about their experiences, *pag-aalinlangan* was included in the initial invitation since *alinlangan* is the synonym through which Filipino / Tagalog dictionaries primarily define *duda* and since it possessed a less negative connotation, referring not to distrust—and the quality of being distrustful that Filipinos do not value—but to the behavioral manifestation of hesitation (Diksyunaryong Ingles-Filipino Filipino-Ingles, 2005; Tagalog Dictionary, tagalog-dictionary.com).

Only one participant talked about *alinlangan* and *duda* as different experiences. Also, while all were willing to share, two were unsure whether their experiences could be called *duda* or doubt. Still, these interviews were continued as it was also of interest to talk to people who saw themselves as not having doubted.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Narratives were analyzed to identify themes and lines of inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A participant, a theology professor, shared the dilemma he experienced in ministering to a “disciple” who was dying of cancer:

I visited the hospital... Nakita kong dalawa ang versions of prayer. One was Pentecostal, talagang... God’s will is healing... Yung pangalawa, halata yung

qualification, kung ano ang gusto ng Diyos... Hindi ako prepared kung paano ako magpepray. Alam ko lang, dadalawin ko then from there, spontaneously, magpepray ako... Torn ako... On one hand, pastoral responsibility ko to prepare them for death. Scientifically, terminal na 'yon... Hindi ako magiging true to my responsibility pag hindi ko hinanda yung tao na harapin ang kamatayan kasi kailangan mo rin yon e. Spiritually, kailangan mong harapin... do the preparation para meaningful... At the same time, naniniwala rin ako na kung ano talaga ang desire ng puso mo, you have to express it, at hindi ka padadaig sa empirical evidence.

I visited the hospital and observed two kinds of prayer being said. One was that God's will is healing. The other contained a qualification about what God's will is. I was unprepared about how to pray. All I knew was, I would visit and from there, pray spontaneously. I was torn. On one hand, it was my pastoral responsibility to prepare her for death because she needed it. Spiritually, one needs to face it, and do the preparation for it to be meaningful. At the same time, I also believe that you have to express your heart's true desire, that you shouldn't be defeated by empirical evidence.

This, to him, was a significant life experience that helped clarify his expression of faith. Other participants told similarly meaningful stories. No conversation stayed at a superficial level of what one participant called "little doubts" or those that did not implicate serious concerns.

One participant talked about his doubt about a girlfriend's infidelity set against the backdrop of his life journey from being someone of faith to becoming agnostic, then an atheist, and back to believing. Another participant talked about having *alinlangan* about whether to marry her fiancé. Another participant talked about "no doubt" due to having never believed but still feeling "stirrings" of faith and wanting to believe. These were not everyday experiences of doubt. They not only engaged cognitive abilities; they also engendered feelings and brought to the fore basic beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Elements of Pagdududa

This experience, *pagdududa*, can be viewed as having interconnected elements. The articulation of experience in this manner in a sense owes itself to past researchers such as Decentecio (1997, 1999), who articulated in terms of

interweaving aspects the *pagdadala* story, or the story of burden bearing by ordinary Filipinos, and Valbuena (2009), who articulated Filipinos' experience of *pagpapatawad* similarly, using *pagdadala* as a framework.

The specific elements of the experience of *duda*, however, were identified from and across participants' stories. Table 1 lists these along with questions that clarify each.

Table 1. Elements of *pagdududa*

Elements	Questions
<i>Nagduda/Nagdududa</i> The doubter	<i>Sino ang nagduda/nagdududa?</i> Who doubted/doubts?
<i>Pinagdudahan/Pinagdududahan</i> The doubted	<i>Sino/Ano ang pinagdudahan/pinagdududahan?</i> Who/what was/is being doubted?
<i>Ikinaduda/Ikinadududa</i> The content	<i>Ano ang ikinaduda/ikinadududa? Ano ang laman ng duda?</i> What about the doubted was/is being doubted? What was the content of the doubt?
<i>Pahalaga</i> Values, attitudes	<i>Ano ang mahalaga para sa nagdududa?</i> What did the doubter value?
<i>Nararamdaman</i> Feelings	<i>Ano ang nararamdaman ng nagdududa?</i> What was/is the doubter feeling?
<i>Ginawa/Ginagawa</i> Responses	<i>Ano ang ginawa/ginagawa ng nagdududa tungkol sa kanyang duda?</i> What did/does the doubter do about his or her doubt?
<i>Kahihinatan</i> Consequences	<i>Ano ang kahihinatan ng pagdududa?</i> What were/are the consequences of doubting?
<i>Pakahulugan</i> Meanings	<i>Ano ang kahulugan ng duda/pagdududa para sa nagdududa?</i> What did/does the experience of doubting mean to the doubter?

