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# Asia Pacific:

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**Asia Pacific: Perspectives** is a peer-reviewed journal published at least once a year, usually in April/May. It welcomes submissions from all fields of the social sciences and the humanities with relevance to the Asia Pacific region.\* In keeping with the Jesuit traditions of the University of San Francisco, *Asia Pacific: Perspectives* commits itself to the highest standards of learning and scholarship.

Our task is to inform public opinion by a broad hospitality to divergent views and ideas that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and the dissemination of knowledge unreservedly. Papers adopting a comparative, interdisciplinary approach will be especially welcome. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit their work for consideration.

\* 'Asia Pacific region' as used here includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the Russian Far East.

## Philippine Studies and the Centennial of the Diaspora: An Introduction

by Joaquin L. Gonzalez III, Ph.D. and Evelyn I. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

For those of us who came of age in the United States before the late-1990s, seeing the words, “the Philippines,” in English-print, can still surprise us. This is because, as recently as ten years ago, we could still count the number of places where “the Philippines” was published on one hand: in the ethnic newspapers our parents brought home from local pan-dasal bakeries or Asian supermarkets, and on the one or two brief pages our US History textbooks devoted to the Spanish-American War. Because our out-of-home exposure to anything Filipino was so inadequate, most of us had no clue that the Philippines shares such a long and complicated history with the United States. And we certainly could never have imagined such a thing as “Philippines Studies”, which not only analyzes and disseminates this history, but places the Philippines, with its history of colonization, migration, and racial mixture and integration, at or near the center of global and diasporic scholarship.

Fortunately, this is less the case for students today, especially at the University of San Francisco (USF), where the Maria Elena Yuchengco Philippines Studies Program (YPSP) has made it possible for students to, daily, see and learn about the Philippines, in their university courses.

Formal Philippine studies in multicultural, multiethnic San Francisco bloomed only in the 1990s with course offerings at City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University. But its peak came in 1999 with the generous endowment of Filipino diplomat and philanthropist Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco to USF for the establishment of YPSP. Thus, USF became the only Catholic Jesuit University in the United States to have such an academic program. YPSP first established itself with financial grants to Kasamahan, USF’s Filipino student organization and their long-standing Philippine Cultural Night presentation, Barrio Fiesta; the purchase of Philippine studies publications and films; financing student attendance at Philippine studies conferences and workshops; and enlisting student participation in the USF-Ateneo summer immersion program in the Philippines. It then expanded to offer courses in Filipino politics, Philippine and Filipino-American histories, conversational Tagalog, Knowledge Activism, and a survey course on contemporary Filipino culture and society.

Since then, the YPSP has grown and evolved, especially in response to student appeals for an education which enables them to understand how the culture, politics, religion, business, societies, environment, and economies of the Philippines are related and interdependent on Filipino rela-

tionships with and within other nations. To further institutionalize Philippine studies as an important academic field of inquiry, YPSP developed an undergraduate minor—the only one of its kind in San Francisco. Today, YPSP faculty are teaching courses, conducting research, and performing service learning on a broad range of topics relating to the Filipino diaspora as well as collaborating and linking to the rest of the world. Unlike other universities, USF’s Philippine studies courses are an integral part of university’s general education core requirements for Cultural Diversity, Service Learning, and Social Science. They satisfy major requirements in the Politics, Asian Studies, and International Studies programs as well as electives in the Asia-Pacific Studies, Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, Catholic Studies, and McCarthy Public Service programs. A Yuchengco Fellows Program for Young Professionals in the Media has recently been established at USF’s Center for the Pacific Rim as well as an Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco Lecture Series which is sponsoring the centennial conference: “100 Years of Filipino Presence in the United States: A Journey of Hope”.

Students of the Yuchengco Philippine Studies program are immersed in service learning and community activities in San Francisco’s South of Market District (SOMA). They mentor at-risk Filipino Americans and their families at Westbay Multi-Services Center, Filipino Education Center, Bessie Carmichael Elementary School. Every year, along with their YPSP professor, YPSP students provide hundreds of hours volunteering at the Veterans Equity Center, Filipino American Development Foundation, Manilatown Heritage, Bindlestiff Studios, and San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission. They join Filipino ethno-tours of San Francisco as well as protest marches in front of the City Hall and the Philippine Consulate. YPSP students have participated in seminars at the Asia Foundation, Asia Society, and the Philippine Consulate General. Many graduating seniors have received prestigious Asian American Civic Engagement Summer Internships through the generosity of the US Department of Education and the Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good. YPSP also supports the annual Philippine International Aid (PIA) fund raiser. Recently, along with Filipino-American students, faculty, and administrators from San Francisco State University, Golden Gate University, and the City College of San Francisco, YPSP students launched a successful campaign that named a South of Market park for Filipina American Olympic, two-time gold medalist platform diver Victoria Manalo Draves.

In 2004, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo received an honorary doctorate from USF and joined the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, long-time head of the Philippine Catholic Church as alumni. Board of Trustees member, Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco was later accorded similar honors. YPSP faculty members have been recipients of: Teaching Excellence Awards, Research Excellence Awards, Jesuit Foundation Grants, Faculty Development Funds, Human Rights Fellowships, US Congressional recognition, McCarthy mini-grants, and Asian American Civic Engagement funding.

Given YPSP’s distinctiveness and substantial growth

since its inception, the editors of *Asia Pacific Perspectives* (APP) have decided to dedicate a special issue to bridging scholarly works from USF Philippine studies professors and researchers with contributions from colleagues from three of the Philippines' leading Filipino and Philippine studies universities, the Ateneo de Manila University, the University of the Philippines, and De La Salle University. This issue, like the field of Philippines Studies, examines a wide range of issues that span borders, writing and literary spaces, disciplinary fields, and Filipino concerns. Though focusing on Filipino and Philippine themes, the articles disciplinary underpinnings represent analytical viewpoints from sociology, arts, humanities, literature, law, politics, history, labor, economics, business, and even technology. Their varied research approaches are also worth noting, from archival documents, ethnographies, participant-observations, legal cases, to key informant interviews, resulting in rich and thick qualitative data and analyses.

Moving in a somewhat chronological and geographical order, Evelyn I Rodriguez opens with an important revisionist article on Philippine international relations prior to American occupation, and sociologically describes some of the outcomes of Mexico-Philippines relations under Spanish rule. In "Primerang Bituin: Philippines-Mexico Relations at the Dawn of the Pacific Rim Century" Rodriguez sketches the prevalent discourse regarding the origins and effects of Pacific Rim dealings, and then describes the history of the Manila Galleon Trade. She highlights the deep ways Mexican and Filipino pre-twentieth century societies were influenced by their trade with each other, and argue that this calls for more scholarly consideration to how contemporary Pacific Rim relations have a significant bearing on culture, as well as socioeconomic and environmental matters.

Then, from legal lenses, Marie Lorraine Mallare, one of the issue contributors considers contemporary Philippines and US relations, by exploring the sensitive and emotional issue of mail-order brides within the larger global sex trafficking industry. In "Mail-Order Brides: A Closer Look at U.S. and Philippine Relations," Mallare examines the bilateral relationship between the United States of America and the Philippines and whether these allies have laws that protect women who are caught in the mail order bride system. She also explains the harm of stereotyping Filipinas or women of Asian descent as sex workers, and the need to protect women from possible abuse by their white male perpetrators. Lastly, Mallare provides an analysis of the legal and regulatory regimes that are currently in place and whether laws, from both ends of the Pacific, are effective or outdated.

This important legal commentary is followed by: the results of a PEW Charitable Trust funded study, an artists electronic publication, and a compilation of English and Tagalog poems which delve into Filipino life in America, using political science, arts, technology, and humanities approaches. In "Apathy to Activism through Filipino American Churches," Claudine del Rosario and Joaquin L. Gonzalez III examine the conversion of socio-political capital for Filipino immigrants in the United States. Gonzalez and

del Rosario argue that the Filipinized churches in San Francisco have become modern day counter-hegemonic spaces and structures where advocacy and activism tactics are learned and immigrant rights are discussed. These counter-hegemonic actions are then directed at US laws that displace, repress, and discriminate against new immigrants.

Changing spatial and literary spaces, this issue moves to contributions from: award-winning artist Carlos Villa and award-winning writer Rofel Brion. Carlos Villa teams up with humanities computing consultant Andrew Venell to move from the traditional visual artists' medium to an electronic arts masterpiece, "Worlds in Collision." This is the world's first website devoted to Filipino American art history. Villa and Venell provides a website collage representing a lineage of Filipino American artists and makers and their cultural achievements in painting and sculpture, graphic design, graffiti writing, "turntablism," music, writing, and film. Ateneo de Manila University Professor Rofel Brion, a Spring 2006 Visiting Fulbright scholar at USF, offers three poems, each in Filipino and English. The Filipino versions were first printed in his acclaimed book, *Story*. The Filipino poems are included in this issue with permission. Entitled "Poems from Diaspora," the English translations, which were written in San Francisco, are being published here for the first time.

From the Philippine side of the Pacific Rim, two social scientists look at critical transnational issues which seem at the outset to be simply domestic concerns, i.e., at the national-level militarization and at the community-level corporate social responsibility. In "The Quest for Power: The Military in Philippine Politics, 1965-2002," Erwin Fernandez traces the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Philippine politics beginning in 1965 during the presidency of Marcos, until 2002, a year before the Oakwood Mutiny, during which a group of soldiers tried to overthrow current Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Fernandez argues that the specter of military interventionism would always haunt the Philippine body politic as long as there are no efforts to exorcise the ghosts of the past.

Meanwhile, in "Corporate-Community Engagement in Upland Cebu City, Philippines," Francisco Magno examines the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in strengthening resource management and environmental sustainability in the upland barangays (villages) of Cebu City located in the central Philippines. In this effort, Philippine Business for Social Responsibility (PBSP) partnered with companies such as the Aboitiz Group of Companies in implementing a package of interventions embodied in the Cebu Hillyland Development Program (CHDP), improving the organizational, socio-economic and environmental systems of communities in the local communities.

We conclude this special Philippine issue of *Asia Pacific Perspectives* with a section containing two essays on "Delano, California Grape Strike" veteran, Philip Vera Cruz. As Filipino Americans celebrate the centennial of the Filipino diaspora to the United States, Joaquin L. Gonzalez III in "Reflections on Philip Vera Cruz and the Filipino Diaspora" pays tribute to the lifetime accomplishments of this under-

studied Filipino and American historical icon, Philip Vera Cruz, by comparing his struggle for social justice with the contemporary battle for immigrant rights. Thus, Vera Cruz stands alongside well-known farm worker activists Larry Itliong and Cesar Chavez. Gonzalez argues that just like Vera Cruz and his contemporaries, the millions of overseas Filipinos of today are the modern-day heroes and heroines of the world we live in, a world without borders but still very much a world with limited protection and social justice for them.

In the second essay, entitled "A Conversation with Philip Vera Cruz, Spring 1971", Sid Valledor unveils an edited transcription of tape recorded personal interviews with the then 70-year old Vera Cruz. The frank and open exchange, between mentor and student, occurred at Vera Cruz' historic Delano home. For over thirty years these valuable tape recordings and Vera Cruz' writings remained dormant. With

mixed emotions Valledor, a retired labor leader, prevailed upon himself to let the world know of what Philip Vera Cruz had to say outside the popular press reports on the Great Delano Grape Strike, as Vera Cruz understood this event. Valledor's interview essay is an integral part of the farm workers movement story as seen from a unique historical evaluation.

This APP issue shares the extensive and collaborative scholarly work being undertaken by the one of the premier formal, institutionalized Philippines Studies program in the United States. Since all contributors are currently teaching, it also affords a foretaste into the range of topics and disciplines the next generation of Filipino and Filipina diaspora scholars are studying, increasingly curious about, and growing passionately engaged in. In other words, this special issue offers a glimpse into Filipino history "in the making."

# Primerang Bituin: Philippines-Mexico Relations at the Dawn of the Pacific Rim Century

by Evelyn I. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

## Abstract

Since the end of WWII, the region of countries bordering, and various island nations within, the Pacific Ocean, has drawn much attention, and been subject to a variety of institutional arrangements intended to promote certain political, economic, and environmental interests. Because of this, the mid-twentieth century is widely held as the starting point for Pacific Rim relations, and studies of Pan-Pacific interactions almost strictly concentrate on examining or trying to forecast their political, economic, and environmental outcomes. This study, however, proposes that the earliest and longest Pacific Rim relationship was actually that between Manila, Philippines and Acapulco, Mexico, and was sustained by the Manila Galleon Trade, between 1565 and 1815. Furthermore, it argues that the most significant result of this 250 year relationship was the profound cultural exchange which occurred between the Mexico and the Philippines.

The study sketches the prevalent discourse regarding the origins and effects of Pacific Rim dealings, and then it describes the history of the Manila Galleon Trade. Finally, it highlights some of the deep ways Mexican and Filipino pre-twentieth century societies were influenced by their trade with each other, and argues that this calls for more scholarly consideration of how contemporary Pacific Rim relations can have a significant bearing on culture, as well as socioeconomic and environmental matters.

One of the earliest memories I have of San Diego, California, where I grew up, is of my Filipina mother holding an animated conversation with our Mexican neighbor: They are seated on lawn chairs, in our neighbor's garage. In between studying for their US citizenship class, they are marveling at various words they have discovered we share: civic words like "*gobierno*", "*presidente*", and "*libre*"; and everyday terms like the days of the week, numbers, time, and, of course, "*tsismis/ chismis*". Their inventory seems endless, and each time one mentions something that the other recognizes, peals of delighted laughter and astonishment ensue and fill the garage.

Many years later, I have come to realize that this scene was just one outcome of the extensive historical connections which commenced between the Philippines and Mexico during the 16th century. In this article, I recount the three-century relationship fostered between Mexico and the Philippines under Spanish rule, and highlight some of the enduring legacies which have resulted from this pan-Pacific association. In doing so, I hope to illustrate that the transnational relationships which existed, and continue to be created, within the region we now call the "Pacific Rim" produced durable and lasting cultural effects, as well as political, economic, and environmental ones.

## The Conventional History of the Pacific Rim

Today, the Pacific-bordering countries of East Asia and Russia; Southeast Asia, the Southwest Pacific, and the Americas are popularly and institutionally, through organizations like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recognized as constituting "the Pacific Rim". The significance of this region has generally been traced back to 1854, after USN Commodore Matthew C. Perry negotiated the Treaty of Kanagawa, "opening Japan" to the West after two centuries of seclusion (Gibney 1992). But the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of this zone did not really come into public consciousness until after World War II, after it began to undergo "spectacular growth in production and international trade" (Linder 1986:1).

As a result, most contemporary studies of the Pacific Rim have concentrated on the region's economic expansion, and its dynamic political relationships and institutions, and its security architecture, including the positions and character of each nation's military. For instance, in their volume outlining a post-Cold War agenda for the Pacific Rim, Bundy, Burns, and Weichel emphasize restructuring "regional relations along more cooperative, transnational lines," strengthening "collective security agreements that emphasize nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and demilitarization," and protecting "the environment and human rights"—all "in the search for continued [economic] growth" (1994: 4-5, 8).

This article aims to revise the traditional history and foci of Pacific Rim studies by proposing that the Mexico-Philippines relationship created and managed by Spain from the 1500s to the 1800s was the first Pacific Rim association, especially to demonstrate that the cultural byproducts of the transcontinental ties deserve as much attention as their economic, political, and military counterparts.

## Ang Umpisa/ La Empieza

The relationship between the Philippines and Mexico began with almost a cosmic coincidence nearly 500 years ago. In March 1521, Ferdinand Magellan "discovered" a group of unrelated islands in the western Pacific, which would later be named and claimed *Las Filipinas*, for King Felipe II of Spain. That same year, only five months later, the heart of the Mexica<sup>1</sup> empire, *Tenochtitlán*, was surrendered to a Spanish armada led by Hernán Cortés, marking the creation of "New Spain" in the southern region of North America.

Cortés and his Spanish expedition's *conquista* of the Mexica kingdom began in the spring of 1519. By November of that year, the Spanish armada, along with about 6,000 Tlaxcalans (a tribe that had been conquered by the Mexica), had ventured from the eastern coast of present-day Veracruz to the enormous capital city of *Tenochtitlán*, in central Mexico (Hassig 1994). Shortly after, Cortés seized the Mexican emperor, Moctezuma II,<sup>2</sup> despite what is acknowledged by records from both sides to have been a hospitable reception. Numerous humiliations, the murder of two Mexica monarchs, the deaths of 450 Spanish men and 4,000 Tlaxcalan soldiers, and a three-month siege involving the cruel obstruction of

*Tenochtitlán's* food and water supply later, Cortés finally conquered Mexico for Spain (Prescott 1936).

In this way, Spain's conquest of Mexico took a brutal two and a half years. Its conquest of the Philippines, by comparison, was prolonged, but "almost bloodless." As the final *Mexica* emperor, Cuauhtémoc, and the *Mexica* took their last stand against Cortés and his troops, Magellan's three remaining ships and 150 crewmen were forced to flee from the Philippines, captainless, after Magellan was slain by natives of Mactán, led by their chieftain, Lapulapu, who refused to have Christianity and tributes to the King of Spain imposed upon them. It would take three subsequent Spanish expeditions<sup>3</sup> after Magellan's for Spain to establish its first colony in the Philippines, and another expedition after that to establish its first Filipino town and to seal its conquest of the islands. With the exception of the first one, all of these journeys were launched from Mexico.

In July 1525, an ill-fated fleet of seven ships left La Coruña, Spain, reached the southern islands of the Philippines (present-day Mindanao), but then witnessed its commanders untimely deaths in the Pacific. Two years later, in November 1527, Cortés, who had become the "virtual... lord and master" of *Nueva España*, "one of the most extensive, richest and strategically important vice-royalties in the dominions of powerful Spain," personally financed and assembled a party to sail to the Philippines from Zihuatanejo, Mexico, and placed his cousin, Alvaro de Saavedra Cerón, at its command (Agoncillo 1990; Giordano 2005). Following Magellan's sea route, Saavedra reached northeastern Mindanao in February 1528, but then died "on the high seas" (Agoncillo 1990). In 1543 a Spanish expedition from Juan Gallego, Mexico (present-day Navidad), finally set up a short-lived colony on the eastern coast of Mindanao, and named the cluster of culturally diverse and separately governed islands "*Las Islas de Filipinas*" in honor of their prince, Felipe II. But, like his predecessors before him, their captain, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, never returned to Spain, because an incurable fever seized him after his capture by the Portuguese in Malaku. Finally, in February 1565, four vessels commanded by Miguel López de Legaspi, reached Cebu, a central island, from Juan Gallego, Mexico. In April of that same year, Legaspi built and settled in *la Villa de San Miguel*, "the first Spanish town established in the Archipelago," and finally secured Spain's conquest there—forty-four years after Magellan first landed in the region (Agoncillo 1990).

## Legacies

Spain's protracted effort to institute its reign in the Philippines gave rise to 334 years of Spanish control over the islands (1565-1899), while it's shorter but nearly ruinous struggle to overthrow the Aztecs led to 300 years of Spanish occupation in Mexico (1521-1821). These centuries of Spanish rule created a significant relationship between the Philippines and Mexico, and left an abiding impact on each country's landscapes, institutions, and people. In fact, historian David Joel Steinberg writes that modern Filipino culture is very much a product of the interaction of cultures in the

Philippines during the Spanish occupation and that, "Without them, the history of the nation would have been radically different" (Steinberg 1982). And in 1829, former US Ambassador to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett, wrote, "The character of this people [Mexicans] cannot be understood, nor the causes of their present condition be fully developed without recurring to the oppression under which they formerly laboured" (Poinsett 2002)\*. I will now explain how Spain controlled and governed Mexico and the Philippines, in order to highlight notable ways in which imperialism in *Nueva España* and *Las Filipinas* affected these countries' modern "national characters".

## Colonizing Mexico

From the onset, Spain understood that harnessing the wealth of Mexico and the Philippines would require the cooperation (i.e., labor) of their indigenous populations, and that this, in turn, would be obtained by means of the spiritual conversion of each colonies' natives.

Since Spain did not secure its invasion of the Philippines until 1565, its project of indio spiritual conversion begins in Mexico. Almost immediately after *la conquista de Tenochtitlán*, Cortés requested a group of Franciscan monks to be sent from Spain "to protect and evangelize the Indians" (Joseph and Henderson 2002:115). In response, in 1524, a group of missionaries who would later come to be known as "the Twelve Apostles of *Nueva España*" ("the Twelve," for short) arrived in Mexico, by order of Charles V's Minister General, Francis Quiñones. Heavily influenced by currents in Renaissance humanism, the Twelve eschewed all comfort and embraced poverty and humility in all their works. Thus, when they arrived barefoot and ragged in Tenochtitlán, but were received by Spanish governors who knelt before them and kissed "each of their hands," the *indio caciques* ("chiefs") who witnessed this were astounded and became curious about the power and words of these men.

So it was that, through men who appeared poor and lowly in the eyes of the world, as though others just as poor, broken, and despised, the word [the Christian gospel] was introduced to this new world, and broadcast among those infidels who were present, and thence to the innumerable villages and peoples at their command (Mendieta c. 1571-1596).

"The missionaries lost no time in the good work of conversion" (Prescott 1936). Though they could not speak the native language, they acquired interpreters to help them proselytize until they learned *Nahuatl*, and/or until the natives became competent in Spanish. They founded schools and colleges to train native youth in Christian ways. Upon the grounds that the *indios* were continuing to offer brutal and idolatrous "sacrifices and services [to] demons," the friars began to obliterate their temples (and everything they contained), so that "in a few years the vestige of the primitive teocallis was effaced from the land" (Prescott 1936:638).

Then, in 1531 on a hillside named Tepeyác, in Tenochtitlán, a dark-skinned apparition calling herself *la Virgen de Guadalupe* (*la Virgen*) is said to have appeared to a

poor, childless *indio*, Juan Diego. According to the official (i.e., Vatican) and popular (folk) accounts, *la Virgen* asked Juan Diego, in Nahuatl, to tell the bishop to build a temple at that site. When Juan Diego did as requested, Juan de Zumárraga, Mexico's first bishop, refused to believe him, and insisted that Juan Diego bring back a "sign" to prove his story. When Juan Diego returned to Mary, she sent him to fill his *tilma*<sup>4</sup> with roses and then told him to bring them, untouched, to the bishop. Later, when Juan Diego unfolded his cloak to present Mary's roses to Zumárraga, a life-size figure of the *la Virgen* had appeared on his *tilma*, exactly as Juan Diego had described her.

Regardless of its veracity, this story captured the imaginations and hearts of countless *indios*, who later came to understand her manifestation in Tepeyác as a sign of Mexico's "chosen" status as the heart of Spain's empire in the Americas. This, arguably more than anything else, accelerated the Spaniards' Christian conversion of the *indios*. Thus, by 1545—the year Captain Lopez named *Las Islas Filipinas*—the Franciscans had converted reportedly over nine million Mexican *indios*, and had insured the physical survival of the Spanish in Mexico by pacifying the "millions of Indians who resented the Spaniards for having forcibly enslaved them" (Mendieta c. 1571-1596:120).

