

# ESKINITAS

*Mapping and Navigating the  
Philippine NARROW STREETS and ALLEYS*

Eskinita: Definition, Cultural & Planning Significance

Challenges of Eskinitas in Car Navigation

Identifying Passable vs. Impassable Eskinitas

Pedestrian Traffic Considerations



# WHAT IS AN ESKINITA?

*word derived from Spanish term “esquinita,” meaning “corner”*

*Refers to the narrow side street or alley, often found between buildings in urban areas*

*Street corner turning to an alley, Now: “eskinta” refers to the narrow passageway itself*

**Cultural Significance for Mapping & Navigation**

*It is not just navigating on the road, but “through people & their activities”*



# CHALLENGES IN CAR NAVIGATION

*as well as for emergency services*

## **Access Challenges**

Unplanned navigation to very narrow & complicated alleys, leads to serious time delays

## **Navigation Issues**

Lack of formal mapping and street signs can cause confusion for casual navigators and emergency responders unfamiliar with the area

## **Driving through Crowds & Obstacles**

In informal settlements, eskinitas can become crowded especially on weekends. More than driving skill (with folded sidemirrors), you need “people skills”.

## **Infrastructure Limitations**

Many informally-planned eskinitas, generally were not designed to support weight and size of bigger emergency vehicles such as fire trucks



# IDENTIFYING PASSABLE & IMPASSABLE



## Width Restrictions

2.0-m., NO car; MAYBE bikes  
> 2.5 m., YES (if unobstructed)



## Vertical Clearance

Low metal tents = NO  
Movable rope shades = YES



## Obstructions

Tents, Umbrellas by sari-sari stores  
and street vendors are indicators by  
their horizontal clearance

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE DRIVING THROUGH AN ESKINITA



**Where is the destination?  
Any practical alternative route?**

highway=destination | motorcar=yes  
proposed tag for very narrow complicated  
roads to 'de-prioritize' on navigation.  
*(must be verified or surveyed)*



**Single-lane, alternating Oneway**

It helps to ask locals if eskinita is oneway &  
through-road. Backing up on very tight road  
'with folded side mirrors' & no rear camera,  
can be nerve-wrecking for most drivers



**What day/time is it?**

If 'end of road' is on your blink spot, ask  
locals for possible events. eg.: on  
weekends, festivities, school/church  
hours; some roads are barely passable

# PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC CONSIDERATION

## Informal areas with no open spaces

Residents use their frontage space for social activities, commerce (stores/vendors), recreations (children playing), bike parking and washing clothes, more particularly on weekends & no-work days, and school vacations. Maximum speed = walking speed or crawling speed.

## People Skills

Filipinos are generally hospitable and helpful. Showing a humble “guilty-smile” plus a good alibi can de-escalate any tensions from misunderstanding why you got yourself stuck there by accident and crash their parties

## Navigating through their living/walking/driving spaces

In Philippine context, an eskinita (even those not passable by motor-vehicles) may also serve as living spaces especially for the informal sectors. The alleys are sometimes “named” and also used for residents’ individual postal addresses. Thus, they should not just be highway=footway or ‘mere thin lines’ in a residential area with huge footprint on map. Adding width=\* to lines is an inclusive recognition of their living spaces and their addresses by increasing visibility as their residential highway counterparts.



# THANK YOU

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