To illustrate, let us look at one participant's *duda* regarding her deceased father's best friend. Her father was a general in the Philippine Marines at the time of his death:

May best friend si Papang, isang contractor. Papang at that time was in charge of Procurements so sa kanya dumadaan lahat ng kailangang logistics... He would bring Papang... on different travels, with the family... Papadalhan kami ng lechon...

Dad, who was in charge of Procurements and logistics, had a best friend who was a contractor... He would bring Dad on different trips, some with the family. He would send us gifts like roast pig...

When her father died, the best friend promised them monthly monetary help for the rest of his life. He also promised to trade his nice car for the bereaved widow's decrepit one. Afterwards, however:

Pinakuha niya yung kotse ni Mamang... Tapos nung 40th day, wala na. Hindi na nagpadala ng pera... Wala na ring kotse... Nowadays, nalalaman namin na he goes around befriending the generals... So nagdududa kami. Yung pinaka-hurtful, nabola mo kami pero pinakanabola mo tatay ko. Parang feeling ko, the years... all of that was a lie.

I cannot do anything because he hid himself... Just chalk it up to bad experience, and I hate it... Shocked ako na may ganoon palang manggagamit... Kasi, kahit batang Cubao ako, na magaling ako makipag-agawan base, I was brought up rin pala in a world na people are basically good. Tapos, meron palang ganoon na blatantly masama... Feeling ko naging bad judge of character ako, pati si Papang... So Papang's best friend actually taught me that siguro it is medyo healthy rin na magduda minsan, pero for me kasi that goes against my personal belief that people are good..."

He took Mom's car. Then on the 40th day of my father's death, he disappeared. He did not send any money. There was no car. Today we would hear stories about him befriending generals. So we doubt. What hurts most is not that he fooled us but that he fooled my dad. Like all those years were a lie.

I cannot do anything because he hid himself... Just chalk it up to bad experience, and I hate it... It shocked me that there are manipulative people... Even if I'm a kid who grew up playing in the streets, I realize that I was brought up in a world where people are basically good. And then I encounter someone that bad... I felt like I was a bad judge of character, and so was my dad. His best friend actually taught me that maybe it is healthy to sometimes doubt. But that goes against my personal belief that people are good..."

In this *pagdududa* story, the *nag(du)duda* was the participant. The *pinag(du)dudahan* was the best friend of their deceased patriarch. The context to this story was the friendship between the participant's father, a military man, and a contractor of military equipment. A set of events triggered the participant's and her family's *pagdududa*: after her father died, his best friend had promised help, but disappeared afterwards, and the family started hearing stories about this man befriending other generals.

The *ikina(du)duda* centered on the question: was the man sincere in befriending their father, or not? The *gina(ga)wa* refers to the response to the *duda*.

In this case, the participant could not do anything but accept, grudgingly, that she and her family, including her father, may have been deceived by the man they had considered a sincere friend.

This experience engendered negative feelings, *na(ra)ramdaman*, such as hurt at the perceived betrayal, anger that she and her family had been deceived, and “shock” at her basic beliefs, *pahalaga*, being shaken. This experience was meaningful, *makahulugan*, to the participant precisely because it forced her to learn that it might also be healthy to “*magduda minsan*.” This was a bitter pill to swallow since it went against her basic belief about people’s goodness. The *kahihinatnan* of this experience was that “it set the standard” for her not to trust too much.

From this and other narratives, we see that *pagdududa* can be analyzed in terms of elements or aspects. The *nagdududa* is the one who goes through the *pagdududa*, the one who doubts. Its specific articulation reflects the idea that people may have *pagdududa* that initially stem from the *pagdududa* of significant others. For example, one participant hesitated to call her experience one of *duda* because she did not see the *duda* she experiences as her own. She saw it as “*nata-transfer*” to her by her mother who has what she called “lingering” *duda*.

The *pinagdududahan* is the object of doubt. In the case of *pagdududa* involving the self, the *nagdududa* doubts him or herself, with the specific content being his or her personal qualities, behaviors, feelings, and motivations. None of the participants talked about doubting their abilities, a traditional focus of self-doubt studies in social psychology. In the relational context, the *nagdududa* doubts other people, particularly motives as indicated by behaviors.