Between the arrival of the Franciscans and the time the Spanish also introduced a number of other institutions, ideas, and sicknesses to *Nueva España*. In 1528—the year Cortes' cousin, Saavedra, died at sea after reaching Mindanao—the Crown established an *encomienda* system<sup>5</sup> in Mexico similar to the one that they had instituted in the Caribbean islands, to exact labor and tributes from the native population. In 1530 they began to introduce Spanish plants, animals, and tools; and they began to extensively conscript the *indios* from all over Mexico into mining in gold and silver mines, building ships to send to California and the Philippines, and constructing the large stone edifices, roads, and watercourses they needed to erect Spanish towns (Zorita 1585).

In 1535, Tenochtitlán was made the capital of the newly-established "*Virreinato de Nueva España*," or "Viceroyalty of New Spain," renamed "*la Ciudad de México*" (Mexico City), and given its first viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza. The Viceroyalty of New Spain consisted of a territory that originally consisted of present-day Mexico, Central America, Florida, and parts of the Southwest United States; and later came to include the Philippines.

By 1545, a decade after Mendoza was given vice regal power of *Nueva España*, Mexico had changed dramatically from the days of the Mexica. A new dual economy of *haciendas* ("great landholdings") in central and southern Mexico, and of gold and silver mines in the north, had emerged. Deadly European epidemics the *indios* had not developed immunities from<sup>6</sup> and a "harsh system of tribute and labor extraction" had decreased Mexico's indigenous population by as much as 85%. And a growing influx of Spanish settlers and African slaves (Vaughn 2001)<sup>7</sup> had intermarried to create what Gloria Anzaldúa calls "a new hybrid race" of *mestizo Mexicanos* (Anzaldúa 1999), Mexicans of indigenous and/ or

Spanish, and/ or African descent.

All this racial diversity and "mixing" eventually helped produce a *casta*, or caste, society in Mexico, which was stratified by race and wealth (Rudolph and American University (Washington D.C.). Foreign Area Studies. 1985). The goal of this caste system (Table 1) was to show that certain racial mixtures were more positive than others.

**Table 1: Mexico's Colonial Casta System, in descending order of social position** (Source: Evelyn I. Rodriguez)

Casta	Description
<i>Peninsulares</i>	European-born whites (Spaniards)
<i>Criollos</i>	American/ Mexican-born whites
<i>Mestizos</i>	Spanish-Indio descent
<i>Mulattos</i>	Spanish-African descent
<i>Indios</i>	Natives
<i>Negros</i>	African descent

In it, European-born Spaniards, or *peninsulares*, were at the top of society, followed by their American-born offspring, *los criollos*. After *los criollos* were the offspring of unions between the Spanish and the *indios*, *los mestizos*. After *los mestizos* were *los mulattos*, those of Spanish and African descent; then *los indios*, and finally *los negros*, the African slaves. By virtue of their position at the top of the *casta* system, *peninsulares* held the most prestigious and well-paying jobs in New Spain, while those *criollos* and *mestizos* beneath them could work most jobs, but were considered ineligible for certain positions. Meanwhile, unconverted *indios* and Africans were deemed as only eligible for the most degrading work.

This project of racial formation—"the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (Omi and Winant 1994)—was motivated mostly by the desire "to safeguard the social position of the Spaniards" in a truly "new world" which offered inestimable opportunities for social mobility<sup>8</sup> to persons of any family, color, or financial background (Los Angeles County Museum of Art 2004).

By the seventeenth century, the *casta* system had become more evolved (and involved), with the Spanish naming and classifying more "castes" which might be produced through the union of various "mixtures;"<sup>9</sup> it had spawned a popular genre of paintings<sup>10</sup> and, most relevant for any discussion on Mexico's "national character," it created an enduring and unequal racial and color (skin pigment) hierarchy, which attributed supremacy to those of European descent and white skin, and inferiority to indigenous and other darker-skinned Mexicans.

## Colonizing the Philippines

By the time Spain successfully established *la Villa de San Miguel* in 1565, it had been experimenting with various ways of colonizing people for almost half a century in Mexico, so it was able to transplant what “worked” for them in Mexico, and to revise strategies for enterprises they thought could have gone better. Accordingly, one of Spain’s first priorities in the Philippines was “pacifying” the indios, through armed force, but especially via religion, in ways similar and dissimilar to how the early missionaries had operated in *Nueva España*. The Spanish felt that use of religion and culture to “mould the natives in the Hispanic image” was particularly important in *las Filipinas*, because, unlike in Mexico, they had not inherited a unified state in the Philippines, but rather, “fragmented units of islands and islets of various sizes separated by numberless bodies of water” (Agoncillo 1990:74-75).

The first priests to establish a religious settlement in the Philippines were Franciscans who arrived in 1577, followed by the Jesuits who arrived in 1581. Both these orders first came to Manila, the walled, European-style city (also called “Intramuros”) that Legaspi constructed and established as the Filipino capital after defeating the Muslim natives of the prosperous and strategically-located<sup>11</sup> village of *Maynilad* in 1571. At the Synod of Manila in 1582, representatives of several orders “agreed to divide the Philippines into spheres of influence” (Steinberg 1982:64). Thus, the Jesuits and Franciscans were later joined by the Dominicans in 1587 and then by the Augustinian Recollects in 1608.

All these orders were obligated by the Synod to contribute to Filipino *reducción*<sup>12</sup> by building and living in “*pueblos*,” settlements centered around a *plaza* which contained the church and a convent, “instead of going around chasing souls” (Agoncillo 1990:80). As orders established *pueblos* throughout the various islands, “new Christian converts were required to construct their houses around the church and the unbaptized were invited to do the same” (Agoncillo 1990). Notably, they also founded a number of schools, including the Philippines’ first university, the (Dominican) University of Santo Tomas (UST). Since the terms of the Synod also outlined that missionaries must “proselytize in the vernacular [native dialect] rather than in Spanish,” the majority of Philippines indios, unlike the indios in Mexico, “never learned much Spanish, because they gained education and religion through the friars in their own Philippine language” (Steinberg 1982:64).

Having learned from *Nueva España* that one way to effectively draw Christian converts among the *indios* was to take advantage of their tradition of and partiality for “burdensome ceremonial” and “fantastic idols” (Prescott 1936:638), in the Philippines,

...the Spanish friars utilized the novel sights, sounds, and even smell of the Christian rites and rituals—colorful and pompous processions, songs, candle-lights, saints dressed in elaborate gold and silver costumes during the May festivals of flores de Mayo or the santa Cruzan, the lighting of firecrackers even as the Host was elevated, the *sinákulo* (passion play),<sup>13</sup> and

the Christian versus Muslim conflict dream (*moro-moro*) [to] “hypnotize...” the spirit of the indio (Agoncillo 1990).

This method of attracting indio converts, combined with the widespread *reducción* efforts of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Recollects, and *encomenderos* (to a minor extent), had the effect of establishing “common religious and ethical precepts, a common faith” across *Las Filipinas* by the start of the 17th century, “but not a common language or sense of single community” (Steinberg 1982). This served Spain very well by practically erasing any likelihood of a sizeable *indio* rebellion (since communication between Filipino groups who spoke distinct dialects was not viable), while facilitating their efforts to indoctrinate the *indios* with Christian teachings and to train them to become loyal subjects of the Spanish crown.

As this was ongoing, privileged Spanish nationals were making small fortunes off the transplanted *encomienda* system in *Las Filipinas*. Like his American counterpart, the Philippine *encomendero* had the right to impose tribute on male residents of his *encomienda*, and he

... was duty-bound to defend his *encomienda* from external incursions, to keep peace and order, and to assist the missionaries in teaching the Christian gospel to the residents within his sphere of influence (Agoncillo 1990).

But, despite being “entrusted”<sup>14</sup> with the physical and spiritual welfare of those living within their *encomiendas*, most *encomenderos* notoriously abused their power in the Philippines and the New World by arbitrarily raising the rates of tributes paid in money or in kind,<sup>15</sup> artificially inflating the costs of staple products by stockpiling them and selling them to the natives at higher rates, and unconscionably exploiting the *indios*’ labor (Agoncillo 1990:84-85).

Similar abuses had led to the formal eradication of Mexican *encomiendas* in 1560;<sup>16</sup> but in the Philippines, the government, another institution transplanted from the New World,<sup>17</sup> often looked away from the transgressions of its *encomenderos*, choosing instead to devote its attention and resources to overseeing its critical galleon trade between Manila and Mexico.

The “Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade” was made possible by the trade route discovered by Legaspi’s chief navigator, Fray Andres de Urdaneta, during Legaspi’s return voyage from the Philippines to *Nueva España* (earlier considered impossible), after his 1565 conquest. Once established, it was “the only regular fleet service in the huge stretch of the Pacific Ocean for two hundred fifty years” (Agoncillo 1990:85), making two treasure-laden journeys a year (on one outgoing vessel and one incoming vessel), between Manila and Acapulco de Juárez, on the west coast of Mexico. The vessels primarily brought silver from *Nueva España* to *las Filipinas* in exchange for porcelain, silk, ivory, spices, and other goods from China, for Mexico and Spain.

Although this trade route has been described as “the most persistent, perilous, and profitable commercial enterprises in European colonial history” (Mathers 1990), in the Philippines, it only benefited a small group of Chinese mer-



chants in Manila<sup>18</sup> and “a very small coterie of privileged Spaniards,” and it created widespread, long-standing damage on the native economy (Agoncillo 1990:85). By 1815, when the Manila-Acapulco trade was finally terminated because of the creation of the “Royal Philippine Company,” which shipped directly from Manila to Spain via the Cape of Good Hope, “many of the significant Filipino cottage industries such as weaving and extractive industries were... ruined and disregarded along with agriculture” (Agoncillo 1990:86).

While Philippine administrators reserved almost all their time and energy for overseeing the galleon trade, the rest of the colony had turned into what social critic, Marcelo H. del Pilar, derisively called a “*frailocracia*” (“friorocracy”) (Agoncillo 1990:79). As it had in Mexico, a society stratified by class and color emerged in the Philippines, under Spanish rule (Table 2).

**Table 2: Philippines' Colonial Social System** (Source: Evelyn I. Rodriguez)

Casta	Description	Social Positions in Philippines
<i>Peninsulares</i>	European-born whites (Spaniards)	Highest administrative positions, clergy
<i>Insulares</i>	Philippine-born whites (Spaniards)	High administrative positions, clergy
" Filipinos "	Spanish-Indio descent	Lower administrative positions, <i>ilustrados</i>
Chinese <i>Mestizos</i>	Spanish-Chinese descent; Chinese-Filipino descent	Merchants, lower administrative positions
Chinese	Immigrants of Chinese descent	Merchants
<i>Indios</i>	Natives	Menial labor

At the top, were the Iberian-born *peninsulares*, then the *insulares* or Philippine-born Spaniards. After them were the “Filipinos,” Spanish-Indio *mestizos* (the educated Filipino *mestizos* among this class were referred to as “*ilustrados*”); then the Chinese *mestizos* and the Chinese; and, lastly, the darker-skinned natives, the *indios*. It was unnecessary and too expensive to import African slaves to the *las Filipinas*, so a negro class never really emerged during the Spanish colonial era,<sup>19</sup> and a substantial *criollo* population never really developed in the Philippines, since many *peninsulares* never truly settled in the Philippines. *Peninsulares* often only stayed in the islands long enough to complete the tenure of a temporary civil appointment before returning either to Mexico or the Spain.

This state of affairs made parish priests the most powerful citizens of the islands, since they “more often than not [were] the only Caucasian and the most important official dominating the town during the entire span of the colonial period” (Agoncillo 1990). As Del Pilar explained,

The friars control all of the fundamental forces of society in the Philippines. They control the educational system, for they own the University..., and are the local inspectors of every primary school. They control the minds of the people because in a dominantly Catholic country, the parish rectors can utilize the pulpit and confessionals to publicly or secretly influence

the people; they control all the municipal and local authorities and the medium of communication; and they execute all the orders of the central government (Agoncillo 1990:79).

## Revolución

Across the Pacific, in Mexico, strong criticisms of members of the highest caste of that society had also emerged. However, in New Spain, this caste was not primarily composed of priests, but of secular *peninsulares* who had been given near-exclusive control of the colony's high offices and monopolies (Espinosa Productions and KPBS-TV San Diego 1999). Mexico's *criollos* and *mestizos* especially resented the power of the Mexican *peninsulares*, and opposed their oppression of the *indios*. So, when *peninsulares* seized control of Mexico City after Napoleon III briefly usurped the Spanish throne in 1808, *criollos* and *mestizos* all over Mexico began to plot various rebellions. About two decades of disorderly and violent civil war ensued. In 1821, the revolution incited and led by *criollo* priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (executed by the Spanish in 1811) and *mestizo* priest José María Morelos y Pavón (executed by the Spanish in 1815), finally achieved Mexican independence.

Meanwhile, conditions for all but the “tiny upper echelons of society” in the Philippines worsened. Loss of the galleon trade caused tremendous economic dislocation in the archipelago, since its economy had come to be almost entirely dependent on it. The loss of the empire in Latin America and the Caribbean made *peninsulares* increasingly suspicious of, and alienated from, anyone born in the Philippines. As the Philippines became more polarized, “locally born Filipinos began to see the country as rightfully theirs and the *peninsulares* as alien rulers” (Steinberg 1982:39).

For over half a century after the loss of New Spain, the Spanish were able “to hide endemic domestic instability in Spain and political, economic, and military weaknesses in the Philippines by bravura” (Steinberg 1982:39). They continued to try and “Hispanize” Filipinos by supplanting *baybayin* (pre-colonial writing) with the Latin alphabet, by legally requiring natives to adopt Spanish surnames (to make it easier to exact taxes and labor, and to control migration), by proselytizing in local dialects to prevent the archipelago's many tribes from recognizing their collective repression and subsequently forming a force in opposition to Spanish rule, and by educating only the colony's top *mestizo* intellects to prepare them to Christianize and govern the natives (Agoncillo 1990:91-100).

However, and somewhat in following with the precedent set by their *criollo* and *mestizo* counterparts in Mexico, Filipino *ilustrados* increasingly began to articulate a dormant nationalist sentiment. In 1886, one of these *ilustrados*, twenty-six year old Jose Rizal (now the Philippines' national hero), finished writing his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. Embedding an indictment of Spain's rule of the Philippines in the tale of a son's pursuit of justice for his dead father, a young woman's coming-of-age, and the ill-fated romance they shared (Rizal 1887), “the *Noli*” sent political shockwaves

throughout Spain and the Philippines. More significantly, its author's execution by firing squad in 1896 activated a grass-roots movement which had already been conspiring for independence, and provided the spark which finally provoked widespread Filipino insurgency against Spain.

In 1898, lead by non-*ilustrado* Andres Bonifacio, and a new military leader, Emilio Aguinaldo; and only two years after Rizal's execution and the commencement of the Philippines Revolution, the Philippines finally won its independence from Spain. But within months after its inauguration, the Republic of the Philippines found itself at war for its freedom again—this time, with its former ally, the United States.<sup>20</sup>

### "Bajo el Toque de la Campana"

Ultimately, the Spanish ruled Mexico for 300 years, and the Philippines for 334. Now that I have narrated the relevant the histories of the Philippines and Mexico up to their independence from Spain, I highlight how the relationships, people, events, and structures from both these countries' colonial periods have left enduring effects on both these nations and their people. For long after *Madre España's* forced departure from these countries, Filipinos and Mexicans continue to live "*bajo el toque de la campana*" in many ways. Here, I discuss the effects of Spanish colonialism on Mexican and Filipino religions, histories, systems of stratification, and identities.

In both the Philippines and Mexico, one of the most obvious lasting cultural outcomes of Spanish colonization—besides their noticeable similarities in social structure, normative commitments, and problems—is a unique Roman Catholicism. Today, the Philippines is remarkable for being the only predominately Christian country among its East and South East Asian neighbors, with about 80% of its population having been baptized Roman Catholic. Mexico, meanwhile, is home to over 85 million (95% of its population) Catholics, making it the second largest Catholic country in the world (Our Sunday Visitor Inc. 1998).

The theatrical and accommodating ways that each country's earlier missionaries drew *indios* to the Church have made Catholicism in these places characteristically unique. Today, the Catholicism practiced in Mexico and the Philippines continues to co-exist with pre-colonial traditions, superstitions, and beliefs. In Mexico, the most notable example of this is the veneration of the Aztec goddess-cum-"saint," *Guadalupe-Tonantzin*. In many parts of Mexico, *Guadalupe* has come to command more devotion than Christ. Her image adorns everything, from prayer books, to beach towels, to the tattooed backs of the most *macho* men; and millions make the pilgrimage to her basilica in Mexico City every year to implore her protection, cures, and good blessings. In the Philippines, I witnessed a local example of the fusion of pre-Hispanic traditions with modern Catholicism while observing women at the gates of a parish in Calamba (Jose Rizal's hometown). As parishioners entered the church grounds, these women offered to light hand-made candles for a few *centavos* each, promising that each one burned would fulfill a secret prayer—whether it be calamity for an enemy, or affection in a

yearned-for lover's heart. The persistence of *indio* folk beliefs and practices in Mexican and Filipino Catholicism might first appear to reflect the obstinacy of superstition; but I argue that it is symbolic of *indio* resistance to full "Hispanization," and of their cultural resilience and creativity, even amidst a powerful institution's destruction of nearly all records of their former forms of worship.

This destruction of the pre-colonial past, incidentally, is another—less readily apparent, but direr—cultural consequence of Spain's three-century presence in the Philippines and Mexico. In the Philippines, which already lacked extensive recorded histories of/ by its various groups before Magellan arrived, the zeal of the Spanish missionaries to destroy what little evidence existed of the islands' pre-colonial cultures resulted in the eradication of virtually all the archipelago's pre-colonial writings, art, and, ultimately, memories. In Mexico, such absolute historical amnesia was only averted because of haste and avarice. "The colonial enterprise engaged in destroying Mesoamerican civilization and stopped only where self-interest intervened" (Batalla 1975:29). During the demolition of the pre-colonial cities and temples, some left various places and items only "superficially" (for lack of a better term) ruined so that they could find, steal, and hoard indigenous "treasures." This saved some sites and artifacts from complete destruction, but still left relatively little behind of what was once an immense and thriving civilization.

This erasure of all or most of the Mexico and the Philippines' pre-Spanish histories means that, for the "average" Filipino or Mexican today, it is very difficult to recall an "evocative era prior to the Spanish period" to which they can "turn with pride" (Steinberg 1982:34). What's more, the absence of a pre-colonial history has stressed the "outsider" and the "alien" in their cultures, "denying the reality of the native." And this has left many Mexicans and Filipinos not only unsure of who they were before Spain, but also profoundly ashamed of "having no culture."

The inferiorizing of native people (especially by native people themselves) was and is compounded by the internalization and continuing operation of the race and class structures and ideologies that Mexico and the Philippines inherited from their colonizers. The *casta* system invented in the New World and later transplanted in *Las Filipinas* created durable associations between lighter skin and entitlement, beauty, intelligence, and even morality. Conversely, it linked darker skin with insignificance, repulsiveness, and a lack of intelligence and morality. Since most native Filipinos and Mexicans were/ are darker skinned, these frameworks, combined with their loss of a pre-colonial sense of self, has had intensely self-denigrating effects. Jose Rizal recognized this in the 19th century when he wrote that Filipinos had

... little by little... lost their old traditions, the memories of their past; ... gave up their writing, their songs, their powers, their laws in order to learn by rote other doctrines which they did not understand.... Then they declined, degrading themselves in their own eyes; they became ashamed of what was their own;

they began to admire and praise whatever was foreign and incomprehensible; their spirit was dismayed and it surrendered (quoted in Agoncillo 1990:100).

Although I cannot go into a very extensive discussion of this here, it is worth noting (especially since it is one of the foci of my larger research on Mexican and Filipino American immigrant families and rituals) that the degradation of the natives of Spain's former colonies is experienced differently according to gender, as well as by class and color. Present-day feminine ideals in Mexico and the Philippines have been clearly fashioned after those introduced by the Spanish. In Mexico, the foremost model of femininity is embodied by the Spanish-induced miracle of *la Virgen*. *La Virgen* is everything the biblical Mary is—and more. In the Bible, Mary is God's "favorite daughter," who unquestioningly puts herself at God's service when she is told she will bear God's son, despite being a virgin (Luke 10:26-38). Beyond that, *la Virgen* is seen as having taken "upon herself the psychological and physical devastation of the oppressed *indio*" (Anzaldúa 1999:52), and as "pure receptivity" who "consoles, quiets, dries tears, calms passions" (Paz 1950:25). She is a model of Mexican femininity that epitomizes and elevates chastity (as her name implies), obedience, and selflessness.

For Filipinos, who prior to Spanish rule maintained a bilateral kinship system and egalitarian gender relations,<sup>21</sup> uphold Maria Clara de los Santos ("Maria Clara"), the primary female protagonist from Rizal's *Noli*, as the fundamental archetype for Filipina womanhood. Though only human, Maria Clara exemplifies ideals similar to *la Virgen*. She is naturally beautiful (she is a light-skinned *mestiza*), but always conscious of her dress and comportment. She is an unselfish, unquestioning daughter, who is willing to "sacrifice" her own serenity in order to assure her father's peace. She is resilient, enduring physical illness and profound heartache throughout Rizal's story. She is a pure ("virginal"), patient, honest, and loyal sweetheart. And when she realizes that she cannot be with the "one love" that can complete and fulfill her, she does the only other thing she can do: she voluntarily surrenders her life to God.

Such paradigms for femininity indicate and require that Filipina and Mexican women bear the responsibility of establishing the "moral worth" and "beauty" of their people. This implies that Mexicanas and Filipinas not only are subject to the racial "inferiorization" experienced by all Mexicans and Filipinos; they are expected help lift their people from their cultural shame by embodying sometimes pleasurable, but always selfless, deferential, and restrictive gendered ideals.

Anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla poignantly captures the tragic contradiction of this native "colonial mentality" when he observes that, "In this way of thinking about things, the majority of Mexicans have a future only on the condition that they stop being themselves" (1975:30). Batalla articulates how, for a former subject who has embraced her/his master's way of thinking, the only way to "have a future" is to deny oneself, and to demean and/ or forget one's origins—in short, to be like one's colonizer.

Despite these tragedies, some positive Philippine-Mexico

cultural connections were made possible under Spanish rule, via the galleon trade—what I argue was the conduit for the first real Pacific Rim relationship. Philippine historian Teodoro A. Agoncillo writes that,

*The mango de Maynila*, tamarind and rice, the carabao (known by 1737 in Mexico), cockfighting, Chinese tea and textiles including the famous *mantón de Manila*, the use of nipa palm raincoat (*shirgo* or *chino*), fireworks..., chinaware, and even tubã<sup>22</sup>-making came to Mexico through the trans-Pacific trade (Agoncillo 1990:87).

