



**THE GEOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE OF BARANGAY POBLACION
TAGOLOAN MISAMIS ORIENTAL, NORTHERN MINDANAO,
PHILIPPINES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
LIVED EXPERIENCE**

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Abstract

This study explores the geographic landscape of Barangay Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. It was studied phenomenologically. The landscape, places, people, events and its interaction on the area that affects the lives of the inhabitants were thoroughly identified and classified. Through visualization, videograph and photograph gathering and collecting of data were utilized. Findings hinges on the “sustainable management” on the natural resources and the mitigation of environmental risks within the peripheral geolocation such that on quarrying of sand, gravel, soil and water are observable. The vulnerability of the barangay during flood, pollution, and housing congestion threaten health and wellness slowly as the low lying area. The geographic topography must be reinvented. Infrastructure development plans and improvements such as: 1) widening of main and satellite roads, 2) flood control systems, 3) construction of bridges, 4) improved drainage, 5) waste management, 6) health, hygiene and wellness, and 7) land classification and zoning must be on the emergency level. Stricter implementation on the building code and environmental regulations is at the tough on the local social legislation.

Keyword: Geographic landscape_ Barangay Poblacion

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Introduction

The geographical landscape of a community profoundly shapes the lives, experiences, and identities of its residents. Barangay Poblacion, as the urban center of Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines presents a diverse and dynamic environment where residential, commercial, institutional and public spaces converge as urban center. Understanding people responses, interaction and adapted behavior in their landscape provides valuable insights into their daily struggles, opportunities, and sense of place identity. The phenomenological lived

experiences of the residents of Barangay Poblacion, capturing their perspectives on how the barangay's geography influences their social, economic, and cultural life.

Geographical condition really affected the way we think, act and behave (Janaydarova & Mehrinisa, 2025). By understanding the complex interplay between geographic factors and human activities, we can make more informed decisions, prepare for potential challenges, and shape a more sustainable future. A geographic landscape is a specific area of the Earth's surface that exhibits a unique combination of physical and human features. It encompasses the terrain, climate, vegetation, water bodies, and the influence of humans (Kostakis, 2023).

Likewise, landscapes play a crucial role in infrastructure development. Their topography, soil, conditions, and potential hazards like landslides or earthquakes must be carefully considered when designing and constructing roads, bridges, buildings, and other crucial infrastructure. Knowing the landscape helps us build structures that are safe, durable, and resilience which minimize environmental disruption (Amjad et al 2023).

The philosophical discipline of phenomenology, which emphasises lived experience, provides a distinctive perspective for examining geographic landscapes. Phenomenology explores the subjective interpretation of a landscape in contrast to conventional approaches that concentrate on objective data, acknowledging that a person's responses, feelings, and sensory experiences are important factors influencing how they relate to their surroundings (Dzhupanov 2024). By recognising that our responses, movements, and interactions with the landscape greatly influence how we perceive a place, this method highlights the significance of the embodied experience (Jiaying 2023).

It acknowledges that our responses of a landscape are influenced by social interactions, cultural values, and shared experiences in addition to being purely personal (Svobodova, Kamila, et al. 2025). This recognises that, depending on their histories and viewpoints, people may interpret the same landscape in different ways. This method recognises that landscapes have deeper meanings that are infused with stories and human experiences, making them more than just physical objects. A key component of phenomenological landscape studies is the significance of place, acknowledging that various locations have distinct characteristics, histories, and meanings that influence how we see the landscape as a whole (Dehpour, Aida 2025).

The phenomenological approach to lived experiences explores human subjectivity, understanding the world as a tapestry of individual responses, emotions, and interpretations, stepping into others' shoes to understand their emotional landscape and meanings. By putting aside our own preconceptions and biases, the phenomenological technique urges us to "bracket" our own assumptions and biases, take a step back, and listen intently to the person's tale. It's about realising that every individual's experience is distinct, influenced by their own history, cultural background, and lens of vision (Grajzel, Katalin 2025).

The phenomenological method is not a lecture but rather a dialogue. It entails paying close attention, posing open-ended questions, and letting the person share their narrative in their own words. It involves accepting the subtleties, paradoxes, and complexity of lived experience while acknowledging that there are frequently several levels of meaning, interpretations, and points of view. It allows us to see the world through the eyes of others, to appreciate the diversity of human responses, and to recognize the power of individual stories to shape our understanding of the world around us.