The *ikinadududa* is the content. For instance, if the *pinagdududahan* is the *nagdududa*’s partner in a relationship, the *ikinadududa* is the partner’s fidelity.

Pahalaga refers to what is important to the *nagdududa*. It is *duda* about what they value highly that had greater significance for the participants. One made a distinction between little and big doubts: little doubts were about little things, i.e., questions that were not as important or “life-changing”.

Nararamdaman refers to what the *nagdududa* feels. Some participants felt anger, anxiety, and sadness. None talked about feeling positive emotions like happiness, though some seemed emotionally neutral, saying that they are used to doubting.

Ginagawa refers to what the *nagdududa* does in response. Some participants talked about trying to reduce uncertainty, like the participant who would look for evidence of his partner's infidelity. Conversely, some tried to maintain certainty by seeking assurance to help them be more comfortable with the situation. One participant, who experienced cold feet three days before her wedding, did not attempt to resolve what she was unsure of: whether to marry into her husband's family. Instead, she reminded herself of what she was sure about: that she was marrying a good man who loved her.

Kahihinatnan pertains to consequences. It is how a particular story of *pagdududa* ended and how it affected the *nagdududa*. Some consequences were positive, like a clearer perspective of the situation; some were negative, like relationships that ended and basic beliefs suddenly put in question. Some participants talked about *pagdududa* from which they were eventually able to move forward. Some talked about being "*nagdududa pa rin*," or still having *duda*, which was about going back to the same doubt, i.e., "*andoon palagi*", over and over. This was deemed unpleasant.

Pakahulugan pertains to meanings that the *nagdududa* creates from the experience. Some were positive, some negative, and were related to *kahihinatnan* and *pahalaga*.

These elements resonate with specific conceptions of doubt in the literature in terms of, for instance, sources, objects, content/types, consequences, and responses. However, a point of departure is looking at doubt as a gestalt, where the whole experience, the phenomenology, of *pagdududa* emerges from the interweaving of its elemental parts. This idea of a whole experience with interweaving elements forms the basis for an interim framework (later detailed) for mining the depths of people's experience and understanding of *pagdududa*.

Context vis-à-vis Description

As seen in participants' narratives, doubt cropped up in different contexts, such as relationships and spirituality, domains identified by Sycip and colleagues (1993) as important to *magandang buhay*. Another thematic line drawn was the context of the *pagdududa* vis-à-vis the terms used in describing the experience. Table 2 summarizes these.

Table 2. Context vis-à-vis description of *pagdududa*

Context	Term/s used
Relational	<i>duda</i> doubt/s <i>pag-aalinlangan</i>
Religious / spiritual	doubt/s, doubting
Self (behaviors, feelings, motivations)	<i>duda</i> doubt/s
Evaluative (decisions, perceptions)	<i>pag-aalinlangan</i> evaluation
Not doubt	<i>nata-transfer na duda</i> no belief

The relational context refers to *pagdududa* in relationships, such as family, friendships, and romantic relationships. The religious / spiritual context indicates, in an obvious sense, doubting one's religious beliefs such as, for two participants, belief in the existence of God, and in another, less obvious sense, doubting as a process of clarifying one's faith, as in the case of the participant who doubted his ministerial approach. The self as context, meanwhile, refers to doubting one's behaviors, feelings, and motivations. *Duda* with self as context seemed to be an offshoot of *duda* within a relationship. For instance, one participant said that a consequence of the doubts he had about his girlfriend, whom he separated from after confirming her infidelity, was that he also begun to question himself and how he had acted in that relationship:

Madami akong tanong sa sarili.... Meron ba akong nagawang mali na nalaman niya, na hindi ko alam?... If I did not give up on her, kami pa rin kaya ngayon? At magiging masaya ba, or maghihiwalay pa rin eventually?"

I asked myself many questions... Did I do anything wrong that she knew and I didn't? If I did not give up on her, would we still be together now? And would we be happy or would we eventually break up anyway?"

The evaluative context implicates a process of evaluating the validity of one's decisions. One participant used the term to refer to what he considered a more "rational", less anxiety-producing, process of taking stock of his situation (after a certain event occurred) to make a decision that would move him forward.