He continues that, "In exchange, [contact with Mexican culture] brought innumerable and valuable flora into the Philippines: avocado, guava, papaya, pineapple, horses and cattle" (Agoncillo 1990:87). And he goes on to explain how major religious figures in Philippines culture (such as the Virgin of Antipolo, the image of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo) have Mexican origins, and how "a considerable number of Nahuatl elements crept into the Philippine languages" (Agoncillo 1990:87), including the Pilipino words "*nanay*" ("mother," from the Nahuatl word "*nantli*") and "*tatay*" ("father," from the Nahuatl word "*tatli*").<sup>23</sup> Again, the conversation described at the beginning of this article is another example of the linguistic effects of the intercultural exchanges between Mexico and the Philippines, which were facilitated, in part, by the galleon trade.

This contradiction, the erasure of a history before 1521, and a culture and people blended from various nationalities, colors, languages, and religions are three *toques* of Spanish colonialism that reverberate throughout Mexico and the Philippines, to this day.

## Conclusion

In relating the transnational interactions which occurred between the Philippines and Mexico between the 16th and 19th centuries, I hope I have demonstrated that their 20th and 21st century counterparts—and the various relations which have been instituted as a result of the history between these nations included in the Pacific Rim—can produce profound cultural exchanges, as well as significant political, economic, military, and environmental consequences. Hopefully, this illustration of the deep ways Mexican and Filipino pre-20th century societies, were and have been influenced by each other, will inspire more scholarly consideration into the considerable and long-standing outcomes on people and cultures, including transnational and diasporic movements and transformations of labor, that today's Pacific Rim associations and organizations will assuredly create.

## ENDNOTES

1. Nahuatl term for what we today refer to as "Aztec".
2. This is the most common rendering of the emperor's name, which is spelled "Motecuhzoma" in the León Portilla's Aztec accounts (León Portilla, Miguel and Lysander Kemp. 1962. *The Broken Spears; the Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston: Beacon Press.).
3. All of these were in conscious violation of the 1529 "Treaty of Zaragoza," a treaty brokered by Pope Alexander VI which divided the world outside of Europe between Portugal and Spain and included

- the area where the Philippines lies as part of Portugal's dominion.
4. A long shawl used by Mexican *indios*.
  5. The *encomienda* system granted Spanish subjects property and control of Indian labor in exchange for helping to convert natives to Christianity, and/ or governing new territories. This lured many Spaniards to the Americas, in search of easy land and money
  6. Such as smallpox, measles, typhoid, and yellow fever.
  7. Opponents of the enslavement of Mexico's indigenous people ironically proposed to import black slaves from Africa. Although this was ultimately too expensive for the Spanish to implement, records indicate that about 6,000 African slaves reached Mexico.
  8. More out of administrative neglect (ie, Spain did not want to be bothered), than out of any true aspiration for a new democratic society.
  9. For example, Spaniards and *mestizos* were said to produce "*castizos*"; *indios* and Africans said to produce "*lobos*" ("wolves"); and Spaniards and mulattos, "*albinos*". These names and categories never achieved consistent usage.
  10. "Most casta paintings were conceived as sets of sixteen scenes, painted on either a single canvas, or separate surfaces. Each image depicts a family group with parents of different races and one or two of their children. The racial mixtures are identified by inscriptions and the scenes are hierarchically arranged" (Los Angeles County Museum of Art 2004).
  11. On the Philippines' Manila Bay and the Pasig River.
  12. The venture of "collect[ing] all the scattered Filipinos together... *bajo el toque de la campana*" ("...under the peal of the bell") or in concentrated areas which could easily be administered by the Church or an *encomendero* [man who had received an *encomienda*]" (Agoncillo 1990).
  13. Re-creating the days and events before Jesus Christ's crucifixion.
  14. The literal translation of "*encomienda*" is "It entrusts."
  15. This is in spite of the fact that their right to impose tributes were supposed to be "according to the limit and kind set by higher authorities" (Agoncillo 1990).
  16. They were later restored because of pressure from Mexican colonialists.
  17. "From 1565-1821, the Philippines was a captaincy-general administered by the Spanish king through the Viceroyalty of Nueva España" (Agoncillo 1990). As in Mexico, administration of the Spanish colony in the Philippines was divided into different levels (in descending order of size and importance): national, provincial, city, municipal, and *barangay* (local district). The Spanish crown governed through the *gobernador y capitán-general*, the King's sole representative and spokesman in the Philippines. The *gobernador-general* had legislative, executive, and judicial power over the entire colony. Beneath him was the *alcalde mayor* who exercised executive and judicial authority at the provincial level (or a *corregidor* if the province was unpopulated, and had been declared a military zone), then the *ayuntamientos* (city governments, composed of a number of councilors and an *alguacil mayor*, or chief constable) at the city level, the *gobernadorcillo* ("little governor") at the municipal level, and finally the *cabeza de barangay* at the district level. Only a Spaniard could be an *alcalde mayor*, a *corregidor*, or serve on an *ayuntamiento*. Only Filipino or Chinese *mestizo* men who were literate in oral or written Spanish could serve as *gobernadorcillos* or *cabezas de barangay* (Agoncillo 1990).
  18. "Tempted by the lucrative trade Chinese immigrants converged at... Manila in Binondo as early as 1637. By 1687, a community of Christian Chinese and mestizos was already formally based in Binondo" (Agoncillo 1990).
  19. Although there were, and still are, natives who are "dark skinned, short, small of frame, kinky haired, snub nosed, and with big black eyes," who live in the Philippines, the *Aeta*. The *Aeta* escaped Spanish and American colonization in the forests of the Philippines. Their genealogy "confound[s] anthropologist and archaeologists;" however, currently, one accepted theory suggests that they "are the descendants

- of the original inhabitants of the Philippines who arrived through land bridges that linked the country with the Asian mainland some 30,000 years ago... when the Malay peninsula was still connected with Sumatra and other Sunda Islands" (Cultural Center of the Philippines 1994).
20. In 1902, the US decisively defeated the Philippines in the Philippine-American war; it would continue to occupy the Philippines until 1946.
21. "Women before the coming of the Spaniards enjoyed a unique position in society that their descendants during the Spanish occupation did not enjoy. Customary laws gave them the right to be the equal of men, for they could own and inherit property, engage in trade and industry, and succeed to the chieftainship of a *barangay* in the absence of a male heir" (Agoncillo 1990).
22. "Coconut toddy." A liquor made by extracting the sap of an unopened coconut bud.
23. "*Nanay*" and "*Tatay*" are used more commonly; but the "true" Tagalog words for "mother" and "father" are "*ina*" and "*itay*."

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## Mail-Order Brides: A Closer Look at U.S. & Philippine Relations

by Marie Lorraine Mallare, J.D.

### Abstract

This legal commentary explores the issues of the mail order bride and sex trafficking industry. It is an attempt to look at the relationship between the United States of America and the Philippines and whether these allies have laws that protect women who are caught in the mail order bride system. It also explains the harm of stereotyping Filipinas or women of Asian descent as sex workers, and the need to protect women from possible abuse by their white male perpetrators. Lastly, the article provides analysis of the laws that are currently in place and whether these laws are effective or outdated.

Through this legal commentary, I seek to change the perspectives and perceptions of how men, particularly “white men,” perceive Filipina women (or *Pinays*). At the age of nine, I was sent to the Philippines to attend elementary school. My mother believed that the best way for me to learn the Philippine language and culture was to immerse me. I studied at an exclusive school for girls located in Quezon City, which was directly controlled and managed by the Maryknoll Sisters. On my first day in school, as we were making our introductions in class, I was asked by my teacher: “What are your parents’ occupations?” I proudly responded: “My father works for the U.S. Navy and is currently on the aircraft carrier *USS Enterprise*, and formerly, my mother was an aide to then President Ramon Magsaysay.” The class burst out in laughter. I did not understand why. A girl seated close to me asked, “Are you a G.I. baby?” I did not understand what she meant by saying this? After class my teacher called me and asked me if I was alright. I said, “I was fine”. That afternoon, on the school bus going home, I heard the other girls talking about me. Still I did not know why. When I arrived home I immediately told my mother and *Tita*<sup>1</sup> about the incident in school. They explained to me that any mention of the “U.S. military” connotes that my mother is either a bar girl or a prostitute. Further, it also meant that my mother probably married a white man to get to the U.S. It was surprising to hear this. After that I made sure that I did not talk about my parents as much. I refused to even mention the word “U.S. Navy”. Then, I believed that there was something strange about my father’s occupation. I want to explain to the world that Filipina women are not all stereotypically in the sex industry. The United States military installations in the Philippines, particularly Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base, have brought this horrible image since the local economies around these bases became dependent on “rest and recreation” dollars. The Philippines history of foreign occupation, in addition to the resulting military sexual colonialism that persisted even after the country gained inde-

pendence from the United States on July 4th, 1946, contributes to Filipinas’ acceptance of marriage to foreigners: in particular the belief that white foreigners are more desirable husbands.<sup>2</sup> As for my parents, they are both of Filipino descent.

The label “mail-order bride” often brings to mind historical images from times long gone. However, this form of trafficking women internationally thrives in the modern global economic system. Operating virtually without regulation, the modern mail-order bride industry prospers by exploiting the power disparities between men and women, rich and poor, those from developed economies and those from developing economies. Young women from poor families in economically struggling nations are transported from their homes, like products, to male citizens of economically advantaged nations under the supervision of for-profit companies known as “mail-order bride agencies.” Throughout the world, the industry is responsible only to its consumers and its own budget. The United States, a destination (or “import”) nation for this industry and the Philippines, one of the most prominent origin, or “export” nations, exemplify the modern state players in the mail-order bride industry.

The mail-order bride industry has been criticized by social and legal commentators for its exploitation of women, creation of immigration problems, perpetuation of stereotypes, and tendency to create situations in which domestic violence thrives. A few laws have been enacted in the United States and the Philippines which attempt to regulate these problems. However, the legislation that does exist has proven largely ineffective to curb the problems associated with this practice of trafficking women. While the number of mail-order bride companies are on the rise and the industry thrives, the harms to the women trafficked have not begun to subside. Recommendation of future attempts to regulate the industry should include international cooperation and concerted multinational effort to control the supply and demand forces in the industry on a global level, rather than attempt to exert control from the national level.

In this legal commentary, I will examine the state of the mail-order bride industry in the United States and the Philippines, legal regulations, and the potential alternatives to current regulations schemes. I assert that the business trade of Filipina or Asian women mail-order brides is premised on the male consumer’s racialized expectations of sexual and domestic labor services to be provided within the privacy of the home. Women are commodities, whether one comes from a privileged background or not. The bottom line is that Filipina women are preyed on as if there is a “For Sale” sign on their foreheads. I argue that international sex trafficking, including mail order brides is a form of prostitution. Although, one can argue that there are some successful relationships from the business of mail-order brides. Overall, the business connotes that women from the Philippines are prostitutes. This commentary ends with a call for more effective transnational regulation that addresses these problems, and suggests possible content for these international legal instruments.

## Background

When the U.S. bases leave, we will still be prostitutes servicing not only the Americans but also the multinationals.

-A former Olongapo bar girl

This statement accurately describes the direction in which the former American military bases in the Philippines are going, transformed in pursuit of the *Medium Term Philippine Development Plan* (MTPDP or Philippines 2000)<sup>3</sup> from exclusive “rest and relaxation: preserves of the U.S. military into a big brothel for multinationals.

The MTPDP was former President Fidel Ramos’ economic blueprint for attaining the status of a newly industrialized country (NIC) by the year 2000, following the footsteps of Asian tigers and cubs like Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia. This plan envisions the establishment of regional agro industrial estates with export processing and tourism as the main economic activities. The plan conforms to the set of conditions laid out by the current Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Foreign investments and foreign loans have so far come in trickles. Revenue from the garment and electronics industries (of which more than 80 percent of the work force are women) and remittances sent home by overseas contract workers and migrants (of which more than 50 percent are women) currently prop up the economy and fuel Ramos’s MTPDP. Women are proving to be the very backbone on which the government is relying to subsidize the ambitions Philippines 2000 plan. With Business comes pleasure. The MTPDP integrates sex tourism into the overall scheme to attract foreign investors, using women as lures. In Cebu, the number of female prostitutes has doubled since the city launched a campaign to attract investment. From March 1992 to June 1993, the number registered commercial sex workers increased from 1,557 to 2,189.<sup>4</sup> In Laoag City, where direct international flights from Taiwan bring in Taiwanese businessmen, prostitution also increased, and in another town in Central Luzon, there was an observable increase in the number of prostitutes working in beer houses and clubs along the highway.

The Philippines, a predominantly Catholic nation, women’s source of income are a contradiction to the beliefs of the church. The average daily wage in the Philippines is P118 pesos (about \$4.20 U.S.). The average daily cost of living for a family of six (the size of the average family) is P286 pesos (about U.S. \$10.20). Children, as well as both parents, may have to work in order to earn enough to maintain the family.

For an increasing number of women, the only option other than prostitution is to migrate to other countries as brides, contract workers, or sex workers. In a country where 70 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, where 20 percent of the population<sup>5</sup> (landlords, big businessmen, and bureaucrats) controls 52 percent of the national income, and where women continue to be marginalized in a development process that favors the rich, women will contin-

ue to migrate in large numbers to foreign countries to seek the proverbial greener pastures.

Scattered throughout 132 countries, most of the Filipinas that have migrated abroad in the last ten years have found work as domestic helpers, chambermaids, entertainers, nurses or prostitutes. Marginalized in low-status jobs as migrants who do not enjoy the rights of citizens in the receiving countries, they are particularly vulnerable working in the private sphere of the home, where they live and render services beyond the reach and foreknowledge of entities that could provide them with needed assistance and protection.

When the floodgates of labor export were opened, trafficking of Filipina women abroad for prostitution became a systematized, large-scale operation. Migration for work, the mail-order bride system, and direct recruitment for the global entertainment industry were the channels. Filipino women in these situations frequently experience violence or other forms of abuse. In Japan, where about 90 percent of Filipinas work as entertainers, the women become easy prey to the Yakuza underworld of drugs and prostitution.<sup>6</sup> In Australia, fifteen Filipinas have been murdered by their husband since 1980.

Filipina migrants contribute greatly to propping up the Philippine economy through their tax remittances to the Philippine government, which if one includes those paid by Filipino male migrants total an average of \$3 billion. Interestingly, after centuries of “development,” women are still playing the centuries-old role of *pambayad utang*: payment for loans incurred. During the Spanish colonial period, the *encomienda* was an administrative unit set up to facilitate and systemize the exacting of tributes and taxes from the Filipino people. Included in the “payments” was forced and unpaid labor for the Spanish conquistadores, and women were included to meet production quotas, do unpaid labor as farm workers, and render free menial services in the convents. In many instances, women were forced to render sexual favors to the Spanish friars and officials. Filipino peasant families were often forced to surrender their daughters to *hacienda* owners and landlords to work at jobs as payment for unpaid loans. The country lives off the exploitation of Filipino women’s labor and their sexual commodification, both in the Philippines and abroad.

Poverty and gender roles in the Philippines are the typical forces that turn Filipinas to the mail-order bride industry. Unemployment rates, particularly for women, have soared in recent years.<sup>7</sup> Social and economic programs aimed at stimulating employment growth and entrepreneurship are generally considered insufficient to meet the needs of Filipinas especially in a world with permeable borders.<sup>8</sup> The culmination of these effects is that “women must seek their own survival outside the formal wage economy.”<sup>9</sup> For many women, this means the choice between work as a migrant laborer or as a prostitute.<sup>10</sup> The mail-order bride industry has provided them with an additional option.

## Defining Prostitution: Language and Discourse

Prostitution in the Philippines affects large and still growing numbers of women and children.<sup>11</sup> Sex businesses

in many forms are becoming a part of the economic life of most cities and towns.<sup>12</sup> Local clients of all ages and social classes constitute the major maintaining factor, but a foreign clientele of tourists, traveling businessmen and military personnel are particularly visible. There is trafficking in women and girls both for an internal and international sex market.<sup>13</sup>

Because of the magnitude of the phenomenon and its integration into economic structures and activities, intervention efforts are particularly difficult. More than ever, therefore, there is a need for collective thinking on the fundamental issues and for a review of programs and services being carried out towards their greater effectiveness. Further, the advocacy from some quarters for the recognition and acceptance of prostitution as work, and for its legalization, also needs to be analyzed. A clear analytical framework is necessary to underpin both immediate responses and longer-term, strategic interventions.

Language is always reflection of the beliefs and attitudes of a culture. The language used to refer to issues of sexuality is loaded with both clear and hidden messages that express very different attitudes towards women and men, often mirroring the lower or disadvantaged position of women in the culture.

In referring to sexual intercourse, women very often say: "*Ginamit ako ng asawa ko*" ("my spouse used me")<sup>14</sup> although there are other terms used which are not so descriptive. Men may also say something like, "*Hindi ko ginagamit ang asawa ko pag fertile siya* (I do not have sex with my wife when she is fertile)"<sup>15</sup> referring to a family planning method. What this language use reveals is that sexual activity is often expressed and experienced as a man's activity that women submit to or allow to happen to their bodies. This very prevalent idiom seems to exclude an understanding of mutuality, equal participation and benefit in sexual relations.

Many cultures unquestionably value women's virginity or chastity but not that of men. Women are expected to have one sexual partner, preferably for life. What this tells us is that "good" women are considered sexual territory that men can lay claim to or have property rights over. If a woman is raped or has sex with a man not her husband, she is considered damaged because a man has entered her body and "soiled" her: "*Nadumihan, may nawala sa kanya*" (She's dirty, she's not the same and lacks her original state of being).<sup>16</sup>

In the language of sexualized advertising or sexualized entertainment, women and girls are often described as having qualities that are sexually desired by men. "*Batang-bata, sariwang-sariwa*" (She's very young and fresh)<sup>17</sup> promised the promotional material for a film. The youth and freshness of girls are to be put at the disposal of men for their use and enjoyment.

Probably the most common expletive in the language is "*Putang ina mo!*" (Your mother is a whore!)<sup>18</sup> Constantly used as the most forceful verbal abuse, expression of irritation, or anger. The contradictions inherent in the system of prostitution are expressed in these three words. On the one hand, prostitution is a system that caters to the sexual demands of men from all social classes, far more numerous than the num-

ber of women in prostitution. Signs on Quezon City establishments saying: *Wanted Sexy Dancer, Wanted GRO (Guest Relations Officer), Wanted attractive girls with pleasing personality*,<sup>19</sup> show that here is a large and unfilled demand for female services for men that establishments try to cash in on. The unspoken "service" is usually prostitution.

On the other hand, however, the worst scorn and contempt is directed at women in prostitution, they are considered the lowest of the low, although they are precisely *doing what men want*. The culture directs no scorn whatsoever at the men who use prostitution. The word *prostitute* is therefore loaded with that contempt, but no word at all exists for the men users of prostitution although they constitute by far the larger population and the more important factor in the existence and maintenance of the system of prostitution. It is different from the case of rape, where there is a word for *rapist*. In both situations, it is the man carrying out physical and other acts on the body of the woman for his gratification and sense of power.

The explanation is not valid that would say that women's "consent" is the determining reason for the language difference because millions of women and girls historically, and in the world today, are held in sexual slavery in brothels and other establishments, and are tricked and trafficked precisely to be put into such establishments. Even in such cases, the women are "prostitutes" with all the contempt the word connotes, and the male users of these sexual slaves are merely "men", with all their social standing intact. In fact, in feminist analysis, there may not be a contradiction at all. Contempt for women is part and parcel of prostitution sex, for looking down on women allows men to do whatever they want with women's bodies, including the most degrading and abusive acts that they would not be able to do with non-prostitute women, as women in prostitution have frequently recounted.

The term *sex worker* most likely had its source in and certainly was given wide currency by international health and funding organizations, especially in connection with the HIV/AIDS issue.<sup>20</sup> When it first started to be heard in place of *prostitute*, the term appeared at first glance to offer relief for the population of women in prostitution from the historically oppressive and woman-hostile weight of the word *prostitute*. As such, it was readily accepted and used by official agencies, the media and a part of the non-governmental organizations (NGO) community. A closer examination of this language use, however, reveals a two-edged sword that many feminists believe work against women's better interests and the struggle for the upliftment of women's status and for gender equality.

The term is premised on the idea that catering to men sexually is indeed an area of labor. It poses no critique whatsoever of prostitution as a gender-based institution, and in fact normalizes it by creating the category of *sex worker* to stand alongside such mainstream occupations as social worker, community health worker, overseas contract worker and so on. It therefore accepts that women should render sexual "services" to the general population of men as a response to



a legitimate social demand and thereby renders invisible the gender-biased social construction of sexuality.

The term also implies that it is men's right to buy sex through the bodies of women and girls. The use of the term therefore legitimizes patriarchal culture, male sexual privilege over women and systems of double standards. Accepting these premises negates women's long struggle against being defined as and reduced to sex in such phenomena as sexualized advertising and entertainment, pornography, even beauty norms and contests.

It would seem the result of an incredible lack of discernment and sensitivity that allows the use of the term *child sex worker* even as the phenomenon of the sexual exploitation of children in prostitution and pornography elicits general outrage and condemnation.<sup>21</sup>

It must be clear that these are *abused* children often suffering severe disorientation and trauma, and not workers whose terms and conditions of labor must be improved. The language used must make clear that this is a completely intolerable phenomenon. The language of work merely muddies and confuses the issues.

Women have historically been a subordinated group, excluded, for example, from political and economic power or from equal status with men in the world's religions. Men have created social and political institutions, defined women's roles and place within them, and laid down the language that reflects those power-based structures. It is telling that in many languages, there are many more terms of abuse and contempt for women than for men.

Language must be created that shows that prostitution is not an institution of women or even fundamentally about women, but rather that it is a system of male appropriation of women's bodies and sexuality. The language must not shy away from or neutralize what is a harsh and cruel reality for women.

In the Philippines, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) use the term *women in prostitution* to express the reality of women and girls being absorbed, enticed into and kept in prostitution systems.<sup>22</sup> Others use *prostituted women* or *PW* for short, to show that social, economic and political factors combine to draw and keep women in prostitution. Still other's use the terms referring to the legal work sites or designations: *bar women*, *entertainers*, *hospitality women*, for example, to identify themselves as women working in these areas and as understood to be in prostitution.<sup>23</sup> These women believe they are "*telling it like it is.*" Perhaps the time will come when women will develop a new term that captures the whole reality.

Perhaps it is also time to make visible the millions of men who are the reason why prostitution exists in the first place. It is also high time to find new terms for these men who think nothing but make sexual merchandise of past, present and likely future generations of women and girls.

### The Social Construction of Sexuality

The desire for sexual gratification is, of course, part of the biological make-up of both women and men. However,

what is generally not taken into account are the ways by which patriarchal ideology and cultural conditions determine the concepts and practices of sexuality of both women and men.