A diverse landscape takes into account a wide range of interconnected components. Topography (elevation, slope, aspect), geology (soil type, rock formations), and hydrology (water bodies, drainage patterns) are the first physical features to be revisited. Through temperature, precipitation, and wind regimes, climate has a significant impact on human settlement patterns, vegetation, and agriculture (Lisso, et al, 2024). Land use, which is influenced by both human activity and natural factors, shows how the land is used for conservation, forestry, urbanisation, and agriculture.

A phenomenological geographical analysis of a barangay's lived experiences delves into the subjective meanings and responses to residents attach to their environment. It moves beyond objective geographical data to explore how the physical landscape including topography, built environment, and access to resources shapes daily life, social interactions, and overall well-being. In addition, socioeconomic elements like infrastructure, economic activity, and population density are closely related to geographical features, demonstrating how the environment affects people's life and means of subsistence (Wang, et al, 2025). These components are combined in a thorough revisitation to comprehend the evolved interactions between the local human society and the physical environment.

Understanding these factors helps in making informed decisions for sustainable development, disaster preparedness, and community well-being. By analyzing these interconnected factors, a comprehensive understanding of the landscape can be achieved, leading to informed decisions for sustainable development, disaster preparedness, and community well-being. This comprehensive understanding can lead to informed decision-making for sustainable development, disaster preparedness, and community well-being.

Barangay Poblacion is centrally located within Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, which itself lies just east of Cagayan de Oro and southeast of Macajalar Bay. Tagoloan is approximately 19 kilometers from Cagayan de Oro, with Barangay Poblacion situated along the main travel route between Gingoog City and Cagayan de Oro City. The total land area of Tagoloan is about 7,938 hectares, with Barangay Poblacion occupying a portion of this as a key urban and economic hub.

The barangay is strategically positioned beside the Tagoloan River, the 13th largest river system in the Philippines, making it both accessible and vulnerable to natural events such as flooding (PhilAtlas 2020). With a population of 13,286 people. The community is made up of 2,835 households. It serves as the haven for middle-class families, whom make their living through various private and public jobs, small businesses, professional practices, and skills.

Poblacion as the recipient place on the river flows from the upper barangay, its muddy water hinting at the soil carried downstream from farms or other land use further upriver without the flood control and the natural slopes and hills which made Poblacion sinkable place. The riverbanks are flat and sparsely vegetated, a quiet contrast to the greener areas and scattered trees nearby. In the distance, you can just make out a small village nestled among the trees under a partly cloudy sky. It's a peaceful, rural scene, the bridge connecting different parts of this quiet landscape, and the river's muddy color telling a story of the land it flows through.

Barangay Poblacion's natural landscape is defined by a mix of flat plains, rolling terrain, and proximity to significant waterways. Water quality assessments in the Tagoloan River indicate issues with physicochemical and microbial contamination, which affect both human and ecological health. These findings highlight the need for sustainable watershed management to protect the

natural landscape and water resources (Bete et al., 2023). The Tagoloan River and its tributaries, including creeks and estuaries, shape the barangay's drainage patterns and ecosystem.

The area is characterized by fertile soils suitable for agriculture, but also faces environmental challenges such as flooding, water pollution, and soil erosion. Forested areas in the upper basin help reduce soil erosion, while built-up and cropland areas in the lower basin have higher susceptibility to soil loss (Salino et al., 2024). Especially during the rainy season. The natural environment supports diverse flora and fauna but is increasingly affected by human activities and climate change (Zhang, et al., 2025). All these mentioned unfavorable negativity the naturally geographic shield gives-up due to the continuing quarry activity within the peripheral Barangays of the Poblacion. The natural straits, estuaries, slopes, hills, hills were slowly touched by the human hands and the natural flow of the water diverted and soon the unpredictable natural calamities to come if not prevented the water catchment Barangay will suffer the consequences.

The Barangay hosted the end product on various industries, from small workshops to larger factories, driving local economic growth and providing employment. However, industrialization also brings concerns about pollution and resource depletion (DPWH, 2024). Poblacion serves as a commercial hub, with businesses ranging from sari-sari stores to larger groceries and eateries. The commercial sector supports livelihood, social interaction, and access to goods and services. (Oocities.org, 2025). The Barangay is densely populated, with residential areas forming the heart of community life. Housing varies from traditional homes to modern structures, and communal spaces like parks and community centers foster social cohesion. (PhilAtlas 2020). However, as to time when this study conducted available ancestral houses are still observable despite many of which were already converted into commercial establishment.