One participant used the terms *alinlangan* and *pag-aalinlangan*, and distinguished *pagdududa* from *pag-aalinlangan*. She defined *pag-aalinlangan* as taking a step back to assess the situation she found herself in, weighing pros and cons so that she could decide and move forward.

Three days before my wedding, I wanted to call it off... Madaming issues... ang biyenang ko nagpipilit na doon kami titira sa bahay nila... At this point, tanggap ko na... but I was very unhappy... Marami nang bad blood... Kinausap ako ni Joey. Sinabihan daw siya ng nanay niya, 'Isipin mo. Ganito yung pakakasalan mo.' Nagulat ako. Sabi ko, 'O sige, give me time to think... kung gusto pa kitang pakasalan.' Nagulat si Joey. Tumawag ako kay Ate May, umiiyak ako... Parang ayoko nang magpakasal... I was torn between... marrying the man of my dreams and living with his family... Siguro yung pag-aalinlangan more of... I wanted to be assured lang of his support."

Three days before my wedding, I wanted to call it off... There were a lot of issues... my mother-in-law was insisting that we live with them... At that point, I had already accepted that we would, but I was very unhappy. There was already bad blood. Joey and I talked. He told me that his mom told him to think twice about whom he was marrying. I was surprised. I told him to give me time to think... about whether I still wanted to get married. Joey was shocked. I called my sister, crying. I didn't feel like getting married. I was torn between marrying the man of my dreams and living with his family. Perhaps the hesitation was more of... I just wanted to be assured of his support."

Here we find the same features, what may be called a *nag-aalinlangan* (the one who hesitates), a *pinag-aalinlangan* (the object of the hesitation), *ikinaaalinlangan* (what the hesitation is about), *pahalaga*, *nararamdaman*, *ginagawa*, *kahihinatnan*, and *pakahulugan*. The context to *pag-aalinlangan*, in this particular case, was both evaluative and relational: evaluative in that the participant was evaluating the consequences of an important life decision, and relational because this decision involved an important relationship. Both *pag-aalinlangan* and evaluation did not involve distrust of another person's intentions or motives.

Finally, "not doubt" or "*hindi duda*" refers to the hesitation shown by two participants to describe their experience as *pagdududa* or doubting. Instead, one talked about her mother's *duda* being transferred to her so that she finds herself doubting her father's fidelity:

Feeling ko, natatransfer na ng nanay ko... nagdududa nanay ko pag umaalis ang tatay ko nang hindi siya kasama... Usually pinagtatanggol ko pero lately, parang nahahawa na ako."

I feel like my mother's doubt is being transferred to me... My mom doubts my dad every time he goes out without her... I usually defend him but lately, it's like the doubt is rubbing off on me.

"*Hindi duda*" meant that the *duda* she sometimes has about her father is not entirely, and originally, her own. However, another participant talked about her experience as coming from no belief and, ergo, having no beginning point for doubt:

I don't have a recollection of ever believing. I remember, when I was very young, asking, 'Why do I have to pray to Papa Jesus?' ... I have no recollection of having faith then putting it to question. My recollection is I had... no firm belief... I was never sure... Maybe it's wrong to believe it exists.

Four participants who shared experiences of *pagdududa* involving relationships, as well as two participants who talked about *pagdududa* involving the self, all used the term *duda* and *nagdududa*. Conversely, three participants did not use *duda* in talking about religious doubting, using "doubt" instead. One participant talked about *pagdududa* in a past relationship, using both *duda* and doubt, and also talked about his religious doubt but using only "doubt".

RECOMMENDATIONS

While interpretations of the narratives may be applicable only to the study's participants, given the limitations in sampling, insight afforded by narratives along with those from the extant literature on doubt and related concepts allows some recommendations to be made about studying *duda* further and explicating the *duda*-wellbeing link.

Duda and Doubt

Judging from the previously noted juxtaposition of context and language, *duda* seemed to be doubt experienced exclusively in the context of a relationship. Both terms reflected a personally meaningful experience of being in an uncertain, transitional, condition that engaged participants' thoughts, feelings, values and attitudes, and behaviors. But whereas doubt also referred to experiences regarding

the self and spiritual matters, *duda* seemed to be exclusively about relationships, such that *duda* about the self was experienced within the context of *duda* in a relationship. In relational uncertainty research, doubts about self influence doubts about the relationship and partner (Murray et al., 2001). Interestingly, in this study, it was the other way around: *duda* about one's relationship led to *duda* about oneself.