Differential gender definitions operate: men as the active, aggressive, highly-sexed human being, and women as the passive recipients of male sexual attention or on the other hand, as having to be available for sex. This often justifies and excuses violent or discriminatory male behavior as "natural." In fact, sexuality has more to do with culture than with nature, for example, concepts of female beauty or of what is considered sexually arousing are not "natural" or inborn but have varied widely in different historical periods and cultural contexts.

What is not taken into account in discussions of sexuality is the present-day reality of the heightened sexualization of many aspects of life. This is most readily seen in entertainment and advertising, but also in such forms of commerce as the fashion industry or tourism. Finally, entire industries have arisen around the sale of sex such as print, video, and internet pornography, "adult" bookstores, massage parlors, men's clubs and any number of establishments that offer women, girls and sometimes men and boys for sex.<sup>24</sup> This phenomenon is sometimes understood as a mere reflection of and response to the "natural" male inclination, and therefore the male market, for sex. It is less often understood, except of course by the successful capitalists of sex who rake in profits, as in fact, creating or stimulating a growing demand.<sup>25</sup> The existence of this visible and increasingly mainstream economic sector works by reinforcing and legitimizing pre-existing patriarchal notions of men's right to sex. It therefore has the added effect of misinforming new generations of boys and men into sexual consumerist attitudes and behaviors.

Because of the economic significance of sex businesses on national levels and on an international scale, some government and international agencies have proposed the recognition of prostitution as a legitimate labor sector.<sup>26</sup> Such recognition will only serve to legitimize men's status as buyers and women's status as use-objects or providers of sex.

### International Trafficking of Women and The Mail-Order Bride Industry

The international traffic in women includes any "situation where women or girls cannot change the immediate conditions of their existence, where regardless of how they got into those conditions, they cannot get out; and where they are subject to sexual violence and exploitation."<sup>27</sup> Women particularly those living in poverty in economically disadvantaged nations, are forced into prostitution or pornography, bought and sold as sex slaves, and lured into the "sex-tourism" industry.<sup>28</sup>

According to Michael Platzer, head of operations in Vienna, Austria for the U.N.'s Center for International Crime Prevention:

Two hundred million people are victims of contemporary forms of slavery...During four centuries; 12 million people were believed to be involved in the slave

trade between Africa and the New World. The 200 million, and many of course are women who are trafficked for sex, is a current figure. It's happening now. Today.<sup>29</sup>

Historically, the international community addressed the "white slave trade," which was understood to be the trafficking of white women as prostitutes.<sup>30</sup> Afterward, the international community acknowledged that sex trafficking affects not only white adult females, but all people regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or age. In 1950, the United Nations officially condemned international trafficking of women for sexual services with the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.<sup>31</sup> Now, women are currently trafficked into powerful, developed nations including the United States, Australia, England, and Japan on a regular basis as sex commodities.<sup>32</sup> There is no evidence that this traffic has slowed down despite the fact that international trafficking of women related to sex has been recognized as criminal throughout this century.<sup>33</sup>

Trafficking in persons – the illegal and highly profitable transport and sale of human beings for the purpose of exploiting their labor – is a slavery-like practice that must be eliminated... Trafficking in persons is a profound human rights abuse, and women are particularly vulnerable to this practice due to the persistent inequalities they face in status and opportunity.<sup>34</sup>

### Mail-Order Bride Industry in the Philippines and the United States

The mail-order bride is one of the most open forms of trafficking women into developed nations. With a click of a key on your keyboard, one can order a mail-order bride. The Internet in particular, makes it easier than ever before for men to shop for wives from exotic places. The largest supplier of brides is the Philippines, which exports an estimated 20,000 women to foreign husbands.<sup>35</sup> Though there are no official tallies, an estimated minimum of 4,000 men find brides through the mail-order bride industry each year.<sup>36</sup> It is estimated that mail-order bride companies make as much as \$6,000 to \$10,000 per client, with some agencies claiming to serve as many as 15,000 clients per year.<sup>37</sup> In the last thirty years over 131,000 Filipinos have left their country to follow their partners, which nearly half of that number going to the United States.<sup>38</sup>

While estimates on the numbers of companies that engage in the mail-order bride industry vary, one source claims that since 1995 up to 500 mail-order bride companies may have been operating in the United States.<sup>39</sup> In 1997 alone, the United States issued 1,782 visas to individuals from the Philippines intending to marry U.S. citizens.<sup>40</sup> The Fiancée petition is believed to be a common avenue for the entry of mail-order brides.<sup>41</sup> Ordinarily, the grooms obtain 90 day Fiancée Visas that permit their brides to enter the U.S. on a temporary basis so the couple can decide whether they in fact want to be married.

Many companies like Life Mates and Asian Flower, are

operated in the United States by sole proprietors out of their homes, sometimes with the assistance of their "mail-ordered" wives.<sup>42</sup> Mail-order bride agencies claim that they are not in the business of trafficking women across national boundaries. However, catalogue descriptions of the women the companies market do not differ much from a department store's listing of merchandise.<sup>43</sup>

The mail-order bride industry is virtually unregulated throughout most of the world. The international law-making community has paid little attention to the open trafficking of women in this form, instead concentrating on forced prostitution and trafficking of children.<sup>44</sup> Acting individually, several countries have attempted to regulate particular elements of the industry. However, these efforts have had no effect on the trafficking of brides.

### Law and Legislation on Prostitution in the Philippines

Philippine law on prostitution is not only outdated and ineffective; it is misogynist in its perspective and harsh in its application. It is a reflection of widely-held societal attitudes imbued with a conservative Roman Catholicism that views prostitution as a phenomenon to do with problematic and culpable women while at the same time rendering men almost totally invisible in the prostitution system. Particularly on issues pertaining to sexual mores, Philippine law remains fundamentally informed with a patriarchal sexual ideology that privileges a socially-constructed male sexuality and that colonizes and misappropriates women's sexuality and identities. Furthermore, by defining and penalizing the prostitution exchange as women's sexual behavior, the law contributes to the creation of a class of prostituted women who are criminalized.

Over the past twenty years, the Philippines has experienced the steady growth of the phenomenon of women and girls and to a much smaller extent, of boys, being absorbed into prostitution all over the country, in the "sexual entertainment" sector both for local men and for foreign tourist clients.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the incidence of women trafficked for purposes of prostitution within and out of the country is increasingly being reported.

Many factors are contributing to the accelerated growth of prostitution. Poverty has worsened particularly in rural areas as the result of decades of government neglect of the agricultural sector and of continuing feudal structures of land ownership.<sup>46</sup> This has put increased pressure on women who are frequently the main supports of families. In particular, the government strategy for an economic "quick fix" is for tourism to continue to be aggressively and indiscriminately promoted.<sup>47</sup> Higher numbers of predominantly male tourist entries than have ever before been achieved, penetrate into vulnerable areas and populations armed with such information and tips from Internet sources like the World Sex Guide.<sup>48</sup> To cash in on this increased demand, local and foreign-owned sex businesses flourish in many parts of the country. The other major economic "quick fix" and pillar of government economic policy is the labor export policy that

includes the government – sanctioned export of women entertainers particularly to Japan and other parts of Asia. Sex traffickers are able to ride on the labor migration movements and the channels and mechanisms in place.<sup>49</sup>

It has been noted that the economic resources that women and girls have come to represent as well as the considerable financial gains that result from their sexual exploitation in prostitution are bringing about marked changes in attitudes within families, communities, the business sector and the government toward growing tolerance for and the normalization of prostitution. One sign of this shift is the call that is being heard today from some quarters for the legalization of prostitution albeit in the midst of continuing professions of moral abhorrence by government officials and the general public. At the same time that the sheer numbers of affected women and girls increase, the law continues to bear down heavily and exclusively on them. In recent years, the AIDS scare and government attempts to control its spread have led to increased police action targeting women in prostitution. Therefore, law reform on prostitution is an even more urgent concern in the Philippines today than it was in 1992 when women's groups affiliated with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women first pressed for changes in the law towards the decriminalization of women in prostitution.

Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code criminalizes vagrants and prostitutes.<sup>50</sup> Vagrants are defined as persons found loitering in public place that are unable to present evidence of livelihood or other legal means of support. Prostitutes are “women who for money or profit habitually engage in sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct.” It is the vagrancy law that is used to apprehend women on the streets, whether obviously soliciting clients or not, the prostitution transaction itself being more difficult to prove.

A more recent law for the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination criminalizes the sexual exploitation, including the prostitution of children, defined as girls and boys under the age of 18 years. In contrast to the Revised Penal Code provisions, the users of prostituted children, the owners or managers of establishments and other profiteers are rendered legally liable and subject to heavy penalties. Moreover, with laws on extra-territoriality having been passed in more countries, especially after the 1996 World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, bilateral cooperation in the prosecution of child sexual abuse offenders is possible and in fact, has been operationalized in the recent past to secure convictions in two cases against foreign pedophiles.

Apart from these main pieces of legislation, there are city ordinances on prostitution and sexual health that are implemental in most urban and semi-urban areas the intentions of which are clearly to promote and protect the tourism and sex entertainment industries that might be hampered by risks to clients' health. These ordinances require the female employees of a wide range of establishments to undergo sexual health examinations at government-run social hygiene clinics including in some cases, for HIV/AIDS. Health care are

issued for these women to be eligible for employment. In some towns, mayor's permits are issued to the women to attend to their employability based on a clean bill of sexual health. The existence and operation of this system of sexual health checks for women constitutes tacit recognition and regulation of prostitution by the State.

Still other laws and ordinances address prostitution indirectly by prohibiting lewd shows generally defined as featuring nudity or sexually explicit acts, or other acts such as the non-observance of building regulations intended to prevent prostitution in massage parlors.<sup>51</sup>

It is also noteworthy that Article 341 of the revised *Philippine Penal Code* that addresses pimping and profiting from prostitution is virtually never invoked.<sup>52</sup> It has moreover been police practice to send in “operatives” as clients into massage parlors or other prostitution front establishments and then to arrest the women while having sex with these police decoys.

Clearly, the formulation and implementation of the law are discriminatory against women and designed to distance men from legal liability. They are also aimed at protecting the continued activities of the sex business sector often owned by politically prominent personalities who may, moreover, be significant contributors to local government coffers or to the pockets of individual police agents.

### U.S. and Philippine Laws: Are they working?

The United States Congress mandated the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to do a study and issue a report, under Section 652 of the *1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act*, to confirm that the mail-order bride industry exploited women and promoted fraudulent marriages. The Report was authored by Professor Robert Scholes of the University of Florida. His findings within the report confirms many issues that have surfaced from the mail-order bride industry. Issues of concern were fraud, domestic violence, and sex slavery. The *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996* recognizes the existence of the industry and its potential problems, and therefore, requires mail-order bride companies to disclose U.S. immigration information to the brides.<sup>53</sup> The implementation and enforcement of this law is questionable. Other immigration regulations place foreign spouses in a conditional status, which requires continued sponsorship of the bride by the citizen spouse over a period of years.<sup>54</sup>

Import nations such as the U.S. have tended to focus on the immigration consequences of the mail-order bride traffic. Instead of protecting the safety of women entering their new nation, regulations seek to prevent or uncover fraudulent marriages and threaten brides with deportation.<sup>55</sup>

The Philippines is alone in trying to curb the international trafficking of their female citizens. Enacted so far are the *1989 Ban on Advertising for “Recruits”*<sup>56</sup> and the *1996 Anti-Mail-Order Bride Law or Republic Act 6955*,<sup>57</sup> which also restricts agencies' recruitment methods. Despite the governmental attempt to control the supply of Filipinas as mail-order brides, economic realities have allowed the industry to

prevail. Informal recruiting practices have replaced formal advertising.<sup>58</sup>

The only mail-order bride specific statute in the United States, 8 U.S.C.A. 1186 (c)(4)(c) affords the mail-order brides little if any protection. In fact, by requiring agencies to disclose the unregulated nature of the industry, Congress legitimizes the current industry structure. This scheme disregards the will and regulations of developing countries, like the Philippines, whose laws can have no force when not backed by the consumer countries. In addition, the law does not address the serious problems mail-order brides face under the current immigration system. The law does not change the conditional status of mail-order brides or shift the power from the consumer-husbands to the brides.<sup>59</sup>

### Recommendation and Conclusion: Call for International Regulation of the Mail-Order Bride Industry

The minimal regulations of the industry, which do exist in individual import and export countries, continue to operate in a vacuum. The laws of import countries do not complement or support the laws of export countries. For example, despite the ban on advertising for mail-order brides in the Philippines, the United States does not regulate the activities of U.S.-based mail-order bride companies that advertise Filipinas, does not scrutinize the actions of mail-order bride companies relating to foreign nations, and does not regulate how companies treat the women they commodify. Further, United States laws which are relevant to the lives of women in the mail-order bride industry target them as perpetrators of immigration fraud, and seek to criminalize their attempts to improve their lives through immigration.<sup>60</sup>

International regulation is necessary because the forces of supply and demand exist beyond any one's country's national borders. Because market forces are transnational, they are more difficult to control than domestic market forces. For example, if brides and consumer husbands lived in the same country, as with traditional matchmaking companies, as enforcement mechanisms that help regulate negative externalities are either lacking or ineffective across national borders. "If the tolerance [for negative externalities] of the supplying country is matched by the indifference of the buying country to the behavior of its nationals overseas, then there are not market restrictions and a free market [for the commodity] will exist."<sup>61</sup>

This accurately describes the mail-order bride traffic between the United States and the Philippines. Essentially, neither nation has expressed willingness to effectively assume the responsibility for protecting these women from harm. The women therefore becomes nationless and caught in the web of the market for them. While the Philippines has outlawed activities related to the mail-order bride industry in an attempt to protect its female citizens, the practice is largely tolerated. In part, this may result from the difficulty of distinguishing between foreign nationals who have formed legitimate relationships with Filipina women from those who have purchased contacts and courtship rights in the absence of

greater regulation of agency activities.

This legal commentary concludes that regulation of the mail-order bride industry is necessary. In addition, cooperation between both the Philippines and the U.S. is important and the mail-order bride agencies should be required to engage in practices that would help balance the power disparities between the market participants. Until realized that there is no difference between mail-order brides and prostitutes or sex slaves, with respect to the degree of coercion, sexual exploitation, and abuse they suffer, the law will continue to protect mail-order grooms and agencies from their actions unfavorable to these women.

### ENDNOTES

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11. Miralao, Virginia A., Celia O. Carlos and Aida Fulleros Santos. *Women Entertainers in Angeles and Olongapo: A Survey Report*. (1990) Manila: Women's Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization and Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan. For more on both issues of human trafficking see: Rhacel Parrenas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, and *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
12. *Id.*

13. *Id.*
14. This statement is referenced by Filipina women.
15. This statement is referenced by Filipino men.
16. *Id.*
17. *Id.*
18. Another direct translation would be, "Your mother is a bitch"
19. Miralao, *supra*, at 10.
20. *Id.* at 13.
21. *Id.* at 17
22. *Id.* at 19
23. *Id.*
24. *Id.*
25. *Id.*
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27. Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* 40 (1979). New York: New York University Press
28. See Susan Jeanne Toepfer and Bryan Stuart Wells, "The Worldwide Market for Sex: A Review of International and Regional Legal Prohibitions Regarding Trafficking in Women," *Gender & Law* 83, 86 (1994). Hereinafter referred to as Toepfer and Wells' evaluation of whether available international treaty law is a useful weapon in the battle against the global sex trade.
29. Michael Specter, "Slave Traders Lure Slavic Women; Dreams of Riches End in Brothels, New Orleans Times-Picayune," *New York Times News Service*, January 11, 1998, A1.
30. *International Convention of the Suppression of White Slave Traffic*, May 4, 1910, III L.N.T.S. 278. [hereinafter *International Convention*]. See also Stephanie Fariior, "The International Law of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution: Making it Live Up to its Potential", 10 *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 213, 216-223 (Spring 1997), for a discussion of the progression of international law regarding human trafficking.
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32. See Laurie Hauber, *The Trafficking of Women for Prostitution: A Growing Problem within the European Union*, 21 *B.C. International and Comparative Law Review* 183, 193 (1998).
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46. *Id.*
47. Liza Largoza-Maza, *The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan Toward the Year 2000: Filipino Women's Issues and Perspectives*
48. *Id.*
49. Miralao, *supra*, at 14-15.
50. *Republic of the Philippines Penal Code*.
51. *Quezon City Ordinance Against Prostitution*
52. *Republic of the Philippines Penal Code*.
53. 8 U.S.C.A. United States Code Annotated 1186 (a) (West 1999).
54. Unfortunately, these regulations are often seen as causing more harm than good. Laws restricting the immigration status of women makes women even more dependent on their husbands. This continues despite recent changes in immigration law. See Michelle J. Anderson, *supra* note 52, at 1415; Deanna Hodgkin, "'Mail-Order' Brides Marry Pain to Get Green Cards," *Washington Times*, Apr. 16, 1991, E1.
55. Fraudulent marriages are generally considered those designed strictly to bypass immigration requirements. See Michelle J. Anderson, "A License to Abuse: The Impact of Conditional Status on Female Immigrants," 102 *Yale Law Journal* 1401, 1411-13.
56. Chun, *supra*, note 3, at 1189.
57. *Philippine 1996 Anti-Mail-Order Bride Law*, Republic Act 6955
58. Tripon, *supra* note 37.
59. Michelle J. Anderson, 8 U.S.C.A. 1186 (a) (West 1999)
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# Apathy to Activism through Filipino American Churches

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## Abstract

This study provides some answers to the question: given that accumulation and accounting of social, cultural, economic, and political capitals exists and is performed, has this critical mass translated to societal empowerment for Filipino migrants? Del Rosario and Gonzalez acknowledge that Catholic and Protestant churches have been utilized as an effective hegemonic ally by colonizing states, like Spain and the United States, to pursue their political and economic self interests within their colonies. But due to reverse colonization, del Rosario and Gonzalez argue that the Filipinized churches in San Francisco have become modern day counter-hegemonic spaces and structures where advocacy and activism tactics are learned and immigrant rights are discussed. These counter-hegemonic actions are then directed at US laws that displace, repress, and discriminate against new immigrants.

Immigrant religious leaders and their followers have become a major source of spiritual, cultural, social, and political capital formation in many gateway cities in America. Hence, their 'organized force' in society versus dysfunctional policies could definitely be seen as counter-hegemonic. The San Francisco Bay Area, home to more than 350,000 Filipino immigrants and their numerous spiritual congregations, is no exception. After all, the acceptable political and spiritual socialization Filipino immigrants subscribe to deviates from what the larger American society prefers and is exposed to—a dichotomized path for spiritual and political life. Church and state should be separated by clear mental and institutional boundaries, particularly in government spaces. City hall is the appropriate venue for politics, policy, and advocacy while the cathedral, mosque, and synagogue are the proper spaces for prayer, rites, and worship. Public policies should reflect this dichotomy in terms of process and product. Not to the Filipino immigrant psyche it seems.

Our initial participant observations (shared in Gonzalez and Maison 2004), led us to explore further the dynamics of this socio-political phenomenon guided by the following thoughts: Given the large influx of Filipino pastors, Filipino religious workers, and Filipino members of various Christian faiths into the United States and the many acculturation and immigration issues that emerge, what kinds of unique civic engagement and incorporation exchanges between and among congregants, state, and society have resulted? From a more radical standpoint, have Filipinos been effective at using their immigrant spiritual politicization as a Trojan horse which would allow them to get into the core of American society and make positive inroads into its hegemonic structures? Most importantly, what are the conditions that have allowed a fused transnational spiritual and political

capital formation to develop?

We began with the assumption that the evolutionary process of intertwined transnational spiritual and political capital formation amongst Filipino immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area illustrates a form of 'counter-hegemony' grounded on the early critical points raised by Marx, Friere, Weber, Gramsci, and Ito on social revolution and the church. After discussing the conceptual underpinnings of this perceived counter-hegemony, we gathered historical evidence of both state-church hegemony and the resulting civil society counter-hegemony in the more than 300 years of colonization and hispanization under Spain and the more than a hundred year old relationship of colonization, neocolonization, and a continuing process of Americanization. Following the Filipino diaspora across the Pacific, we compiled more materials on the movement of this counter-hegemonic socialization and behavior to the United States through the Filipino diaspora of pastors, religious workers, and parishioners—many THAT came early on as agricultural workers and later on as professionals. Crossing to America also meant that we needed to extend our initial speculation. Essentially, this mass movement of people and culture from the Philippines constitutes a form of reverse colonization, where American political, social, and economic institutions and spaces experience varying degrees of Filipinization. The scope of this counter-hegemonic impetus is evaluated in more depth through two cases studies comparing the growth and development of fused transnational spiritual and political capital formation in pre-dominantly Filipino Catholic churches and how they use this to constructively engage local and national public policies which have negative effects to their community. We conclude with some common lessons from the cases and challenges to the sustainability of this unique process.

## Revisiting Hegemony and the Church

There is a growing body of research about religion and congregation based political organizing. The nature of the relationship between church and politics has always been controversial with philosophers writing about it for centuries and policy-makers who have been trying to avoid stepping on matters of religion and faith. There is, however, a few works that looks at the dynamic and praxis within emerging Filipino diasporic communities, particularly in the United States. Hence, this is the area where we wish to make a contribution. Our thoughts in this study are grounded on the classic works of theorists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Paolo Friere, Antonio Gramsci, and Filipino historian Reynaldo Ito.

Even after societal moves to bar churches in much of the western world from intervening in the smooth conduct of state affairs, the power of religious teachings continued to be identified as a major stumbling block to effective governance and economic productivity. This moved Karl Marx to argue strongly that "religion is the opiate of the people" and elaborated further in *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* that:

The foundation of irreligious criticism is: Man makes religion, religion does not make man...Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

Eventually, Marx influenced many critical thinkers, political activists, and oppressed workers including Paolo Freire who in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* strongly agreed with him that churches and their teachings definitely fostered a lack of critical consciousness to marginalized groups in civil society by:

Preaching sin and hell, churches appeal to the fatalistic and frightened consciousness of the oppressed. The promise of heaven becomes a relief for their existential fatigue. The more the masses are frowned in a culture of silence, the more they take refuge in churches that offer pie in the sky by and by. They see church as a womb where they can hide from an oppressive society...This directs their anger against the world instead of the social system that runs the world...leaving untouched their real source of oppression. (pp. 131-132)

Marx and the 'Marxist school of thought' he inspired argued that religion advanced a false consciousness, in which people find solace and relief from their existential fatigue through praying to be saved in another world, the afterlife. They are comforted by this idea, which distracts them from confronting and addressing the material reality and injustices of the present world. To Marx and his followers, the focus should be developing a strong state-driven economic substructural base' supported by a 'superstructural frame' of loyal civil society stakeholders. They argued that the ideal superstructure is one that is made out of the masses, the oppressed, and the workers. Using a dialectical analysis, Marx stated that building a strong substructure and an oppressed people reinforced superstructure was the only way to reaching true 'socialism'. Socialism is the synthesis of a more equitable approach to redistributing economic wealth and to achieving the political interests of the marginalized majority as opposed to feudalism (the thesis) and capitalism (the anti-thesis). In essence, the Marxist school sought to destroy the hegemonic superstructure made of rich elites, including churches, who only enriched themselves using corrupted feudalistic and capitalistic substructures, by creating a new economic foundation grounded on the tenets of socialism. A counter-hegemony or proletariat revolution led by peasants, factory workers, and other oppressed groups was therefore necessary.