The physical environment of Barangay Poblacion profoundly shapes residents' daily experiences, livelihoods, and sense of identity of the place. The proximity to the river provides water resources and supports agriculture but also exposes residents to flooding and waterborne (DREAM Program - UP, 2024). Industrial and commercial development has improved economic opportunities but introduced new environmental and social challenges. However, these are not new to a developing place but it must be balance in the making the place a beautiful place to live. And, live life to the fullest.

Industrial and commercial developments in the Barangay Poblacion of Tagoloan, including proposed institutional public and private infrastructure, have improved economic opportunities but introduced environmental and social challenges such as pollution, habitat disruption, and community health concerns. Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) made by the Social Studies researcher in Tagoloan Community College emphasized the importance of public and private participation on environmental management plans to address these issues as mentioned also by the DPWH (2024). A naturally built estuaries connecting from the Tagoloan river going down to Sitio Pulot wherein the small creek with murky water flows build-up green plants and allows bio-life to live harmoniously with the environment within the boundary of Barangay Poblacion and Barangay Baluarte (Sitio Pulot) by the year 2019 it was slowly blinded and occupied by human development but the naturally created waterways. Although it is no more visible by our naked eye but still there underground serving as the "invisible straits" and during the slow and heavy rain water build-up hamper the human activities. A simple concrete bridge crosses the creek build-up, heavy equipment and development introduced then the forgotten history of the geophysical of the area

are no longer remembered and so water challenges become vital in the ecosystems on the lives of the residents.

For Barangay Poblacion residents, creeks and estuaries before provide a source of food, means of transportation and recreation especially it connects to the large body of water connecting the Barangay Baluarte coastline. They are often used for fishing, as well as for transporting goods and people by boat alongside with the neighboring Barangay and even to the extend to Macajalar Bay in Cagayan de Oro City. The rich biodiversity of these areas also provides opportunities for tourism and eco-tourism. However, creeks and estuaries are sensitive ecosystems that are vulnerable to pollution and environmental degradation. If only utilized intelligently and not blinded the natural flow and direction of the water, the mentioned benefits would help us living in a quality of life. Improper waste disposal can disrupt the delicate balance of these waterways, impacting the livelihoods and well-being of residents (Bete, et al, 2024; Miao, Qing, and Chibuike Nduneseokwu, 2025). However, the area faces challenges in water quality due to pollution from agricultural runoff, untreated sewage, and industrial discharges. The development negatively affects the lives and water usability of the Barangays.

Additionally, Barangay Poblacion since it is vulnerable to flooding, particularly during the rainy season. To mitigate these risks, the government has initiated flood control projects, such as dikes and improved drainage systems (EIS). However, they are increasingly threatened by pollution from unmanaged waste, untreated sewage, commercial and industrial discharges. These impacts degrade water quality, harm aquatic life, and reduce the usability of water resources for households and livelihoods. Soon, if not manage intelligently water safety and security will affect quality of life.

Methods

This study was done since Tagoloan Community College is within the vicinity of the area and it must be known its physiological strength. So, the pictorial and documentary analysis was made to revisit the geographical landscapes of Barangay Mohon based on geographic imaging and maps. The researchers also conducted an FGD of which dialogue and conversation were technologically recorded.

Historiography was embraced during the research. An in-depth interview was done to the participants to the researcher in Barangay Poblacion. An open-ended question also was designed to explore and discover new insights and grasp the group's social dynamics during the FGD. Although, the dialogue and conversation were casually done when it involved the name of the place, peoples, events and the interaction of the inhabitants. However, the qualification of human informants is resident of the area, at least 60 years old of age and has a lineage of consanguinity to the locals where the study is conducted.

Lastly, videography and pictorial capturing framework were done during the geographic landscaping through the field work (Gomez, 2025; 2025a, 2025b). And to that end, recorded, collected and gathered data were analyzed according to the Modified Colaizzi's Seven-Step Methods of data analysis outlined by Gomez, et al, (2025a; 2025b) were also utilized in this study to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. The researcher underwent also on the saturation period of time (4 semesters) to see to it the informant participant for time verification. Of course, the research protocol on the ethical standard were properly observed.