Further inquiry can clarify two important points. One, is *duda* simply relational doubt? It would be interesting to find out if there are contexts or domains of *pagdududa* other than relationships. Second, what is the direction of influence as regards *duda* about the self and *duda* about a partner? While participant narratives paint a picture of self-doubt as a consequence of the doubt experienced within a relationship, it may be more of a reciprocal relationship where self and relationship/partner doubts feed each other.

Duda, Alinlangan, and Other Related Concepts

Further lexical analysis is needed to determine other nuances of meaning. What other terms do Filipinos use to describe experiences involving uncertainty? For instance, how do we situate *alinlangan* in relation to *duda*?

One participant defined *pag-aalinlangan* as hesitation that is an offshoot of *duda* and "*hindi kasing lalim ng duda*" (not as profound as doubt). Etiological meanings of doubt point to hesitation as a behavioral manifestation: because the person is in doubt, he or she hesitates to act. A Tagalog synonym for *duda* is *urong-sulong*, a compound word that means "indecisive" (Urong-sulong, Tagalog-English Dictionary, bansa.org). It is made up of two words signifying movement, *urong*, which means "to retreat" or "step back" (Tagalog-English Dictionary, bansa.org) and *sulong*, "to push forward" (Tagalog-English Dictionary, bansa.org). Interestingly, in Bahasa Indones, the same forward-backward movement to doubt is reflected in the compound words *maju mundhur* and *gojag gajeg* (A. Pramastyaningtyas, personal communication, February 28, 2011). There is reason to believe that *pagdududa* and *pag-aalinlangan* may have different nuances of meaning because, based on participants' narratives, *pag-aalinlangan* did not seem to involve distrust, specifically distrust of people's intentions.

Perhaps the profoundness of experience of *duda* for the participants is in part due to the involvement of trust, distrust, or faith, which can be viewed as different levels or, perhaps more appropriately, types of confidence. This resonates

with the existing literature implicating, for example, trust and distrust, in people's navigation of an uncertain world (see Lewicki, 2006; Khodyakov, 2007). How are these concepts related to doubt? Viewed from the lens of *pagdududa*, how do Filipinos conceive of *tiwala* (trust), *di pagtitiwala* (distrust), *paniniwala* (belief), or *pananalig* (faith)?

To illustrate, two participant narratives offered contrasting views of people and the necessity of trust and distrust, reflected in *pagdududa* that differed in emotional tone and frequency. The participant who had a negative experience involving a family friend found it a bitter pill to swallow because it shook her basic belief in people's goodness. Contrast this narrative:

Palagi akong maduda sa tao. Iniisip ko palagi kung ano agenda nila. Hindi ako very trusting... Halimbawa, yung mga dyowa... Kahit alam mong hindi naman siya nagchi-cheat, you never really know. So check mo na lang para hindi ka nahuhuling walang alam... Lahat kasi ng tao feeling ko masama. Man, by nature, is evil. Kung maiisahan ka nila, gagawin nila, so kailangan vigilant ka rin. Dapat alam mo kung ano yung ginagalaw nila para alam mo rin kung paano ka gagalaw... On some level tina-trust mo pero... baka naman mamaya, luhaan ka na lang kasi you don't see it coming.

I always doubt people. I always wonder what their agenda is. I'm not very trusting. Take partners, for example. Even if you think he's not cheating on you, you never really know. So just check so you're not caught unaware... Man, by nature, is evil. If they can one up you, they will, so you also have to be vigilant. You have to know their moves so you'll know your own moves... You trust them on some level... but you don't want to end up crying because you didn't see it coming.

Here, the habitual experience of *pagdududa* is underlined by belief that people are, by nature, "evil". Hence, this participant's *pagdududa* is the means by which he determines how he will act in his relationships given that people's intentions are not always clear and good.

The participant described himself as "*maduda*" or habitually doubting. In Mangubat's (2008) study, participants deemed this a negative quality. However, the literature on trust and distrust indicate that effective navigation of uncertainties requires both (Lewicki, 2006). In other words, being *maduda* is not entirely negative since the exercise of *duda* may be a means to survive in a world where others' motives are not always and entirely apparent.