From another perspective, Max Weber, in his famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, provided a counter-argument to the Marxists' views on the primacy of the economic base in relation to institutions, especially churches and their religious teachings. It seemed that to Weber reforming key elements of the superstructure is as important as building a solid substructure. If the Catholic

CHURCH is corrupt and inadequate, then one should seek an alternative institution within civil society that would be compatible with a capitalist substructure, like Protestantism. Protestant teachings could offer the much needed counter-hegemonic deliverance for the oppressed and downtrodden. There is no need to change the economic base to socialism. After all, in the Protestant ethos it is assumed that, "Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose in his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs." (p. 53). Weber suggests further that capitalism grew largely as a result of Protestantism and its teaching of predestination. The idea was that God signifies his favor by rewarding the chosen ones with prosperity for their work, whether shop owner or peasant farmer. Everyone was obliged to regard themselves as chosen ones, because if they did not, they were regarded as having inadequate faith. The highest form of moral obligation of the individual was to fulfill his or her duty in worldly affairs and success in their duty was regarded as a sign of being one of the elect.

Elaborating further on the importance of superstructures or civil society entities was Antonio Gramsci. As alluded to in Omi and Winant's book *Racial Formation in the United States*, Gramsci is known to have popularized in-depth thinking on 'hegemony' in civil society. Hegemony is defined as the conditions necessary, in a given society, for the achievement and consolidation of rule by a dominant group (Omi and Winant, p.67). In other words, it is the conditions that allow for oppression. Society as a whole is persuaded to agree upon an ideology that is favorable to the dominant class. This ideological dominance is achieved by the ruling class through a combination of consent and coercion. The relationship between the two is dialectical and hegemony would not exist without both aspects. At times, consent is the primary force at work, but at other times, when consent is not easily won, coercion or force becomes the primary means of maintaining hegemony.

The dominant class must make compromises and forge alliances with its fundamentally opposing classes in order to gain and maintain political and ideological leadership. In turn, the subordinate classes are persuaded to hold values and beliefs that are consistent with the economic dominance of the ruling class. Although rule can be obtained by force, it cannot be secured and maintained, especially in modern society, without the element of consent. Gramsci conceived of consent as far more than merely the legitimation of authority. In his view, consent extended to the incorporation by the ruling group of many of the key interests of subordinated groups, often to the explicit disadvantage of the rulers themselves. (Omi and Winant, p. 63)

The consent aspect of hegemony is won and maintained through civil society, which includes religion, education, mass media and popular culture. These are the realms in which an ideology that is favorable to the dominant class is created and perpetuated. For example, from the time a child enters school, he or she is taught history and literature that are consistent with the economic and ideological dominance

of the ruling class. They are taught good work ethics which makes them productive workers for monopoly capitalism. When one watches television, news programs and even MTV, there are debates about political topics. But the debates take place within very narrow margins on the political spectrum, not allowing for arguments that are on the left end of the spectrum, or even on the far right of the spectrum. This process insures that the perspectives of the public in general will also be very narrow.

This is in keeping with Marx's hypothesis that the superstructures perpetuate and maintain the base. Gramsci built upon Marxist ideas, by focusing in on civil society and demonstrating that it is the terrain upon which the proletariat must engage in counter-hegemonic activities. He describes the "war of position," which is a very gradual process through which the people must undergo moral and ideological reform to eliminate the class bias of the existing hegemony. Ideology is the key to transforming society—it is what gives a common denominator to all members of a historical bloc. This is where civil society comes in, where "war of position" is a necessary first step in revolution to win the consent of the people. Without consent, power may be seized from the ruling class, but force would eventually be needed to maintain it.

But is it possible for a group in civil society to win a 'war of position'? Could counter-hegemony emerge from a hegemonic superstructure, like the church? It seems so, according to the historical evidence presented by Reynaldo Ileto in *Pasyon and Revolution*. Ileto's work is significant since it illustrates how Filipino civil society is able to position itself for counter-hegemonic projects within the hegemonic superstructures of both Spanish and American church and state. Ileto's work echoes the counter-hegemonic battles described in the vast literature on liberation theology. Ileto makes connections between a popular Filipino religious text *Casaysayan nang Pasiong Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoong Natin* (Account of the Sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ) or the *Pasyon*, and Filipino revolutionary movements against their Spanish and American colonizers between 1840 and 1910. Although Spain imposed Catholicism upon the Philippines, Ileto argues that the Filipino people were able to create their own brand of Christianity, from which a language of anticolonialism evolved in the late nineteenth century.

The *Pasyon* was the most commonly used text in the reading and dramatization of the story of Jesus Christ during Holy Week festivities in the Philippines. According to Ileto, it served two functions. On the surface, the rote reading of the text provides evidence for Marx's postulate about religion being used to pacify people. The Spanish colonizers used the ritual of acting out the *Pasyon* to teach loyalty among the natives loyalty to Spain and the Church. It also was meant to encourage "resignation to things as they were and instilled preoccupation with morality and the afterlife rather than with conditions in this world". However subconsciously, which Ileto notes was not intended by the Spanish missionaries, the sub-text of the *Pasyon* provided Filipinos with an interpretative, vernacular language for "articulating their

own values, ideals, and even hopes of liberation." (p. 12)

The widespread use of the *Pasyon* text as a mantra not only during Holy Week, but also on other important occasions, reinforced its entry into the subconscious of the people. It was used when Filipinos prayed and mourned for their dead, in festivals, in *sinakulos* (passion plays) which were performed outside the church, it was sung in courtship rituals, and common *pabasas* (or reading sessions) could accommodate entire barrios. Some people would forbid their children to read anything but the *Pasyon* during the Holy Week and some claimed that it was difficult to find a girl or boy who did not know the phrases of this book. "Before the abolition of the of friar censorship by the republican and American colonial governments, the *Pasyon* was one of the few literary works available to the rural population, and therefore could not fail to shape to folk mind." (p.19)

A common stereotype of Filipinos that Ileto references is that of a passive, deferential and hospitable family-bound individual. The perception is that the masses are willing to accept existing conditions, avoiding direct participation in politics. "There is a lot of validity in this image. Social mechanisms do tend to preserve the existing socio-economic structure. The struggle for survival often relegates politics to the sidelines, particularly when the masses perceive that politics has generated into nothing more than *pulitika*—the bargaining and jockeying for power among Filipino politicians... 'the *tao*, thinking first and foremost of the survival of himself and his family, is little interested in high-sounding policies, ideologies, or principles of good government and administration.' Ileto warns against this stereotype, taking into consideration the many instances throughout history when popular movements threatened to overturn the ruling structures—counter-hegemony at its best. His study examines the possibility that folk religious traditions which usually promote passivity, but really "have latent meanings that can be revolutionary." (p. 10).

Ileto claims that the Filipino masses' familiarity with the *Pasyon's* revolutionary images allowed them a cultural preparedness to live out similar scenarios in response to adverse conditions under Spanish and American hegemony. He analyses the text of the *Pasyon* and emphasizes its importance as a "mirror of the collective consciousness." Its narration of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection conveys a transition from darkness to light, despair to hope, misery to salvation, etc. Analogously, in times of political and economic despair, the masses were able to take action under the leadership of individuals who promised "deliverance from oppression." The themes of the *Pasyon* were parallel to the nation's transition from the dark age of Spanish exploitation and dominance to the bright age of freedom. Ileto illuminates themes within the *Pasyon* that do not encourage passivity and acceptance of the status quo under Spanish or American hegemony. One example is that although Filipinos regard family as the basic unit, the *Pasyon* teaches that a time comes when one must heed to a higher calling, which may require separation from their family. This is exemplified through the emphasis of Jesus' relationship with his grieving mother and his expla-



nation that he must leave her because he had a greater mission to fulfill—saving humankind. Additionally, the masses could identify with Christ in the *Pasyon*. He was described as a poor, seemingly harmless man of humble origins. He and his followers exhibit timid, modest and sad behavior. To the colonizers, this was an ideal image for keeping natives in a subservient state. Despite this lowly behavior on the surface, however, the ‘real’ story brewing in the minds of the Filipinos was one of defiance to authority and commitment to an ideal.

### **Hegemony and Counter Hegemony: From America to the Philippines and Back...**

Ileto’s work is significant to our study of church, civil society, and counter-hegemony because it shows how religious ideals have shaped the Filipino socio-political consciousness. Ileto’s thoughts in *Pasyon and Revolution* goes beyond the points raised by Marx, Friere, Weber, and Gramsci by asserting that the indigenous Filipino thinking shaped religion and the practice of religion and eventually inspiring counter-hegemonic behavior against two powerful hegemonic colonizers. In this section of this chapter, we move further up the dialectical chain by examining how Spain and America began a legacy of church hegemony which carried over to Filipino immigrants to the United States. But, later on, these same U.S.-based church institutions experience varying degrees of Filipinization and then used successfully to ‘colonize’ their former American colonizer.

### **State and Church Hegemony under Spain and America**

Hegemony has shaped the consciousness of Filipinos since the time of Spanish colonization. The Catholic Church and its missionaries were used as tools for establishing and perpetuating Spain’s hegemony over the Philippines. Although Magellan is known as the first Spanish explorer to reach the Philippines, it was not until the Legaspi expedition reached the islands in 1565 that the Spanish were able to establish colonial rule. What made this expedition more successful than the first was that Spain used the combination of the cross and the sword to subjugate the native people. The army was the “sword” and the “cross” was, of course, the Catholic Church. The work of Filipino historian Renato Constantino documents how Legaspi arrived armed with Augustinian missionaries, soon followed by Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans. These missionaries became the pretext for Spanish colonialism in which the colonizers aimed to “bring the light of Christianity to the natives.” (Constantino, p. 67). “The Spanish Empire was deemed to be in the service of ‘both majesties,’ God and the King.” This was the basis for the union of church and state which became a critical aspect of Spanish rule in the Philippines. The colonial power used the church to pacify the people and to manufacture the consent that was needed to establish hegemony over the islands. Through the research of Steffi San Buenaventura (2002), we have an example of Gramsci’s “consent and coercion.” She

cites John Leddy Phelan’s work in determining that while Mexico and Peru were colonized through the “violent conquest by sword..., the Spanish colonization of the Philippine archipelago was primarily a conquest-by-the-cross, whereby Spanish missionaries ‘envisioned their work as a spiritual conquest of the minds and hearts of the natives, a supplement to, and the ultimate justification for, the military conquest.’”

Over the course of three centuries, Catholic friars were sent from Spain to eradicate the natives’ religious beliefs in “false” idolatry. Ultimately, the friars in the Philippines had more power than the king’s administrators because they were larger in number and had more permanent positions. They were entrusted with so many civil duties that over time, they were involved in every aspect of community life. The friars were in charge of schools, taxation, military enlistment, municipal budgets, health, police and even in the local dramas that were staged at the fiestas. Over time, they seized much of the ancestral lands from indigenous peoples.

Taxes, tributes, exorbitant rents and arbitrary increases of the same, forced labor and personal services – all these intensified the hardships of natives who now had to give a good part of their products to their landlords. In addition, some administrators practiced other petty cruelties which caused much suffering among the people. In 1745, in the Jesuit ranches of Lian and Nasugbu, Batangas, for example, the people accused the religious not only of usurping the cultivated lands and the hills that belonged to them, but also of refusing to allow the tenants to get wood, rattan, and bamboo for their personal use unless they paid the sums charged by the friars. (Constantino, p72.)

As evidenced in Ileto’s work, the Spanish missionaries hoped to use religious teachings to encourage Filipinos to be loyal to Spain and the Church. The *Pasyon* was one way in which they “encouraged resignation to things as they were and instilled preoccupation with morality and the afterlife rather than with conditions in this world.”

Though the most brutal forms of hegemonic activity linked to the church occurred during Spanish colonization, it is certainly not limited to that time. Dawn Mabalon documents how supportive Protestant leaders were of American imperialism. She quotes Reverend Wallace Radcliffe who stated, “I believe in imperialism because I believe in foreign missions...The peal of the trumpet rings out over the Pacific. The Church must go where America goes” (Mabalon, unpublished). The United States won the Spanish American War in 1898 and bought the Philippines from Spain. But they also used their army to suppress any resistance to this purchase, killing over 1.5 million people during the Philippine American War. Mabalon writes that “(m)issionaries even defended the atrocities committed by soldiers in the Philippines, calling Filipinas/os ‘treacherous and barbaric’ and ‘defective in reasoning’” (ibid.). During the American time, religion, particularly Protestantism, served as an important justification for acquisition and domination. United States President McKinley’s theological justification for con-

tinuing occupation is well known. He claimed that the United States had the responsibility to “uplift and civilize and Christianize” Filipinos.

San Buenaventura asserts that “the coming of Protestantism ended the Roman Catholic monopoly on Christianity in the Philippines.” While the majority of Filipinos remained loyal to the Catholic Church, many chose to join the American religion, which San Buenaventura links to its representation of freedom and liberty. But despite what it was supposed to represent, Protestantism failed to give Filipinos the sense of self-determination that they desired by denying them participation at higher levels of leadership within the church. Although there was a high level of enthusiasm from Filipinos, those who sought involvement were relegated to lower positions of leadership as “Filipino helpers.”

While the Spanish relied heavily on the church to maintain power and dominance over the people, the Americans were able to utilize other forms of civil society, particularly education. A new band of hegemonic missionaries were deployed to the Philippines. The Thomasites, as they were called, arrived in the Philippines in 1902 and established an American educational system and English as the primary teaching language. Today, English is still taught alongside *Tagalog* and is the main language used for teaching in the Philippines. The educational system continues to manufacture consent, while US military presence on the islands provides a formidable tool of coercion when needed.

### **Church Hegemony Follows Filipino Immigrants “Stateside”**

American hegemony constitutes both the “push” and the “pull” factor for Filipino immigration to the US. The influence of the American educational system, the US military presence, and the domination of American corporations are major factors in the shaping of Filipino “common sense” in Philippine cities. American brand-names are far more desirable and well-known than local ones. All of the famous Filipino actors and actresses seen on TV everyday are the ones who look the most “white,” which demonstrates how the hundreds of years of both American and Spanish colonialism has affected Filipinos’ perception of themselves. Leny Strobel writes about how colonial civil society has shaped Filipino psychology:

The experience of colonization has prevented Filipinos from becoming too critical of American hegemony. Colonial mentality has made whiteness a reference point. Consequently, Filipinos are also often judged by outsiders and by each other on the basis of Western cultural standards, e.g. lazy, undisciplined, passive, obsequious, never on time. Even Senator Shahani endorsed a 1988 study of the Philippine character which blamed Philippine culture, rather than imperialism and colonialism, for the weaknesses of Philippines society. (Strobel, p. 38.)

It makes sense, then, that many Filipinos truly believe that a life in the US would be superior to a life in the Philippines. Strobel points out the historical determinants of

Filipino immigration to the US, such as the colonial relationship between the US and the Philippines and the “global capitalist system that influences the movement of peoples from poor to the affluent countries.” The remnants of the colonial days along with “globalization” are some of the factors that keep the Philippines so poor, which “pushes” Filipinos out. The glamorization of American whiteness and wealth “pull” those that are able into the US.

Once the United States opened its doors in 1965, many Filipinos saw this as their golden opportunity to chase the “American dream.” Many people who were just graduating from college or their professional schools were trained in the American-style schools where they learned that the United States is the land of freedom and opportunity. The common perception is that by living here, they will be able to provide their family with a better, American education and have more opportunities to succeed and to prosper. Strobel writes:

From 1965 to 1976, more than 250,000 Filipinos entered the United States. This group was composed predominantly of Filipinos from the urban middle class; most were college graduates, professionals, and highly skilled workers. Identified as the “brain drain” generation, they are products of an American-patterned education in the Philippines. Their world view, beliefs, and values have been shaped by this educational system and the hegemony of American culture in the Philippines. This has resulted in reverse ethnocentrism—the preference for things foreign or American, or in Filipino slang, “stateside.” (p. 37, Strobel)

The 2000 US Census found that there are more than 320,000 Filipinos in the San Francisco Bay Area alone. But the reality of “freedom” and “opportunity” is less than perfect, as we have seen throughout the history of Filipino presence in the US. During early immigration when Filipino men were hired as agricultural workers, they faced many forms of discrimination. There were anti-miscegenation laws and the infamous sign on the door of many shops and restaurants that read, “NO FILIPINOS ALLOWED.”

In the first part of the twentieth century, Stockton, California had the highest number of Filipino residents outside of the Philippines as a result of its agricultural industry. Mabalon explores the ways in which churches in Stockton remained conservative in the earlier part of the century, siding with the more dominant forces of society rather than with the disenfranchised Filipino community of the time. Until 1962, Stockton was part of the massive Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco. Mabalon’s article is very revealing in terms of how Filipinos were perceived by the Church. She cites primary sources showing that anti-Filipino racism was one of the factor that pushed Filipinos away from the Church. In fact, she gives undeniable evidence that the Catholic Church supported the 1935 Filipino Repatriation Act in order to address what was called the “Filipino problem.” She cites documents from San Francisco Archbishop John J. Mitty who said that “I wish to emphasize my conviction, based upon Filipino sentiment, which repatriation will go far in solving the difficult Filipino problem.” Although this conviction was

supposedly based upon Filipino sentiment, “only 2082 Filipinas/os out of a population of more than 100,000 in Hawaii and the US mainland volunteered to be repatriated.” In later letters in which he was pushed to address the “Filipino problem,” he drafted statements that blamed the Filipinos who “want white collar jobs and flashy clothes.” He believed that their difficulty stemmed from the “instability of character of the Filipinos.” He ultimately removed those statements from his final letters to the papal representative in the United States, but the drafts which Mabalon was able to obtain, reveal Archbishop Mitty’s negative and conservative attitude toward Filipinos.

Mabalon’s article shows how unwilling the Catholic Church in Stockton was in addressing problems facing the Filipino community, despite the facts that most Filipinos were Catholic and that Stockton had such a large population of Filipinos. Father McGough of Saint Mary’s Church in Stockton said, “I regret I have nothing to offer in the way of a solution for these people.” Another priest at Saint Mary’s stated that Filipinos are already “lost to the church.” Mabalon also elaborates where Fred Cordova left off in *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans*, in which he devotes a chapter to discussing the Church and Religion in the Filipino American community. He points out that although ninety percent of Filipino Americans were thought to be Catholic, the Catholic Church did not make much of an effort to respond to the needs of the community. Coming from a Philippine society, rooted in Catholicism for more than three hundred and fifty years, Filipino Americans often were denied access to sacramental marriages, involving Catholic brown men and Catholic white women; to Christian burials, involving indigents; to Sunday masses involving individual browns in all-white parishes; to Catholic education, involving poor brown children; to confession, involving the alien foreign speaking.

San Buenaventura did extensive research on the religious experiences of Filipino American communities in Hawaii and southern California which uncovers the role that non-Catholic religion played in perpetuating hegemony. Immigrant workers arrived in “a plantation system that encouraged the Christianization of its labor force.” Because of the Protestant origins of the sugar industry..., the creation of ethnic missions within the Congregational and Methodist Churches was a natural step in inculcating Christian teachings and virtues to the “Asiatic” plantation workers and in instructing them in American democratic principles through the process of Americanization. To them, it was also necessary to nurture Christian religion among the converted workers so as to ensure the continued civilizing effect of Christianity on their outlook and conduct...to prevent having a “Filipino social problem”...Protestant missionaries worked on the assumption that the Filipinos needed special Christian moral guidance. (p. 158, San Buenaventura)

Whether it was the unwillingness to accept Filipino immigrants or the desire to control their behavior, religious institutions in the United States have a long history of continuing the legacy of oppression within the church. Hegemony through the church is a transnational phenomenon, starting

with Spanish colonization in the 1500’s and persisting throughout the twentieth century.

### Counter Hegemony Comes to America: Two Cases from the Filipino Diaspora

The counter-hegemonic consciousness arising from the sub-texts of Spain and America’s Christian teachings led to the emergence of spin-off groups from their Catholic and Protestant Churches. Beyond what Iletto described as *Pasyon* prayer sessions inspiring Filipino to move from mass apathy to militant activism versus Spain in 1840 and against America in 1910, were similar hegemonic actions by Filipino Catholic priests. Filipino Reverend Fathers Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora were martyred in public on the recommendation of their Spanish church superiors for sharing their ‘progressive views’ with their parishioners, particularly the *indios*. This only fueled the anger of Filipino nationalists like Jose Rizal, who penned two novels exposing blatant church-state corruption and abuses. Disgruntled, Rizal eventually left the Catholic church and became a mason. One Filipino Catholic Church pastor, Gregorio Aglipayan, established a breakaway group called the Philippine Independent Church (or Aglipayans) which was refused recognition by the Vatican. Yet another lay person, Felix Manalo, disillusioned by both Catholic and Protestant churches founded his own progressive church called the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (INC) during the American occupation of the Philippines.

In the decades after the annexation of the Philippines by the United States, Filipino immigrant Catholics, Aglipayans, Iglesias, El Shaddais, Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Mormons, and Witnesses came en masse to California not only to continue to spread the faith and Filipinize American spiritual spaces but to mainstream into state-society relations various forms and degrees of Filipino-inspired counter-hegemonic engagement. There was some evidence of counter-hegemonic activities among the early immigrants despite the strong American church-state hegemony discussed earlier. The many Masonic lodges (e.g. Caballeros de Dimasalang), venerating the legacies of Filipino heroes like Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, and Emilio Aguinaldo, from the small towns to the big cities of California, were clear evidence of counter-hegemonic thinking and action among early immigrants. Around the same time that liberation theology began to flourish—during the 1950’s and 60’s—Stockton’s church people changed their attitude toward Filipinos. Mabalon cites instances of counter-hegemony through her work, in which she find that the Franciscan priests, which is a religious order that is dedicated to serving the poor, focused resources on the Filipino and Mexican immigrant workers in the area. In fact, Father Alan McCoy, a liberal Franciscan priest, along with Larry Itilong and Dolores Huerta worked to form the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). The AWOC was responsible for the historical Delano Grape Strike, but few people mention that it has roots in the church. The AWOC would later unite with Cesar Chavez to create the United Farm Workers Union.

Two contemporary case discussions demonstrate in depth these varying forms and degrees. We organized our case studies to delve into the following key factors and conditions that allowed for counter-hegemony to grow and prosper: (1) compelling political issues, (2) leadership structure, (3) socio-economics of the congregation, and (4) parish interest groups.