Results and Discussions

The results and discussions surrounding the geographical landscape of Barangay Poblacion, framed through the lens of phenomenological lived experiences. And, it was seen the following saturated information: 1) widening of main and satellite roads, 2) flood control systems, 3) construction of bridges, 4) improved drainage, 5) waste management, 6) health, hygiene and wellness, and 7) land classification and zoning.

Widening of main and satellite roads. The study has seen road in Barangay Poblacion as important way-in and way-out. For now, the accessibility on the network of places interconnecting the different Barangays of the Municipality is feasible and viable. Although talking the sustainable development through responsible natural resource management as the population grows and space remain as ease (the decay of time and space follows) the distance shorten but the space becomes inhospitable.

Doing further gathering of the information in the Department of Public Works and Highways with the information from the private engineer practitioner they mentioned that:

“Ang pagka bahin-bahin mangyud niadtong panahuna nianang mga dalan sa Barangay Poblacion sa Tagoloan para man gyud na sa kabalayan susama sa pagka bahin-bahin sa usa ka “sub-division karon.”

[the manner it was subdivided during the time on the different streets in Barangay Poblacion of Tagoloan is like the subdivision housing when it was subdivided]

Therefore, listening the participant informant and the old-age inhabitant of the Barangay they told the researcher that “they do not even know that Tagoloan will boom like we’ve seen now.” So, it is observable that the growth and development was really feel and seen by the inhabitants. Thus, the mentioned statement above revealed that the Municipal Planning Office was not able to foresee the development of the Municipality during that time. The standard span of the main road and the satellite roads is intended for a subdivision road only.

For now, the resident inhabitants of the Barangay were able to feel and see traffic congestion for the convergence of the different sociocultural and socioeconomic activity of the Barangay being the center of the Municipality. The rising of the government infrastructure and private commercial establishment showcases the picturesque Poblacion.

Flood control systems. This government infrastructure would mean to the area of study as wharf, dikes that prevent the running and increasing volume of water that may cause the killing of lives and destroying the property. The geographic landscape of Barangay Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines, is predominantly composed of plains (PhilAtlas, 2023). Situated at an elevation of approximately 12.9 meters (42.3 feet) above sea level and having a flat terrain that characterizes much of the Municipality of Tagoloan. (PhilAtlas, 2023). The total land area of 117.73 square kilometers predominantly plain landscape is typical of the area as bordered by the Tagoloan River, the 13th largest river systems in the country, which flows nearby the Barangay.

The plain geographic landscapes significantly influence the lives of the Barangay inhabitants, impacting various aspects of their daily living. The flat terrain generally, facilitates

easier construction of infrastructure such as roads and buildings, improving accessibility and connectivity within the community and to external areas. However, it is vulnerable to flood since it is the catchment of the water from the upland countryside tendency on the created “delta” that develop liquefied part of the area which affect the construction of big and small infrastructure.

Nevertheless, slowly, gradual and properly manage development leads to preventive measure. Proper and intelligent planning increases safety and security of individual citizenry. Establishing resilient “flood control” protecting lives and property. In particular, smooth flow on transportation networks, supporting trade and access to essential services like healthcare and education continually alive. Undisrupted fertile plains, conducive to agriculture, opportunities in farming and food production, economic stability and food security for residents is lively. However, at present they are facing challenges.

Construction of bridges. During the FGD and the phenomenological maturation period the study see bridges resident inhabitant may avail. The transporting of their goods to market infrastructure be made available. As for their resiliency the inhabitant would not mind to carry their goods and services to the other side of the river. Years pass-by, bulwark of the running and increasing volume of water become indispensable. Local Government Initiative (LGI) constructed a resilient bridge to travel. Later, it become predominantly used. So, their intensive agricultural practices in the Barangay later it leads to soil deterioration and environmental issues. The overall, effect of a plain landscape on the Barangay Poblacion is complex and depends on factors like soil quality, water availability, and the community's ability to manage risks associated with flooding and environmental sustainability. For now, the area need another satellite bridge to accommodate the congested traffics.

Improved drainage system. The drainage system mentioned by the participant observer is the sewerage drainage from the individual households going to the drainage connecting to the roadside. Although there is a drainage system established by the Local Government Unit but five (5) to ten (10) years from now this system would not anymore accommodate the increasing volume and bulwark of water to facilitate. Although, the national road and even the satellite roads are not yet ready for the smaller and bigger drainage infrastructure. Although, this observation is made visible and observable during the slight and heavy rain falls.