Another related concept is uncertainty, of which doubt is often simply taken to be a synonym. We can inquire if, for instance, *pagdududa* is simply not being certain or *sigurado*. This is to ask whether all conditions of uncertainty are conditions of doubt, or more specifically, how doubt is related to uncertainty. Research already points to a quadratic relationship between uncertainty orientation and trust in close relationships. Uncertainty-oriented individuals were more inclined to experience moderate trust for partners and were less bothered by mixed feelings. Certainty-oriented individuals reported either low or high trust and were less tolerant of doubts about their relationship and partner (Sorrentino, Holmes, Hanna, & Sharp, 1995). Further research can explore the interplay of uncertainty and trust in the experience of doubt.

Doubt / Not Doubt

As previously mentioned, two participants were unsure about whether their experiences can be described as *duda* or doubt. One seemed more or less sure of her state of non-belief in God but would have moments of wanting to believe. She described herself as having made no progress:

I think the questions have defined me, but I don't feel like I've grown... I have become comfortable in the not knowing, but I have had no progression.

This participant's sense of not having made progress was similar to the other participant who talked about her mother's *duda* about her father's fidelity as being transferred to her. She described her mother's *duda* as "*andoon palagi*" (always there), affecting her and her brother. These participants were dealing with questions that did not have answers, *duda* that was never resolved, so that there was a sense of not moving forward or past the doubt. With one participant, it involved a deeper sense of stagnation, not having grown. It would be interesting to find out what differentiates the experience of doubters from the ostensible non-doubters. This links to the doubt-uncertainty question as it seems that at least some people do not use the term doubt to describe an experience that does involve not knowing for certain.

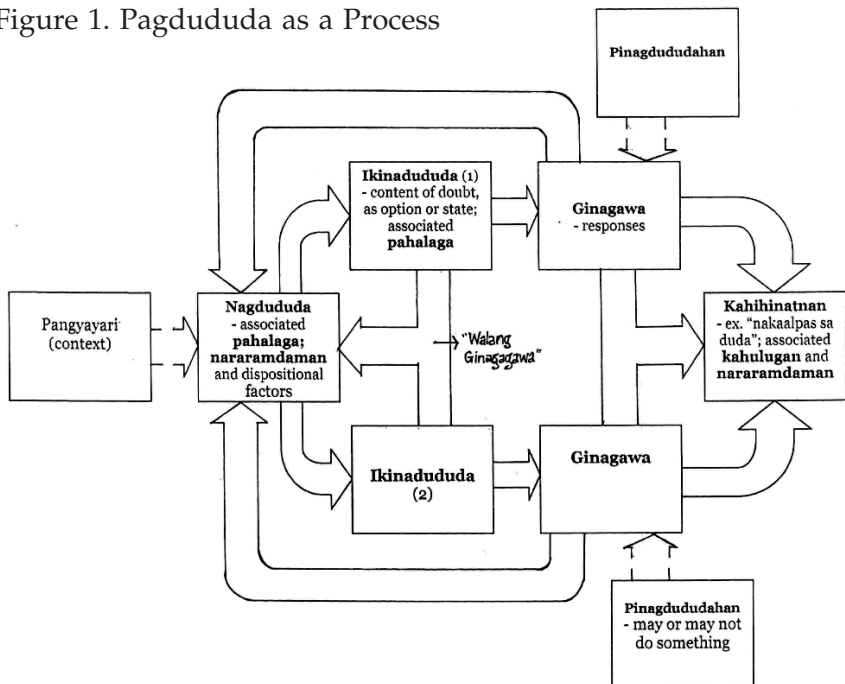
Duda and Wellbeing

Studying *duda* and wellbeing requires an interim conceptual frame. Based on insight from participant narratives, and informed by extant literature, the *kuwento ng pagdududa*, or "story of doubting", views *duda* as a psychological

condition involving uncertainty, a transitional condition that temporarily stops a person and situates him or her in between two seemingly incompatible states.

Pagdududa is a basic experience that people go through to navigate a world full of uncertainties. The different features of people's *kuwento ng pagdududa* may be treated as distinct but interwoven elements. Figure 1 is a simplified visual representation of a single instance of *pagdududa*, with the *nagdududa* caught between two seemingly opposite states (or is presented two possible but ostensibly competing options). Forward-pointing arrows reflect forward movement ("*sulong*") while backward-pointing arrows reflect retreat ("*urong*").

Figure 1. *Pagdududa* as a Process



The *nagdududa* brings to the experience personal characteristics, motives, and other dispositional variables. The *nagdududa*'s background as well as a precipitating event or *pangyayari* provide a context. The two paths open to the *nagdududa*, which he or she perceives at that point to be divergent, represent competing *ikinadududa* along with *pahalaga* associated with each.