### **Saint Augustine's Catholic Church, South San Francisco, California**

**Background and compelling issues.** Based on congregational size, Saint Augustine's is the largest parish in the vast Archdiocese of San Francisco, which is comprised of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties. The membership is more than ninety percent Filipino and every weekend at Saint Augustine's is like a *barrio* fiesta. They have five masses on Sundays and three masses on Saturdays to accommodate the over 4000 families that are registered parishioners, which means that the church is bustling with activity all weekend. After each of the masses, you do not see everyone rushing off to get back their routine of their lives. Many parishioners do not leave the church until an hour or two hours after the mass they have attended is over. There is always food and parishioners stay to eat and hang out with their friends and say hello to their friends who are coming in for the next mass. Upon completion of any liturgical service, one hears the cheerful sound of parishioners talking and laughing and children running and playing. One can always count on eating a meal after the mass, where active parishioners either set up a table outside the hall adjacent to the church. For fundraisers, the parishioners will sometimes set up a stand outside the front entrance of the church and sell hot dogs, *lumpia* or soda.

Interestingly, there are no *Tagalog* mass or *Tagalog* bible study held at Saint Augustine's unlike in many of the Catholic and Protestant churches that have been Filipinized. There are also no strong indications of Filipinization in the external and internal features and icons of the church. However, these are more than made up for by the linguistic exchanges in Tagalog, Ilocano, Visayan, Kapampangan, Bicolano, and other Filipino dialects between and among priests, lay workers, and parishioners before and after each service. The use of Filipino attire for both men and women during special events such as baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and funeral services are also give away the ethnic background of the congregations. Beyond the language and fashion, the displays of traditional Filipino customs (i.e., children asking for a 'blessing' by putting the hand of their elders on their forehead) and culinary displays during parties and gatherings are clear manifestations of the congregations Filipinization.

One sunny Sunday in October, one of the active parishioners approached me when she saw me buying a hotdog after mass. She was happy to see me there, as we had met on a quieter weekday for her interview. Proudly she explained, "This is how we are here," holding her arm out to demonstrate the liveliness of the after mass activities. Dozens of

people still milling around outside, while dozens more entered the church for the next mass. She is a matriarch of the parish community—everyone who seemed to be involved in fundraising knew her and greeted her. She was able to answer many of their questions, even though she did not seem to be directly responsible for any duties that day. "They call me *mama*," she said proudly and continues to laugh and make jokes with other parishioners. I realized that Saint Augustine's is truly a second home and a second family to many of the parishioners.

Saint Augustine's caught the attention of San Francisco city officials when shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, when the US Congress hastily passed new air transportation and homeland security legislation which mandated that baggage screening for all of the America's airports was to be taken over by the federal government. The new law, signed by President George Bush, restricted airport security screener jobs to US citizens only. At the time, SFO's security screeners were about 90 percent Filipino, a vast majority of them were new immigrants still ineligible for to become US citizens. There was tremendous opposition to this mandate from progressive groups and the Filipinos community in the Bay Area, and Saint Augustine's was very involved in the struggle to protect the jobs of these over a thousand immigrant non-US citizen workers at the San Francisco airport, 900 of whom were of Filipino descent. A large number of the screeners who were affected are parishioners and relatives of parishioners. But this was not the only reason that Saint Augustine's became involved in the struggle and it was not the first time they had taken a stand against injustice and hegemony. After an initial conversation with one of the pastors at Saint Augustine's, Father Robert Andrey, we learned that this parish has been engaged in mobilizing its congregants toward political goals since at least 1998.

Saint Augustine's has 3500 families officially registered as parishioners and an estimated 1500 additional families attending masses, making it the largest parish in the three-county Archdiocese of San Francisco. This is why the parishioners and church leaders were surprised when in 1999, South San Francisco's Planning Commission rejected a proposal to expand the church's building structure and build an elementary school next door. The parish had worked with the city for over eighteen months to come up with an acceptable project. When they were denied, the congregation was so shocked and hurt, that they were adamant about not giving up. After over a year of planning and work, they felt strongly that their voices needed to be heard. About five hundred churchgoers showed up at City Hall to persuade the City Council to overturn the Planning Commission's decision. Their mobilization proved successful, and the South San Francisco City Council unanimously approved the plan.

**Leadership structure.** There are two different types of leadership at work in the parish of Saint Augustine's. The first is the leadership of the priests and nuns who were involved in the above mentioned struggles. They, in turn, foster a second type of leadership amongst the parishioners. During the last five to six years, Saint Augustine's has bene-

fited from the experiences and political values of three religious leaders: Father Eugene, the head pastor, Sister Nona, head of the music ministry and education, and Father Obet, pastor. Through interviews which each of these individuals we learned that they were bringing years of political organizing with them to Saint Augustine's.

Father Eugene has been a priest in the Bay Area for many years and was one of the first priests contacted by the Bay Area Organizing Committee (BAOC) which does community organizing around the Bay Area in order to empower disadvantaged groups. According to Larry Gordon, president and CEO of the BAO, Father Eugene was contacted because he is a very talented pastor who shared the progressive political vision of the BAO and began working with him even before he became the head pastor at Saint Augustine's. Father Eugene sees his role as inspirer and motivator as critical in mobilizing the parish. "You have to be charismatic, welcoming and a little diplomatic at the same time...One thing that really I learned (is) it might be very difficult from the beginning. But if you don't do anything, if you don't make that first start, you will (never) do it. I think it was difficult for me to see what's going to happen. Because it was a really gigantic, a really huge project. But I just found out if there's a will there's a way."

Sister Nona has her organizing roots in the Philippines. She has been very involved in both the airport screener and expansion projects. For her, it was a great experience to be involved in these struggles because it reminded her of the times that she was involved in political resistance in the Philippines. "I have another concentration here with music. But it is not like there (in the Philippines) where we organize and we become very active. Here it is different. But there it takes a lot more courage to involve yourself. It is very risky." Despite the risk involved, Sr. Nona enjoyed the political work that she was involved in back home. She fondly recounts her first experience in organizing. "Well, it's already ingrained in my mind when I was young. My father was a lawyer and he was working with the poor. So I can see him. He accepted more clients with the poor. When I was a sister I had lots of experience. The first experience that I had was when our congregation went to defend the young girls from going into prostitution—giving them work so that they would not have to choose prostitution. That was my first experience. We did some marching and demonstrations. I was one of the leaders and we involved the whole town with the permission of the parish priest and somehow we were even able to involve the mayor. It involved the whole town, but it was peaceful."

Sister Nona brings this experience with her to the US and while the political situation is a bit more stable here, she misses being involved with fighting such blatant social injustices. She sees the social injustice here as well, but does not see enough resistance to it.

"Living here, you realize all the problems. Look at the housing conditions. There are many who are jobless... Why can we not do something? At least to prevent those who first came from the Philippines and other countries. They cannot anymore afford to buy a house. And for me that's not fair. Well you can say that the others were here for a long, long

time. Blest are you who are here for a long, long time. But can we do something? Housing goes up and up and up and we just bow down and bow down and bow down. Even here in California, no one is saying something about the housing. And how many people here are jobless. How many have to move somewhere else just to survive. How many have no health insurance. And they cry. They are crying but no one is speaking up. We have to speak out. That's what I hate, that is what is lacking."

So Sister Nona hopes to be able to teach through her example. She goes to the organizing meetings and hopes that people will see her and realize that she is in support of social justice issues. "For me, it's just continue as leaders. If they will see in us, that our presence, our witnessing is strong, I think even if you are not saying anything. If they will see you that you are attending meetings...Oh Sr. Nona is there and Father Eugene is there, Oh they are for it. And we are also very lucky that our volunteers are here. It is not only he work of one, it is community work. The involvement is not just mine, it is everyone's."

Father Obet also has political roots in martial law the Philippines. He is familiar with the idea that religion is the opiate of the masses and does not agree with the idea because it is not his experience here or in the Philippines. "...My formative years were the martial law years...We were fighting the martial law regime when I was a student in the seminary. Then I became a priest and that was when I was able to do more for the Filipinos. And then when I came I did not look for BAO—it came to me. And I kind of was able to continue what I was doing in the Philippines. I was also involved with community organizing in the Philippines during the time of martial law. In the Philippines there was a thin line between the church and politics. I was so active that there was a wrong report that I was suspected of being associated with the NPA. My rectory was raided in the middle of the night. When there was the People Power Revolution. When that took place, I wanted to make sure that was successful because if it was not, then I was a marked man. I was a very young priest at the time."

Father Obet's work and initiative with Saint Augustine's was critical in the campaign to save the airport screeners. As Saint Augustine's representative to the Bay Area Organizing Committee, he was able to help with a Living Wage victory in San Francisco and was largely responsible for initiating the screener campaign within the parish. His political conviction has been useful in explaining why it is important for the church to become involved in political matters.

"Well, I always preach about faith and justice because for me faith without justice is not real, not authentic. And of course we have the social teachings of the church. They are a well kept secret, but of course we try to uncover the secret. It is really hard to preach about justice, especially if we talk about to each his own, in this crisis of poverty. There is this wrong common notion that when priests talk about justice, we are going overboard because there is a separation of church and state. And you're not supposed to engage in politics. The fact is ...that's wrong. Religion covers all aspects of

our life, including politics. But what we don't do as ministers is participate in partisan politics. But politics in general is very big...it is a part of the social teachings of the church. The only problem is that people have this notion that you should not mix church with politics."

The above religious leaders bring their talent and experiences to help make Saint Augustine's a parish that has real political leverage in fighting for social justice. As good leaders, they recognize that they cannot be the only leaders and that the leadership should continue even after they must leave Saint Augustine's. Father Eugene has been very effective at delegating leadership roles to people in the parish. There are at least two dozen names that Father Eugene can cite when asked which parishioners help him to get things done. There is someone to lead the Youth Group, the Small Christian Communities, someone to lead the capital campaign to expand the church and build the school, a leader for the Outreach Ministry, and many more. Father Eugene encourages them to take their own initiative and gives them the freedom to develop each project without reporting each little detail to him. They appreciate this freedom, which also gives them more accountability and ownership of these projects. The leader of the capital campaign for the expansion and the school, for example, worked for months on planning the project with the city and with the other parishioners. When the project was denied by the Planning Commission, she was one of the most determined to fight it.

**Socio-economics of the congregation.** Although Marx and other political theorists prioritize raising the consciousness of the working class to be the leaders of social transformation and counter-hegemony, Saint Augustine's provides compelling evidence that other social classes can also play an important role and can be very effective when organized.

The vast majority of the parishioners at Saint Augustine's are residents of its surrounding South San Francisco neighborhood, which is a predominantly immigrant community, but one that has enjoyed a little more time and stability in this country than the South of Market district of San Francisco. Many of the people living in the neighborhood have had the privilege to either buy or rent a house rather than having to live in a small inner city apartment. The community has also had time to mature. With the influx of immigrants in the 1970's and 1980's, the children of these immigrants are now either in college or college-bound. The parents now have a little more free time than they once did.

Noemi Castillo, the Director of the Ethnic Ministries office at the Archdiocese of San Francisco, believes that it is sometimes more difficult to mobilize brand new immigrants who are struggling to survive. While it is true that they are the ones who are suffering from the most injustices and can probably identify with those injustices much more easily, they are often too busy working two or more jobs to become civically engaged. Saint Augustine's, she observes, has a larger number of middle class, more stable families than other predominantly Filipino churches in San Francisco.

Ted, a parishioner, keenly reflects upon how the stability he has been able to attain in his years here has allowed him

to gain some perspective on social justice: "I see myself as having changed from that conservative, hard-working, trying to make it out here in the United States. It's changed...now maybe we're more stable, we're no longer looking at success as a hungry beginner. We've learned to see that it's more than just grabbing for the big pie. There are less fortunate people than myself over here and in everything we do I just feel that I've been blessed and fortunate and I can't stand to just watch oppression happen in any kind of form. When there is an oppression, I think there is no love and how can I say I'm a Catholic...how can I even say I'm a Christian if I didn't do something about it? I felt I'm being—I'm not being true to myself...It took me thirty years to change the way I think. And then now, when we have attained a certain sort of stability, status in society, then you're focus changes. You grow."

In addition to the insight that economic stability allows, the church can draw upon the resources that it offers: money and time. Father Eugene has not only been able to raise the money that was needed to expand the church and build the school, but he has been able to enlist parishioners to become organizers and leaders in their free time. While most of the parishioners still have to work full time, they no longer have to work two or three jobs to survive. Father Eugene has also called upon some of the parishioners who have retired. As soon as their last day of work arrives, Father Eugene has work planned for them at the church. And the church is so much a part of their life, that they are more than willing, if not flattered to do it.

Activists and organizers often come from the middle class as a result of the luxury of time and education that they have. But they are not so far from the working class that they cannot relate. While they have had some luck and success in gaining financial stability in this country, many of them recognize that they also hold relatively little power in society and could lose their status depending on economic and political conditions. The majority of the families at Saint Augustine's are immigrants, and their experience as new, struggling aliens to this country is not so remote a memory. They remember their experience as foreigners and still feel that they are not completely accepted by US society.

When the federalization of airport security happened, it hit close to home for many parishioners. One of the parishioners who became very involved in the struggle to save their jobs said, "I think as Filipinos we saw it as a threat. We thought that Filipinos who are capable, deemed to be capable in doing their jobs, (were) yanked out of them because they're not US citizens. We felt (like) airport screeners...and then what next? Doctors, nurses, engineers? All of these people. It was flavored with so much racism or discrimination."

Maria is another active parishioner who has happened to have a brother who was an airport screener. Although she herself was not threatened, her family was and she was determined that the church needed to do something about it if they could. "We were trying to convince the city officials that people's lives will be very much affected. It is just very unfair." She was particularly angered by the fact that while her brother was being fired by the government because of his

status. His non-citizen status did not stop her brother's son from being asked to risk his life serving the government. "My brother cannot work in this kind of job because he was not a citizen. He was being laid off because of that citizenship thing. But you know, my brother's son is working, is in the armed forces. He is in the Air Force. It is really unfair." The way she sees it, if her nephew is putting his life on the line for the country, the least the country can do is let his father keep his job. "That is their livelihood," she stresses. Maria is keenly aware that even with this kind of job, it is a struggle to live in this area. "Because you know, here in the Bay Area, our cost of living is very high and yet the wage is not comparable to the cost of living. Rental here for a one bedroom is \$1200. And the take home is \$1200—and that's take home. That means one of the paychecks is already gone to rental. What about the food, the clothing, the car that you drive. Gas too is another..." When Saint Augustine's became involved in the airport screener struggle, her closeness to the situation made it easy for her to see that something needed to be done. "My brother was one of them that will be laid off and so I attended the meeting."

**Parish interest groups.** The first of two major parish interest groups is actually located outside of Saint Augustine's. The Bay Area Organizing Committee is a broad based organization that is comprised of a mix of religious, labor and civic institutions. The organization's director, Larry Gordon, says that its goal is to "empower" communities and to fight institutional injustice through other institutions. The Bay Area Organizing Committee's relationship with Saint Augustine's began with the church's expansion and school project. Father Obet says that the BAOC wanted to prioritize creating deeper relationships with the city government officials. The parishioners claim that it was the training of the BAOC that enabled them to make their case against the South San Francisco's Planning Commission. They helped the parish formulate well thought out arguments to present to the City Council and emphasized the importance of mobilizing a large number of people to go to the meeting to show their support. Ultimately, hundreds of parishioners showed up at City Hall and several delegates articulately argued for an expansion of their church and the building of an elementary school. The victory with the city was an emotional one, and some of the parishioners wept remembering their joy and relief in finally getting the city to approve their project. Although the parishioners firmly believed that denying them their right to build a bigger church and a school for their children was unjust, they were very nervous about being able to convince the city. Their success, though they felt it was deserved, was a bit surprising, and therefore empowering. From this experience, the relationship with the BAOC grew and they continued to work on the living wage and the airport screener issues.

The BAOC lends its organizing expertise as well as its ability to mobilize other institutions for common goals. The airport screener rally drew in hundreds of parishioners from Saint Augustine's, but even hundreds more from the other member organizations of the BAOC.

The second crucial parish interest group involved in Saint Augustine's counter-hegemonic projects is the Small Christian Community. The Small Christian Communities that exist at Saint Augustine's are the single most mentioned factor in creating the conditions for counter-hegemonic projects within the parish. Every last interviewee talked about the Small Christian Communities and how they made the mobilization of large numbers of parishioners possible when needed. There are two six-week seasons of the Small Christian Communities per calendar year and Saint Augustine's just completed their sixteenth season. Each season, small groups of six to twelve parishioners gather once a week outside of mass, usually at one of the parishioner's homes. Together they spend an hour and a half praying, reading from the gospel, reflecting, sharing and then coming up with ways to integrate what they have learned into their lives. The "Faith Sharing and Integration" portion of the weekly format calls for the small Christian community to share how the reading and the learning are related to their daily lives and relationships. Afterwards, the "Response in Action," decides how the learning can be put into action and lived out in their lives going forward. This acknowledgment that faith and religion must manifest itself in action is quite different from the notion that it is an opiate to the people, and was critical in mobilizing the parishioners toward political and social justice causes.

When we asked Boy how he was able to help gather more than 200 parishioners in a mobilization of more than one thousand people to support the airport screeners and demand that the city do something to save their jobs, he immediately mentioned the Small Christian Communities. "Westborough Middle School was the venue...and (we) had Willie Brown come out. One the day of the rally for the screeners, Ted and I were appointed coordinators. We had to get everyone from Saint Augustine's to be at this place at this time." Ted explained that they made pulpit announcements, Sunday bulletins and phone calls. But a crucial factor was that "We ha(d) these six coordinators who were supposed to pull from the pool of the Small Christian Community facilitators and from there get the numbers." Boy adds that "The Small Christian Communities of Saint Augustine's were very, very well organized, and a very cohesive force. So even if some of (the people in the Small Christian Communities) admittedly, did not quite understand all the issues, because we said get as many of the Small Christian Community members there and get your families and get your friends and get everybody involved. I think that's one of the reasons that we had quite a good turnout. That's where they focused. I said 'grab the Small Christian Communities. Get them to start mobilizing these people.'"

Not only do the Small Christian Communities facilitate the mobilization of the parishioners when they are needed in large numbers, but they also help foster the sense of community within the church. Lisa, another parishioner who was involved in both the screener and the expansion/school project, says that their sense of "*kapatiran*" or brotherhood is very strong at Saint Augustine's. The Small Christian

Communities are what she calls a “life sharing” and she attributes the closeness of the parish to this process. “Before, you know, people just come to church. Now it’s so different. People (are) putting their effort together because of the Small Christian Communities. There is more involvement now. . It’s not about *chismis*. One of the rules of that bible sharing group is everything is confidential...it has to remain in that group only. Whatever you discuss that’s it. It remains in that group...Because of that we got a whole lot of people involved. Got involved with the screeners. Most of them are from the small Christian community...” The Small Christian Communities seem to create an environment of trust, accountability and closeness amongst parishioners in which they feel they have the responsibility to take action in carrying out their faith. All of the parishioners that were interviewed have a strong conviction, based on their Small Christian Community experience that prayer and action go hand in hand. Lisa says, “Prayer without action doesn’t do anything. Because one of the teachings of God is to pray and also to do work, you know, just like Jesus. Because he did not just make miracles, you know in order for him to do things, he has to do some work also.” The Small Christian Community readings call for believers to engage in civic action. The Small Christian Community pamphlet that was used this last season was called “The Call to Family, Community and Participation,” and its opening paragraph read:

The human person is not only sacred, but social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. No community is more central than the family; it needs to be supported, not undermined. It is the basic cell of society, and the state has an obligation to support the family...We also have the right and responsibility to participate in and contribute to the broader communities in society.

The themes of the Small Christian Community readings are very social justice oriented, and at times counter-hegemonic themselves. The themes for the last season were Call to Family, Call to Community, Call to Participation, Catholic Social Teaching in Action, The Call to Family, Community and Participation, and the Obstacle of Racism. These themes help shape the social and political consciousness of the parishioners so that the ideas of “prayer without action,” and “faith without justice” are not acceptable for them.

These are just some of the conditions that allowed for the initiation of counter-hegemonic projects to occur at Saint Augustine’s. Others that were not as highlighted in the interviews included Filipino values, for example. Some parishioners believed that there were Filipino-specific values that came into play when the parish decided to take a stand on the issues that affected them. The sense of “*bayanihan*” when their Filipino brothers and sisters were being betrayed by the government and their deep sense of family urged them to rise up and protect their brothers and sisters whose families would suffer from the loss of their jobs.

Saint Augustine’s is really paving the way for churchgoers to realize their potential in making the world a better

place. The parishioners have tasted victory and had a glimpse of what the power of organized people can accomplish. But there is still some untapped potential and much work to do. Sr. Nona and some of the parishioners touched upon some of the injustices that they continue to see every day. We hope this study will encourage them to continue their work and that it will invite other individuals and organizations to harness their power in seeking social justice and counter-hegemony.

### **Saint Patrick’s Catholic Church, San Francisco, California**

**Background and compelling issues.** Within less than a week after the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States, Filipino community activists along with the leaders of Saint Patrick’s Church organized a prayer vigil. It was the first ethnic community in the Bay Area to take a collective stand on progressive issues after the tragedy and it was hosted by Saint Patrick’s and strongly endorsed by its Filipino pastor, Monsignor Fred Bitanga. The call was for maintenance of peace, a stop to all the anti Arab and Muslim American violence, and for the United States to take a step back and examine our foreign policy as the possible motivation for these attacks. Many speakers also named US imperialism as the reason for why other nations would want to attack us. The over 100 Filipinos who came to the vigil sang “Imagine,” by John Lennon, which was soon thereafter banned from being played on the radio by Clear Channel.

Many new Filipino immigrants, especially from small towns, operate within the mental construct of a Philippine *poblacion* (or town plaza), wherein the church is at the center of the plaza with the various governmental institutions and social gathering places around it. Because Saint Patrick’s helps Filipino immigrants adjust to American life by reinforcing Filipino cultural values and behaviors, it continues loyalty towards the parish. In San Francisco’s South of Market area, Saint Patrick’s is the center of gravity that draws Filipinos back even when they have moved to the suburbs.

Within this Filipino ‘plaza’ is the Filipino Educational Center, where Filipino youth attend after school programs held in Tagalog. The Mint Mall, which is two blocks away from Saint Patrick’s, houses a Filipino bookstore, restaurant, Filipino businesses, and non-profit organizations. Also within two blocks away is Bindlestiff Studios, the epicenter of Filipino performing arts in San Francisco, gives local actors, actresses, poets, spoken word artists, and musicians a place to develop and showcase their craft. Filipino student organizations and Filipino American Studies in the universities and one high school in the Bay Area help students in the a process that Strobel has labeled cultural identity formation. The Church, although it is often overlooked, is a site where some of the most powerful rearticulation and counter-hegemonic struggles take place.