Listening to the inhabitants they said:

“lagi kaniadto dili man ingon niini ka kusug ug hinay ang ulan ga baha na dayon. Ug wala gyud sukad nga ang among balay maabut sa tubig sa baha. Sa bagay wala man gyud ug canal dinhing dapita pero bisan gani ang eskwelahan ug ang plasa ga bahaan na gani gihapon”

[again before it is not like today that strong or slight rain will produce flood. And, never before that we experienced flood in our house but for now we experienced flood however, the school and the plaza are even flooded]

The above mentioned statement by the participant observer made a comparison before and today about the Barangay Poblacion regarding the “rain” and the “flood” yet they don’t see the big building and houses are risen and small drainage becoming smaller and the construction of the different building infrastructure redirected the natural flow of the water. And, besides the soil siltation and the washing on the grains of sand redirected the flow of the water.

Waste management. The inhabitants say this theme would mean garbage coming from the households, institutions, businesses and industry. During the phenomenological study found informed resident on waste management may be able to help the Local Government Unit (LGU) to its constituent function. Thus, the proper practice on the solid waste management in their daily routine must be imbedded. It was found out that company, businesses and industry are not more their reliance to the LGU collection and garbage disposal. It was only seen few of the identified and classified businesses, company and industry have their own waste management facility.

In the facility that both public and private establishment are solid and liquid waste being managed and segregated according to their usability and purpose. The recycle, reused and reduced (3R's) system to collect, storage and transport are done before it was being disposed accordingly. We need this to anticipate the growing population and establishment.

Listening the voice of the participants they told the researcher that:

“Dinhi sa among dapit “regular” and pagkuha sa basura apan kung dili gani ma “segregate” dili nila kuhaun, busa manimahu lang gihapon. Apan naay dapit hinhi sa siyentro dugay nila ma kuha busa apiktado lang gihapon kami sa kahugaw ug ka baho kay dili man sila mo tul-tul sa pag kuha.”

[here in our place regular in collecting the garbage but if not segregated they will not collect it which is why still stink odor are still observable. While other place in the Poblacion are delayed in collection still we are affected because of the unsanitary stink odor which the collector didn't follow the scheduled collection]

Here on the statement above the demand on high discipline to both parties is necessary. Stop blaming to one another is the answer. Police your own self and the community for the betterment of everybody.

Health, hygiene and wellness. This theme was made mentioned by the inhabitants due to the uncomfortable, unpleasant, unlikely, unfavorable and inhospitable surrounding. By now, the clamor for the aged is a “generation gap” as economic hub of the Municipality. The buying and exchange of goods and services are present in the area as hosted the government institution, businesses, commerce and relative thereto. So, the area is no longer residential. Therefore, the health, hygiene, and wellness issue is at stake and challenge. Environmental, sanitation and recreation facilities be available to the inhabitants for their wellbeing. Continuing information, formation and transformation of the residence made them well-informed residents of the area which can proactively collaborate the ever-changing needs of the time by the Local Government Unit. Land zoning must be at high priority to foster favorable healthy living.

Classification and zoning. This theme came-out during the FGD due to the different concern coming from the different sector in the community. During the saturation of data institutional, businesses, commercial and residential sectors are identified and classified wherein the land classification updates enhances the respective sectors for growth and development. It however, increases tax collection to meet also the ministrants and constituents function of the Local Government Unit of Tagoloan. As class-A Municipality, the local government code was properly observed and its relative laws. Issuance of the government permit relative to its

implementation must be properly handled. We cannot sacrifice the wellbeing of the inhabitant who is the one generating progress and development. They are the climax of everything in the community which the researcher hoping that we may not see them as something for this cause of growth and development. They have mind to think, heart to feel and human system to act making them someone to somebody and hoping that during the classification and zoning may this residential of human not become nobody.

EXHAUSTIVE DISCUSSIONS

Barangay Poblacion is often referred to as the heart or the center of the Municipality. It is more than a geolocation. It is a living, breathing space of human where the environment and human experiences intertwined. Its geographic features focus on human condition. Its crucial role shapes the people thinking, acting and behaving. It fosters the geographic identity and quality of life to the residents.

Conclusions

As the study hinges on the “sustainable management” on the natural resources and the mitigation of environmental risks. The geolocation of the Barangay's is vulnerable in flooding, pollution, and housing congestion. These risks not only threaten the environment but also pose significant threats to the safety, security and well-being of the residents. Intelligent investment and reinventing infrastructure development plans promote awareness.

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