The *nagdududa* has several options for what to do, i.e., *gagawin*. For example, he or she can attempt to reduce the *duda* by seeking confirmation of one option or the other, or an integration of both options. The *nagdududa* can also seek assurance that can buffer the risk he or she takes by choosing a particular option.

The *kahihinatnan* implicates the *kahulugan* made out of the experience and may influence how the *nagdududa* feels about him or herself and about his or her *duda*. A possible *kahihinatnan* is the end state of *nakaalpas sa duda*, i.e., having moved forward from the doubt. Another possible end state is *nagdududa pa rin*, i.e., still having the same doubt (represented by arrows looping back to the *nagdududa*). These end states may be linked to whether the *nagdududa* does something, i.e. *may ginagawa*, or does nothing, i.e., *walang ginagawa*, about his or her *duda*, and how effectively he or she engages the doubt.

The diagram links the *pinagdududahan* through a broken arrow pointed towards the *ginagawa*. This reflects whether the *pinagdududahan* can actually do something to help the *nagdududa* move forward. Participant narratives indicate that *duda* may be highly relational. If so, the *pinagdududahan* becomes a very important other. Similar to Bonifacio's (1989) assertion that the responsibility of regaining trust falls squarely on the shoulders of the distrusted, it can be asked now whether the responsibility of resolving doubt lies, at least in part, with the doubted. Will it be more beneficial if the *pinagdududahan* is perceived to be doing something to help the *nagdududa* resolve the doubt? Or is it always better for the *nagdududa* to resolve his or her doubt?

Narratives show that *duda* is implicated in domains considered important to Filipinos' wellbeing. If so, then *duda* may have positive and negative consequences on Filipinos' wellbeing. And since wellbeing is a multi-dimensional concept, further research can look into different aspects, such as psychological wellbeing, which emphasizes personal growth and optimum development. Using the framework, further research can compare the *nagdududa* narratives of Filipinos who score high on a measure of psychological wellbeing (see Ryff & Keyes, 1995) to those who score low on the same measure, to identify benefits and detriment and differences in how these two groups experience, engage, and are affected by doubt.

Studies on doubt indicate many negative consequences. The flip side is less represented. In thinking about *duda* and wellbeing, the question can also be

asked: when does *duda* lead to positive consequences? Some participants' stories suggest that in their lives, doubt has played what can be called a clarifying role. One participant clarified what his faith meant to him and how it would be expressed in his behaviors. Another participant's experience allowed her to clarify what was important, thus enabling her to make a major life decision. Another avenue for investigation is the role of a counseling or clinical psychologist in helping the *nagdududa* in this regard. Decentecio (1999) has previously identified as one of the important tasks of the counselor *paglilinaaw/pagkaklaro* of the different aspects of *pagdadala*. Likewise, if *pagdududa* can be used as a process through which the *nagdududa* clarifies which option to go with and what to do next, how can the counselor/therapist facilitate this clarification?

Participant narratives show that *pagdududa* can be meaningful. Perhaps the counselor's task is to help the *nagdududa* create meanings that help the *nagdududa* move forward from his or her doubt, i.e., *makaalpas sa duda*. The idea of forward-backward movement, progress and retreat, is helpful in this regard. A resonant theme in participants' stories is that the desired end state for *pagdududa* is not just a matter of reduction of *duda*, but a sense of having moved past it to a more comfortable state. This end state of *nakaalpas sa duda* means, for some, that uncertainty is reduced, and for some, that certainty is reinforced. Either allows the *nagdududa* to move forward. Conversely, an undesirable end state is *nagdududa pa rin*. This is about going back to the same *duda*, over and over. Here, the *duda* does not get resolved in a meaningful manner. Uncertainty is not reduced through confirmation of one possibility or integration of options. Neither is certainty maintained through assurance of what is ultimately important.

If an individual's life can be seen as a multiplicity of *pagdududa*, then perhaps a healthy picture of *pagdududa* is one where the *nagdududa* progresses and moves forward, in a spiral, while an unhealthy picture is one where the *nagdududa* goes back to the same *duda* as if he or she were in an infinite loop. In this sense, *pagdududa* becomes a process by which people can either progress and develop or remain stagnant.

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NOTES

- ¹ All names have been changed to protect identities.