The Church is the one and only place that Filipino immigrants can come to in the Bay Area and feel immediately at home. In a world of unfamiliarity, the Church is familiar, comfortable and empowering. Furthermore, it provides serv-



ices to new immigrants that help them to acculturate. In some Bay Area churches, masses are offered in Tagalog and confessions are heard in several Filipino languages. One of the congregation members of Saint Patrick's church in San Francisco commented on how the church gives her a sense of belonging: "...every time I attend mass I can see that all the altar servers, the priests, the lay ministers, the lectors...and also the music ministry, they are all Filipinos and that makes me proud because the other people who attend the mass who are not Filipinos will see how close we are, how big the community is." Many of the Filipino traditions of celebrating holidays are practiced in Bay Area churches. For example, Saint Patrick's celebrates *Simbang Gabi*, which is a treasured form of celebrating Christmas for Filipinos, a nine-day early morning novena mass. The children of parishioners often sing church songs in *Tagalog* and go to catechism classes where their parents feel that they learn Filipino values such as respect for elders. Filipino congregants feel that the Church is a way to feel like part of the Filipino community.

Saint Patrick's Church builds on the sense of continuity between the Philippines, where the majority are Catholic, and the U.S. Filipino ushers greet new immigrants and seat them among the congregants who are mostly Filipino also. More often than not, the celebrant is a Filipino priest. Aside from the Gothic Revival architecture, the new Filipino immigrant usually feels that one is still in Manila, especially during the monthly Tagalog mass. Icons refer to popular devotions in the Philippines, like those to the Mother of Perpetual Help and the Divine Mercy flanking the high altar. The affection Filipino Catholics feel the Holy Infant Jesus (Santo Niño) is enshrined close to the center of the sanctuary. Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint, has also his own shrine. Even the Black Nazareno, an icon of Christ, is revered by many male Filipinos at the Quiapo Church in Manila, has a place.

Many Filipino Catholics are not content to pay their respect to their saints simply through prayer touches, caresses, and bestowing affection as if the saint is a living person, they have worn off the paint on Saint Lorenzo Ruiz's feet and the Sacred Nazareno's right hand. For the Filipino parishioners Saint Patrick's church is one of the few places where they can engage in this active form of devotion without being self-conscious. They can also even pray and confess in their native or through bi-cultural priests. Dual citizenship, i.e., allegiance to both the Philippines and the United States, is an accepted mental state here in this church. Filipinos claim that this definitely eases in their acculturation.

The redevelopment of San Francisco into a cosmopolitan city has caused serious displacement to its Filipino residents and workers who take refuge in pockets of the city with low income housing units. The tearing down of the I-Hotel in what was then a ten block Manila town symbolized a victory for commercial developers but it also galvanized Filipinos and their community allies into political action. Thus, affordable housing became an issue especially for those who at the turn of the 20th century to work as agricultural workers and now gravitate to the city to retire and be with fellow Filipinos. The demolition of the I-Hotel was followed by a

suspicious fire which gutted the Delta Hotel, another popular low income residence for Filipinos.

The City of San Francisco's redevelopment of the South of Market also affected not only residential areas but old commercial buildings on 6th Street which included the home of Bindlestiff Studios. Artists and musicians lobbied long and hard at city hall but eventually had to move to a new location. Hitting close to the heart of Filipino spirituality was the Archdiocese of San Francisco's decision to close Saint Joseph's church and the adjoining Catholic school which were predominantly populated with Filipino parishioners and students. Filipino pastor Monsignor Fred Bitanga was transferred to Saint Patrick's Church. The loyal Filipino congregation followed.

The neighborhoods where most of Saint Patrick's parishioners live are some of poorest and depressed areas of San Francisco. The South of Market and Tenderloin are areas where petty crime, drug sales and drug use, homelessness, youth gang violence, vandalism to vehicles and property are all part of daily life. Nevertheless, these areas are popular to new immigrants, especially Filipinos, because of their accessibility to downtown jobs eliminating the cost of commuting, availability of low rent apartments, and close proximity to Filipino shops and services, from groceries, to barber shops, to tailors, and restaurants. But most importantly, the South of Market is where the center of their religious life is located. It is easier to earn and save money in these neighborhoods. However, the social trade-offs to many Filipino families for these economic benefits are increased drug use among teens, school drop out rates, teen pregnancies, youth and senior depression cases, and HIV infection incidences. Additionally, the test scores at the local elementary school are some of the lowest in the county.

The long awaited naturalization of Filipino World War II veterans in the early 1990s brought another wave of new immigrants to the Saint Patrick's care. Because of the long Congressional delay in acting on this matter, most of the veterans who arrived were already in their 60s and 70s, with no medical benefits. Their main source of support was SSI or Social Security Income. They had supplement SSI with odd jobs as bus boys, doormen, security guards, garbage collectors, school janitors, newspaper deliverymen, and handymen at the hotels, businesses, schools, and restaurants in the area.

**Leadership structure.** Just like all Catholic churches, the leadership structure at Saint Patrick's is hierarchical, with the pastor at the top, moving down to the associate pastors, the deacon, and the parish staff. Two Filipino nuns from the Religious of the Virgin Mary, a religious order established in the Philippines, serve on the parish staff, in charge of the parish's finances and their religious educational program. However, the behavior and actions of leaders and followers exhibit very much a Filipino organizational culture. Monsignor Fred Bitanga, the charismatic pastor, is the ultimate authority within the parish. However, over the years, as demands for his guidance and counsel have increased, he has learned to delegate much of the work down to his trusted and loyal associates and the staff, and there is much leeway

in how they handle affairs. Owing to the demands placed on the pastor (who is probably the most popular person in the Filipino-American community, and not just the parish), he cannot help but have the other Filipino priests shoulder some of the work, especially in dealings with the parish's many organizations.

Lay parish activities are coordinated by the parish council, which meets weekly on Tuesday evenings. The 21 different parish organizations send representatives to the council, with the exception of the four youth groups, which have their separate council. The parish council acts as both a consultative and deliberative body in that it coordinates the parish's social life. Decisions on activities and related issues are then relayed back to the organizations, which usually have the responsibility of implementing them. As for the youth, the youth council becomes the primary parish organization for them, an umbrella entity encompassing the youth choir, the altar servers, and the youth chapter of the Legion of Mary. As a result, the youth organizations frequently share the same members.

In the minds of many of his parishioners, Monsignor Bitanga represents a form of political, economic, and social patron. In the Philippines, patrons usually manifest themselves as prominent citizens (i.e. the mayor, the local lawyer, anyone in a position of power). In the absence of such figures, the monsignor becomes the locus of power, able to influence decisions, to bestow favors, and 'bless' community events but most of all actions. The Monsignor's leadership in the parish and the larger community is seen through the respect that is given for his 'blessings.' His 'blessings' though could be explicit or implicit, social or political, formal or informal, direct or indirect. For instance, the monsignor has given his explicit blessings to the September 11, 2001 activities and sits on the board of directors of the Veterans Equity Center while he has also given more implicit blessings to mass actions for the I-Hotel and Bindlestiff studios, to more social services for families, and to the fight for low income housing. He tries his best to be at all social and political events but as mentioned earlier, if he is not able to, he usually sends some of his loyal associate pastors or lay assistants. Even when he is not there, as long as people know that the monsignor is their supporter or that he has an awareness of the issue, then they feel 'blessed' just as in the airport baggage screener displacement issue. Thus, he never in front of counter-hegemonic exercises like marching to City Hall and rallying on Market Street but it does not mean that he is not supporting them or that he has not informed his parishioners of these events. Community leaders engage in mass actions to address the burning issues discussed earlier knowing that they have the monsignor's blessings.

Parishioners come up to the monsignor with a request for help for almost anything. Most of the time, it's with some spiritual matter; but there are times when an individual would ask for his assistance in regards to everyday matter—affairs with institutions outside the Church, such as housing matters or legal immigration status. The monsignor intimated to us in an interview that he is not very comfortable with this

kind of solicitation but he is obliged to help however he can. This is how they have been trained in the Philippines and this is what is expected of them by parishioners. Most of the time, he refers such requests to government and non-governmental agencies who are better equipped to help, e.g., Catholic Charities, Westbay, SOMA Teen Center, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Board of Supervisor's Office. People view the monsignor as a benefactor, and they are willing to follow him as long as he is able to dispense favors. The persons he helps are also able to 'name drop' him and get 'better' access to services especially from Filipino agencies. In a way, Monsignor Bitanga is able to create a more subtle but effective form of counter-hegemony.

**Socio-economics of the congregation.** The primary ethnicity in Saint Patrick's is at present Filipino. It used to be predominantly Irish until about the 1970s, but with the demographic shift in the surrounding neighborhoods came the change in the congregation's make-up, along with the parish's merger with Saint Joseph's. Percentages are hard to come by, as the pastor noted that Filipino parishioners are notorious for not registering as such. Hence, the term "parishioners" will be used loosely; "parish regulars" would probably be a more accurate description. In terms of age, the congregation is fairly old. A good part of individuals who take part in daily parish activities are within the 50 to 70-age bracket. There is a significant youth movement within the parish (consisting mainly of families), but the older members form the bulk of the parish. Women seem to dominate the congregation; in many of the parish events observed, women frequently outnumber men three to one.

Single-family homes are rare in the South of Market and Tenderloin areas, these neighborhoods are dominated by apartment buildings and single resident occupancy (SRO) hotels. The congregation reflects the neighborhoods' socio-economic status, with many of the older congregants living in low-cost housing provided by the parish and the community, such as the Alexis House and the San Lorenzo Ruiz Center. There are many exceptions though, as there are parishioners that come from communities outside San Francisco. Employment varies from parishioner to parishioner and follows age patterns; the older parishioners are either retired or unemployed, while the younger parishioners have steady employment, either part-time or full-time. There are parishioners with professional jobs, though not in management—many work close by as office workers in the Financial District or in retail establishments close to the church in the Union Square area. Many of the older parishioners, especially males, immigrated to the United States to press for veterans' benefits they feel were denied to them by the United States government despite their service during the Second World War.

Generally speaking, the younger generation seems to be more affluent than the older parishioners. Given the different waves of Filipino migration, the younger parishioners are usually the "brain drain" generation and their children. As for the veterans and their spouses, they could be classified as an extension of the original itinerant Filipino field workers of the 1910s to the 1940s, though the veterans came much later.

In terms of their present socioeconomic situation and their location, the veterans have much more in common with the field workers than their “brain drain” contemporaries. Encounters between the older and younger generations of parishioners resemble their counterparts in the Philippines. The older generation has the run of the parish while the younger members have mostly a secondary role. While youth members participate in liturgy (such as the altar servers and the young adult choir), adult members regularly perform the duties of ushers, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers. The average household income though is still much lower than other Catholic parishes.

A good indication of the relative status of older and younger parishioners is the parish organizations. Of the twenty-five different parish organizations, only four are geared towards the younger parishioners. However, the presence of independent youth organizations is significant in that it addresses the question of legacy. Given the advanced age of many of the parishioners, the youth represent the future lay leaders of the parish, and their involvement in parish activities seems like a preparation for this future assumption of leadership roles. There are connections between the older groups and the younger groups—the younger members of the adult organizations serve as informal mentors to the youth parishioners, often identifying each other as fictive kin: the mentors act more as older siblings to the youth instead of a more formal relationship.

Generational dynamics also exist among adult parishioners, with younger adults showing deference to older adults. Though most call each other either “Brother” or “Sister”, there are times when persons are addressed as either “*Kuya* (older brother)” or “*Ate* (older sister)”, usually in more informal settings. This is another example of the prevalence of fictive kin relationships that are brought over from the Philippines, much like the relationship between the youth parishioners and their mentors. The regionalism that usually characterizes Filipino settings seems much more muted in the parish environment. It can be attributed to the homogenizing effects of religious faith—that is, having something as significant as faith diminishes the effects of other differentiating factors, such as regional origins. That, and the need for ethnic solidarity in a foreign country can also be a determining factor. Saint Patrick’s now becomes a center for the creation of a new Filipino identity rooted in the American experience, and the old regionalisms of the past are now used mostly as material for jokes.

Politically speaking, the parishioners of Saint Patrick’s live in two worlds. Not only are domestic politics and issues of importance, but what goes on in the Philippines is also followed with interest. The easy availability of both Filipino-language and Filipino-oriented media, as well as the frequent arrival of visiting priests from the Philippines help keep the parish informed of social and political developments in the home country.

Parishioners get informed on political issues inside the church through sermons by the priests or outside the church. Filipino establishments in their SOMA ‘town plaza’ frequent-

ly feature racks where one can get free Filipino newspapers, and newsstands—especially around Downtown and SoMa—sell Filipino newspapers and magazines if the operator is Filipino. The Filipino Channel (TFC) is a cable channel operated by the Philippines-based media company ABS-CBN, and it is readily available on cable networks in Daly City and other areas with a significant Filipino population. For people without access to cable television, two local channels (KTSF and KMTP) have Filipino-language programming.

In terms of activism and engaging in counter-hegemonic activities, some chose to be more sacrificial than other in terms of joining their fellow parishioners on the street protests. Many chose to sympathize through prayers and financial contributions, as in the case of the Filipino airport worker’s displacement, some of whom were Saint Patrick worshippers. Their strong Catholic faith helps determine their stance on morality, but they are conscious of where they stand in America. Parishioners seem to reflect a majority of Filipino immigrant families—a mix of social conservatism (usually around the areas of personal and sexual issues) and political progressiveness. Many of the parishioners are conscious of the Filipino veterans’ struggle for equity and the poverty that oftentimes surrounds them, and they are also conscious of how far down in the political ladder Filipino Americans are. Like many other Filipino Americans, parishioners in Saint Patrick’s view the American dream as more than just personal prosperity but also as political and social validation—which is why the election of a Filipino as mayor of Daly City in November 2001 was of major importance among the local Filipino American community.

**Parish interest groups.** Church leaders believe that their primary concern is in the spiritual welfare of its parishioners. Hence, their counter-hegemonic engagement is in the form of parish-CBO (community-based organization) partnerships. Apart from daily masses and other religious rituals, plus other devotional activities, the parish sponsors religious education programs for the parish’s children that attend public school and Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) programs for new converts to Catholicism or adult candidates for confirmation. In relation to the parish’s liturgical functions, the church also has three different choirs (adult, youth, and the Latin choir that sings at the weekly Latin mass), an organization for the lay ministers (ushers, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers), and another organization for the youth altar servers, both for altar boys and altar girls.

And of course, there are the parish organizations. As mentioned before, coordinating the social activities between these organizations (all in all, twenty-five) is the Parish Council. Apart from the eight chapters of the Legion of Mary, the other organizations deal with liturgical functions (as described above), are related to a particular order or devotion (Charismatic Prayer Group, Divine Mercy, Holy Name Society, Lay Carmelite, Sacred Heart Devotion, Saint Vincent de Paul Society), or a particular saint (Confraternity of Saint Joseph, Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary), and the youth parish council.

Historically, many of the social activities for these organi-

zations—such as parties and meetings—have been held in the main parish hall. However, with the recent renovation of the church, social activities were scaled back and the larger ones either cancelled or held outside the church. Some activities—such as the block rosaries popular among the Marian organizations, a devotion where an image of the Virgin is passed among the members' homes for a certain period and rosaries are said during the intervals—still occurred outside the church, but for organizations that were more dependent on the parish's facilities, this proved to be a damper. It is only within the past two years that the social life that revolved around Saint Patrick's precincts began to revive. Before and after the formal meetings and prayer sessions, and during informal parties and functions are times to discuss community issues.

To address the issues mentioned above, many of Saint Patrick's church leaders (including Monsignor Bitanga) and parishioners are actively involved in neighborhood-based organizations like West Bay Filipino Multi-service Center, South of Market Teen Center, the South of Market Health Center, the South of Market Job Training Center, Arkipelago Bookstore, Filipinas Restaurant, and the Filipino Veteran's Equity Center. Many are board members, organizers, staff members, volunteers, financial contributors, and proprietors. Saint Patrick's, as a Filipino institution, has close linkages with these civil society groups. Further, these community-based organizations and the Saint Patrick's often play the role of mutual advocate for Filipinos. They have successfully lobbied the U.S. Congress to provide recognition to Filipino World War II veterans by grants of American citizenship. These organizations have also leveraged funds from the City and County of San Francisco for Filipino youth and their families. They have lobbied for resolutions to be passed by the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. They have also lobbied for the successful appointment of qualified Filipinos (some who are Saint Patrick's parishioners) to city, county, and state-level commissions, boards, and other government posts. Saint Patrick's leaders and members have also supported letters and petitions brought to them by these community-based groups addressed to San Francisco mayors, California governors, California congressional delegations, and even U.S. Presidents. Counter-hegemony at Saint Patrick's is reflected in the symbiotic relationship between the church and these civil society organizations: the church helps new arrivals maintain an important socio-spiritual connection to the Philippines while the neighborhood organizations help them make a successful start in their new home in the U.S.

## Summary and Conclusions

Based on our extensive archival and ethnographic researches, we have attempted to provide conceptual, historical, and empirical evidences to the emergence of counter-hegemonic activities within the Filipino-American religious experience in San Francisco.

Conceptually and historically, Marx, Weber, Friere, and Gramsci provided us with a good philosophical framework

to examine counter-hegemony through the church. However, Ileo introduced us to a more culturally adapted analytical lens by pointing out that Filipino counter-hegemony against their Spanish and American colonizers was inspired by the sub-texts of religious teachings used for hegemonic means. We extended Ileo's assertion further by arguing that given the proper conditions, i.e., compelling issues, leadership structure, socio-economics of the congregation, and parish interest groups, that Philippine church-inspired counter-hegemony could be transferred and utilized effectively by Filipino immigrants to engage hegemonic structures in American society. Ironically, Filipino immigrant counter-hegemonic activities versus the American church and state were inspired by the same Spanish and American Catholic and Protestant teachings. They started with indigenous Masonic lodges, then into Catholic and Protestant Churches, the diaspora in the 60s and 70s also brought many pastors and congregations into independent Filipino churches like the Iglesia ni Cristo and the Aglipayan Church. Many 'American' spaces and congregations were Filipinized with the decline in traditional church memberships. For instance, the all-American Lutheran church in Pacifica, California was taken over by the predominantly Filipino Seventh Day Adventist congregation in the early 1970s.

Our participant observation at two San Francisco Bay Area Catholic churches allowed us to study this socio-political phenomenon in more depth and found these conditions to be critical to counter-hegemony: Firstly, counter-hegemony begins with compelling national and local political issues. These problems are close to the hearts and minds of the immigrant congregation and also their larger ethnic community. Some of their members might be directly affected, like in the displacement of the Filipino airport screeners at the San Francisco Airport due to a new law and the fight for Filipino World War II veteran's benefits. However, these two national issues being discussed in Washington, DC were also concerns that the larger Filipino community in California were concerned with. Apparently, both Saint Augustine's and Saint Patrick's congregations had a plethora of internal but most of all external concerns that drew them outside the confines of their churches. Additionally, the political environment of tolerance, radicalism, and acceptance in progressive San Francisco is more conducive and open to counter-hegemony than most cities in the United States.

Secondly, charismatic religious and layperson leadership are critical to identifying and acting on the compelling issues. They must be comfortable at bringing out and using the many years of political organizing they were exposed to in the Philippines. The form of leadership could be an explicit, hands on style as in the Saint Augustine case or an implicit, leadership by 'blessing' approach as seen in the Saint Patrick's case. Church leaders could be in front of a march protesting injustices to member of the community or simply sending 'signals of consent' from behind the altar during the homily in a mass. Thirdly, the socio-economic background of the congregation is also a critical element to effective counter-hegemony. However, their current class standing (whether

middle or lower class) and what region they came from in the Philippines are less important to hegemonic activities than their Filipino political socialization and willingness to combine spiritual energy and mass action to address congregational and community issues. Saint Augustine's and Saint Patrick's churches are both pre-dominantly Filipino and led by Filipino pastors. But the class backgrounds of both church varied. A majority Saint Augustine's parishioners were relatively more affluent and established than Saint Patrick's. Finally, parish interest groups are key determinants of successful mass action and linking with community groups. The Saint Augustine's case illustrated the significance of engaged parish interest groups like the Small Christian Community and the Bay Area Organizing Committee while the Saint Patrick's case showed the effectiveness of parish-CBO partnerships and alliances towards successful counter-hegemony. Parish interest groups are important for winning small battles in city hall and commission hearings as well as big wars at the US Congress for veterans' benefits. They are also the key to continuing struggles against chronic health and other social problems like HIV infection, drug addiction, homelessness, among other social problems.

There are a number of challenges or 'what ifs' to sustaining these many vital lessons. Firstly, there seems to be an abundant supply of compelling issues—internal or external threats—especially among immigrant communities. However, what if they reach a point where there are concerns but they are no longer 'compelling', for instance, if issues became simply more administrative in nature, i.e., balancing the annual budget. What if the community feels that these issues are not worth fighting for? Will counter-hegemonic energy subside? Will low demand for political action eventually lead to political apathy? Secondly, leaders come and go. What if the current charismatic and politicized leader is transferred or replaced by the Archdiocese? There are lots of churches that have large Filipino congregations but not too many Filipino priests with the counter-hegemonic drive to minister and harness their socio-political capital. Thirdly, what if the Filipino immigrant congregation, rich or poor, decides to be apathetic and submissive to the larger societal hegemony? Then, the war of position ends. Lastly, which relates to the previous point, what if the parish interest groups chose to focus on traditional Filipino devotions, veneration, and prayer groups? What if community groups refuse to partner with the parish church? What if the Archdiocese decides to regulate the counter-hegemonic activities of whatever degree just as it discouraged some Filipino socio-religious practices, like holding masses outside of the church? Overcoming these barriers is the key not just to sus-

taining the gains from counter-hegemony but also replicating and spreading the positive lessons across Filipino churches and for the empowerment of other immigrant communities.

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# The Quest for Power: The Military in Philippine Politics, 1965-2002

by Erwin S. Fernandez, M.A.

## Abstract

This article traces the involvement of the military or the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Philippine politics beginning 1965 during the presidency of Marcos until 2002, a year before the Oakwood Mutiny happened when a group of soldiers tried to overthrow the present Arroyo administration. It provides a brief overview on its history before 1965 from its colonial beginnings during the American regime until the Macapagal administration. During the time of Marcos, the involvement of the military was a crucial factor in the making of a dictatorship. After the overthrow of Marcos in 1986, a politicized section of the military staged eight coups to topple Aquino's government. Ramos, a military man and Aquino's own choice won the election and successfully negotiated for peace with the rebels. In the short-lived Estrada administration, the military was the critical element of its downfall in 2001 that led to the assumption into power of Vice-President Arroyo. Rumors of coup plots, however, were in the air only three days after Arroyo's assumption into office. This article concludes that the specter of military interventionism would always haunt Philippine body politic as long as there are no efforts to exorcise the ghosts of the past.

From 1965 to 2002, the Philippine military or the Armed Forces of the Philippines underwent major and minor transformations that shaped its present image and character. From a mere adjunct of the US Army called the Philippine Scouts, a Filipino auxiliary army was created to fight the Philippine Revolutionary forces, up to the establishment of the Philippine Army during the Commonwealth regime, the Philippine military today showed a remarkable resiliency and steady growth after its formal creation in 1946 although constrained by little financial allocation for its modernization. Such condition resulting from budgetary constraints placed AFP's responsibility in the domestic sphere while defense against external threats could be relied on US bases in Clark and Subic before the Philippine Senate refused to allow its continued stay in the Philippines in 1990. However, this reliance on US bases was not an assurance for the US to support the country in case of war. AFP was preoccupied in the late 1940s and early 50s in fighting the Huks and containing the rebellion in Central Luzon. During the time of President Quirino, AFP deployed the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK) in the midst of the Korean War. During the Vietnam War, President Marcos sent the Philippine Civic Action Group to Vietnam (PHILCAGV). The role of AFP in civic action for the purpose of nation-building during the time of Pres. Magsaysay that was carried through intensely in the twenty-year rule of President Marcos was beginning to create an image of the AFP as partner in national develop-

ment. It was also during this period that AFP was notorious in being a protector for few big people, hence a big private army notable for the oppression it caused to ordinary people.<sup>1</sup>

This article looks into the transformation of the role the military, individually speaking or the institution itself, from the time of President Ferdinand E. Marcos until the presidency of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, but a year before the Oakwood mutiny in late July 2003. President Marcos transformed the AFP into a state-sponsored private army to perpetuate himself to power. Marcos was crucial in the politicization of the Philippine military years before his proclamation of Martial Law and it reached its peak after, as Marcos needed the military to suppress opposition to his rule. Thus, this article discusses the role of Marcos in the politicization of the Philippine military as well as an elaboration on how a politicized segment of the military wreaked havoc during President Corazon C. Aquino's administration when she faced more than six coup d'états to topple her government. During the time of President Fidel V. Ramos, an ex-military man, Aquino's former Defense Secretary and Marcos' former Philippine Constabulary chief, the government issued amnesty proclamation for those who were involved in the failed coups d'état. There was an assumption that the military was again back in the barracks, thus depoliticized and seemingly rendered apolitical. However, during the rule of President Joseph E. Estrada, the critical factor that led to his overthrow was the military and hence, the military was also the critical factor in the assumption into power of Arroyo. From the start of her presidency, her government faced rumors of takeover or power grabs months before a group of junior officers mutinied.

## The Role of the Military in Government

Modern political systems enhance their legitimacy when they have the capacity to instill discipline and enforce the law. The military as an institution of power and coercion serves the purpose of ensuring the protection of the nation-state against lawlessness and violence. In every government that is mandated to guard its people from harm, the police and armed forces play a prominent role. The Philippine military, like any other military in the world, responds to its constitutional obligation as guardian and protector of the Filipino people.<sup>2</sup>

In the same article and section of the constitution, it states "civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military." The inclusion of this provision anticipates the tendency of the military to engage in military adventurism. At all costs, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) shall abide by this provision, to carry out its responsibility of protecting the state. Still, its interventionist stance would manifest in conditions that allow it to happen. There are four environmental factors that shape the political role of the armed forces. Welsh Jr. & Smith state these as follows: "the nature and extent of political participation within the society, the relative isolation of the armed forces from social and political currents, the extent to which the military serves as a direct

support for the government, and the legitimacy enjoyed by the government."<sup>3</sup> Internal variables within the military i.e. mission or level of politicization among the enlisted men, interact with environmental factors to create a situation that either maintains its subordination to the executive power or disregards it and engage in outright intervention. Military intervention usually arises from a government that has lost its legitimacy or in conditions that nurtured and even pampered it. The case in point is the Marcos regime.

### **Marcos and the Politicization of the Military**

The politicization of the military was carried out with intensity and impunity during the Martial Law regime of President Marcos. Before Marcos, past administrations had engaged the military in civic action duties, which gradually increased their role in politics, only to be disrupted by President Macapagal's belief that the military should not engage in civic action for it encouraged them to participate in politics. Military officials were appointed to head government agencies. He consolidated his power by strengthening the right arm of totalitarianism by raising pay for enlisted officers, greatly expanded their services in government, and promoted their welfare and the prestige in the uniform. Likewise, by patronizing the military, Marcos developed close and intimate relations with them, and as their commander-in-chief, gained their loyalty. In the course of the Martial Law, an arrogant military had begun to emerge under the auspices of the dictator. Felipe Miranda contends that linking the military's politicization to Marcos is rather simplistic because, as he argues, "does not pay enough attention to the general trend towards mass politicization in Third World countries and the involvement of their military establishments in national political management after the end of the Second World War." Granted that such was the case, yet one could not discount the fact that Marcos accelerated the process of politicization in the Philippine military and it goes against the grain to say that "it did not have to be Marcos who surfaced and personally benefited from politicization within the military" for this conclusion is tantamount to empty speculation that runs counter to historical processes. It is enough to say that Marcos had helped nurture the already politicized consciousness of some sectors of the armed forces.<sup>4</sup>

Evidence from the database culled from survey questions for cadets enrolled at the Philippine Military Academy from 1951 to 1991 suggests that cadets' demographic characteristics showed an already politicized crop of neophytes in the military before they entered the academy. They usually belonged to the lower-middle to upper-middle class that indicates an upbringing that promotes political awareness. Although they were being initiated into an organization that instills discipline and loyalty, inculcates values that promote cohesion, these, however, do not constitute primarily the reasons for the politicization of military personnel. The degree of political awareness that would lead to their politicization depends on individual and external factors. During the time of Marcos, internal threats to stability and security furthered

the need to mobilize military men against the communist insurgency of the New People's Army (NPA) and Moro secessionism led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao. Personal ambition and the lust for power reciprocated Marcos' intentions for militarization.<sup>5</sup>

A pampered military was born during the Marcos administration. The growth of enlisted men and personnel in the military showed a dramatic increase from the time Marcos assumed the presidency till the advent of Martial Law. From mere 53,000 in 1965, it increased to 62,715 in 1972 and reaching as high as 142,490 in 1976 and its peak in 1986 with a manpower of 156,139. Consequently, military budget shares a substantial portion of the general appropriations between 1972 and 1986 with a 4.54 % of its budget over GNP in 1976 amounting to P 6 billion. From 1977 up to 1985, the general trend was a significant increase annually if compared it to its pre-1972 levels.<sup>6</sup>

After the Marcos regime was overthrown in 1986, the newly installed government faced a threatening challenge against its legitimacy as nine months after Aquino's presidency, Juan Ponce Enrile, the Defense Minister, tendered his resignation giving credence to coup rumors that eventually culminated in the August 1987 coup attempt led by Colonel Gregorio 'Gringo' Honasan of the Reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines Movement (RAM).

### **Unsettling Cory: The Anatomy of a Politicized Military**

Wary about the return of a military regime and the threat that a politicized military poses, the framers of the 1987 Constitution enshrined in it the sanctity of the civilian supremacy over the military. Yet, the residue of politicization in the military remained and became the leavening agent for its aggressive postures against the Aquino government. Before the inauguration of Aquino as the new head of the republic, certain sectors in the military plotted to overthrow Marcos and establish a civilian-military junta. The turn of events prevented them to carry out their plan of attacking Malacañang as Marcos had been tipped off about it. This led them to stage a rebellion that did not shed blood for the people on the streets shielded them against Marcos' formidable tanks and armories and the rest is history. No doubt Aquino's presidency rested on a very slim chance should the coup plotters succeeded in their plans of taking over the reins of government.<sup>7</sup>

In the six years of Cory Aquino, her presidency was always on the brink of military takeover. Seven or eight coups had undermined her credibility to run the government in its most crucial period after the nation's plunder by her predecessor. Top military men had aided, in one way or another, these coups. In order to dissect the anatomy of a politicized military, it is necessary to understand the complexity of factors that interplay to produce the necessary conditions for the emergence of military intervention. Therefore, answers to questions like what were the motivations of the plotters to engage in coups, demand attention and elaboration.



Military intervention has been dealt with in a number of scholarly writings. According to Welch, Jr. & Smith, the likelihood of military intervention rises (1) when armed forces shift its attention to domestic rather than foreign policy concerns; (2) when the government in power orders the armed forces to subdue its opponents; and (3) when a differentiation occurs in the armed forces' understanding between service to the nation and service to the government. The other internal factor, the organizational characteristics of the military include cohesion, autonomy, structural differentiation and functional specialization and professionalism. Each of these components affects the probability of a military intervention. The same authors said that the possibility of military intervention increases (1) when armed forces have high internal cohesion; (2) when curtailment of their decision-making occurs; and (3) when external assistance expands its role in the domestic scene. The last factor, political awareness contributes to the likelihood of military intervention. A politically aware military could arrogate unto itself the legitimacy to supplant a corrupt regime. The following conclusions hold true for the general aspects of military intervention. Military intervention (1) is more likely to be initiated by junior officers than senior enlisted men; (2) as part of conspiracies, officers are linked to groups or individuals that oppose the government; and (3) results from specific policy grievances. These internal factors when in tandem with the environmental factors could produce the stimulant for intervention. A government with low levels of legitimacy, accompanied by a failure to reform a deteriorating economy, is highly susceptible to military intervention. Against these postulates, we will formulate certain conclusions in the context of coups d' état during the Aquino administration.<sup>8</sup>

### The Nature of Coup d'état

An old joke in Columbia relates an Army officer asking a retiring colleague: 'And what will you do now?' He replied without batting an eyelash, 'Conspire, of course, man!' A joke like this speaks a lot about military men's inclination to engage in coups d' état or any other form of military intervention, not only when they are about to retire but as long as they are in active service with circumstances before them that might provoke them to do it.

Coups d' état against the Aquino regime was one of the many staged coups against governments, legitimate or otherwise, in the Third World since the Second World War. Third World countries had become witnesses to assassinations and conspiracies, of military coups, the institution of military regimes and the erosion of democratic rights. In the Middle East alone, between the years 1945 and 1972, there were a total of eighty-three coups and attempted coups. In Latin America, the fact that it has become such a commonplace for coups, it has become part and way of life, which might perplex outsiders. Yet, Jack Woodis aptly warns that "the clearly established prevalence of military coups and military governments in the Third World, especially in the last thirty years should not lead us into thinking that the direct or indirect political intervention of the military into politics is a phenom-

enon confined to these countries" for outside pressures with ulterior motives may have given rise to these.<sup>9</sup>

Coercive force of the state also lies in the hands of the army.<sup>10</sup> Any threat against the sovereignty of the nation-state demands the exercise of coercion. Standing armies in the world had defended their respective countries against foreign intruders. However, when a particular section of the army wields this power to overthrow its government, then coups d'état enters the picture. What is coups d'état; what is its nature and how it manifests?

Originally, a French word, coup d'état literally means "stroke of state", which refers to the "vigorous action, usually violent and usually military or involving the use of military force, to overthrow a legal government and replace it with a new governing authority."<sup>11</sup> Michael Glazer adds that it is "unconstitutional seizure of power of governmental power by a small group that employs tactics of planning and surprise, and often of limited violence" [underscoring supplied].<sup>12</sup> Members of the armed forces, aided or headed by civilian allies, seize political control of a government in power. It is planned, well-coordinated move in an effort to avert any opposition in their motive of supplanting a regime. Both a political and a military action, it is an overt declaration of assuming the legitimacy of power by displacing an allegedly corrupt government. Edward Luttwak, however, was quick to point out that for a coup d'état to be successful; it does not need to be carried out either by the masses like in revolutions or by military forces. He also distinguished it from other types of effecting change of leadership such that it does not hint a kind of political orientation. Luttwak provides a more rational and balanced definition of the term with the following: "A coup consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder."<sup>13</sup>

There are indispensable pre-conditions to mount a coup, and after determining its feasibility, coup plotters ponder on the strategy, planning and the execution of it. Strategy considers the direction in which the coup should be carried out, which is two-pronged: the necessity of a maximum speed in executing the plan is directly proportional for the time allocated for the neutralization of would-be enemies before and after the coup. Infiltrating sources of state power by neutralizing opposition is also a part of the strategy. Planning requires the neutralization of political forces outside the government. The execution of the plan "takes place in one short period of time... all...forces must therefore be used in the one decisive engagement."<sup>14</sup>

**The Pre-Coup Situation.** Months after the People Power Revolution, the country faced instability. Some doubted the legitimacy of the Aquino presidency. Marcos loyalists believed that Marcos would definitely return and assume his post again. In the Ilocos and nearby provinces, Marcos has considerable support. This transition period was marked by confusion between the duly constituted government and some local officials in provinces, cities and towns in the countryside. Three years before the collapse of dictatorial regime, the economy was in shambles with inflation rates soaring as

high as 50.3 percent in 1984. Although positive economic changes happened in 1986 and three years afterward, these were minimal improvements from the previous administrations economic slippage and economic reforms were wanting. The political climate, at least politically, was sufficient enough for the coup leaders to embark on politicizing some sections of the armed forces and ride on popular disenchantment on the status quo. The following is a summary of the eight coup attempts.<sup>15</sup>

**The February 1986 Coup Attempt.** Since 1982, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile had organized the Reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines Movement (RAM) for his personal political agenda. Marcos had been planning to assassinate him. For fear of his life, Enrile began creating his own security group led by Lt. Col. Gregorio Honasan. This group underwent rigid military training in Quezon Province. Marcos eventually knew this, which Enrile denied his involvement. By August 1983, Aquino's assassination triggered the creation of an 11-man Ad Hoc Steering Committee within RAM that asked for the promotion of genuine reforms in the AFP. RAM membership grew and by March 1985, its objectives were known with the formulation of its nine-point "Statement of Common Aspirations." Enrile, however, was beginning to utilize RAM as a political vehicle of preventing Mrs. Marcos & General Fabian Ver, the AFP Chief of Staff, from assuming the presidency should sick Marcos dies. Preparation and planning for the coup were beginning to ripen since September. Then, the call for a snap election derailed their plan to carry out the coup on December. Massive cheating in the snap election hinted them to pursue their plan with consultations with civilian leaders like Cory Aquino about the proposal for a civilian-military junta. Marcos, however, foiled their plans. One of their plans was to capture Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos by crossing the Pasig river with a commando squad. The outpouring of people in EDSA prevented Marcos and his men to launch an attack against the rebels. In the phenomenon called People Power, this side of the story was little known.

**The Manila Hotel Incident.** On the basis of the alleged unconstitutionality of the February 1986 People Power, Arturo Tolentino was sworn in as the interim President in a ceremony inside Manila Hotel on July 6, 1986. Attended by military men loyal to Marcos, civilian personalities were also present during the ceremony. The Aquino government was caught unaware of this coup plot. Immediately, an ultimatum was set for the surrender of the people involved on July 8. The government's policy of maximum tolerance paved the way for the issuance of amnesty and clemency for them. Tolentino for his part disclaimed any responsibility for it.

**God Save the Queen.** Juan Ponce Enrile, the Minister of National Defense, has a hand over this plot, which was executed by his RAM boys led by Honasan. Fidel V. Ramos, the AFP Chief of Staff, did not waver in his commitment to the Aquino government although the pressure was so great to defy. Under his command, the AFP as a whole did not allow the rebels to succeed over their plan. The plot was arranged to happen when Pres. Aquino left for Japan on state visit on

November 11, 1986. Leaks about this coup attempt preempted the execution of the plan. Nonetheless, it was moved on the 23rd of November and at this time, supported by Marcos loyalists. There was a plan to seize the *Batasang Pambansa* building in Quezon City and establish the said parliament, elect a President, nullify the snap election for Aquino to step down and call for another election. On November 22, a day before the execution of the plan, Ramos declared that all government forces were on red alert. On the 23rd, the plan was foiled. After the incident, Enrile was sacked as Defense Minister.

**January 1987 GMA 7 Incident.** Another coup attempt that involved Honasan and RAM and the Marcos loyalists, the rebels attacked GMA 7, hostaging 43 employees of the said broadcast network, Villamor Airbase, Sangley Point in Cavite and Fort Bonifacio. After negotiations between the government and the PMA officers, which the latter accused the former of softening its position over communism and communist insurgency, the rebels decided to lay down their arms, surrender and return to barracks in the third day of their siege while the ringleaders were arrested. To avert a similar coup crisis, Pres. Aquino created the Cabinet Crisis Committee headed by the National Security Director, Dr. Soriano. Likewise, another unit, National Capital Region Defense Command, was formed tasked to maintain security around Metro Manila.

**April 1987 'Black Saturday' Incident.** Situation in the country favored the rebels led by a certain Col. Cabauatan to justify their coup. They denounced the government's ineptitude, as shown by the intermittent electric power outage, the rising cost of petroleum products, the water crisis, breakdown in peace and order and other woes that plagued the country during that period. On this day, April 18, two bombs exploded, one after another, at the Colgate-Palmolive in Makati and at Philippine Refining Company. No one was injured but investigators linked this to the coup attempt only as a diversionary tactic. The rebels attacked Fort Bonifacio releasing detained soldiers who participated in the January 1987 coup attempt but out of the 108 men, only 48 joined them. They proceeded to the office of the Army Chief of Staff and made it their headquarters. The next day, government troops began firing at the rebels and security measures were made to prevent the rebels from calling for reinforcements. By noon, after negotiations by phone, only 45 rebels surrendered out of the 56 mutineers because ten escaped and one died. Cabauatan was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment while 41 non-commissioned officers were acquitted.

**July 1987 MIA Takeover Plot.** Before this plot called 'Oplan Inang Bayan' could be carried out, it was nipped in the bud. The plan was to hostage foreigners at the Manila International Airport (MIA) and takes control of it and destroys air forces defense at the Villamor Air Base. The plot was linked to Enrile. The plan was foiled at the very start and surprisingly no one was arrested.

**August 1987 Coup Attempt.** A month after the aborted coup, another coup attempt was to be launched on August 28. Preparations were under way since July when reports

showed Col. Honasan and a certain CPO Raquion were seen frequently at Signal Village in Fort Bonifacio and on late July, a massive recruitment of police and military men by RAM was monitored in Nueva Ecija for insurgency operations as their pretext. Col. Honasan again was implicated in this that was identical to the 'God Save the Queen' plot. On August 28, the rebels attacked and tried to occupy Malacañang, Camp Aguinaldo, PTV-4, Camelot Hotel, Broadcast City, Villamor Air Base, RECOM 3 at Camp Olivas in Pampanga, RECOM 7 - Cebu and Legaspi City Airport. Of these eight areas, the rebels occupied all for a time except Malacañang. It lasted for only a day and a half but its aftermath revealed the gravity it caused to the parties involved accidentally. Damage to properties amounted to more than P 50 million. For example, the burning of the General Headquarters building of the AFP costs over P 41 million. Fifty-three people were dead while more than 200 were wounded. Majority of these were unarmed civilians.

**December 1989 Coup Attempt.** Although the government was serious enough in addressing the grievances of the soldiers after the August 1987 coup, for instance, Congress passed a bill for across-the-board wage increase for AFP personnel, disgruntled soldiers under the leadership of Honasan were unappeased by such amends. The rebels on December 1 bombed Sangley Point and subsequently attacked Manila by noon. Because of the seriousness of the situation, Pres. Aquino was forced to ask for the help of the United States. The US sent Phantom F-4 fighters. The rebels were compelled to surrender after the third day of the encounter.

To sum up, these eight coup attempts underscored the increased politicization of the military that was sown during Martial Law. Certain personalities and interest groups emerge as crucial and pivotal in the emergence and execution of these coup plots. Juan Ponce Enrile is one. The other is Gregorio Honasan. What binds the two is the organization called Reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines Movement (RAM). At first, the motivation of the people behind RAM was to reform the AFP because of the latter's perceived inefficiency and corruption and lost ascendancy due to its excesses during Martial law. It turned out only to be the staging point of people like Enrile to aspire for and acquire power through military intervention. It was the same group that led Honasan to lead at least five of these coups in an attempt to grab power and replace Aquino's government with a military junta. Besides RAM, Marcos loyalists were also instigators of some of these coup plots. The common denominator between this group and RAM is their quest for political power that either was lost during the overthrow of the dictator or was overtaken by events like EDSA People Power Revolution that spoiled their February 1986 coup plot. Partly, it is legitimate to put the blame on the government because of its failure to dismantle organizations within AFP like RAM and others that erode the cohesion of the military as a whole. The laxity that it showed to the rebels only displayed the apparent weakness and lack of political will of the Aquino administration. Only in this kind of approach will engender again in the minds of veteran coup plotters that

when opportunities should arise, no other recourse but to strike!

### **From Ramos to Arroyo: The State of the Philippine Military**

Fidel V. Ramos, who became the Defense Secretary of Aquino, was a military man. His track record shows his integrity for constitutionalism as he steadfastly supported his beleaguered commander-in-chief during the crucial period of coup attempts against the government. During his presidency from 1992-1998, he endorsed and promoted constitutionalism among AFP personnel. The emphasis on civilian supremacy over military was given due consideration in the military's effort to cleanse its image from the previous perception as the den of power-hungry military officers. Therefore during the Ramos administration, there were initiatives to remedy civilians' alienation towards the military establishment.<sup>16</sup>

One of the setbacks in the process of insulating the military from politics was Ramos' inclination of designating retired military officer to government offices. Although these people were retired military men, after retirement, they were still identified as belonging to the military establishment. Appointing retired military men to government offices is a minus rather than a plus in the effort to shy away the military from politics. Still, another setback was the emphasis on the role of the AFP in national development projects. The participation of military men in policy-making only contributed to the increase in their political participation in government. Furthermore, Ramos began accommodating some people to the AFP by offering a general amnesty program. Those involved in the coup d'état got the chance to be enlisted men again with accompanying benefits like back wages or promotion.<sup>17</sup>

On top of these, Ramos was credited for pursuing the AFP Modernization program that was sidelined during his predecessor's term. The program aims to professionalize the AFP by modernizing its facilities, naval, air force, marines and army.

The Estrada administration's handling of the military was hinted as the beginning of civilian control over the military when Orlando Mercado was appointed as the Secretary of National Defense. On the course of Mercado's term, a disagreement appeared between him and the AFP over his management style. Some sections of the AFP did not appreciate his approach on the issue of mismanaged funds of the AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS) by his taking it to the media instead of approaching it internally within the AFP. They misunderstood him because they did not consider his background as a media man. Mr. Estrada was chided for being so cold to the military especially when he, as the Commander-in-chief of the AFP, should have attended the centenary celebrations of the Philippine Military Academy in 1999, instead of attending the wedding of a former sexy star. A year before this, Estrada was given a cold-shoulder treatment from the military when he decided to suspend the buying of weapons for AFP's modernization program because of

the Southeast Asian financial crisis that also affected the economy.<sup>18</sup>

In 1999, after more than a year of cold relationship with the military, Estrada gained a considerable military backing when he allowed the purchase of weapons under the modernization program and allocated some Php 5.4 billion for this alone. His military policy of an all-out-war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the subsequent year, which the AFP had successfully waged war against the secessionist rebels and even retook MILF camps especially Camp Abubakar, MILF's main camp, made a big boost of support for him coming from the military. Estrada also ordered military operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) after the ASG took and hostages 21 people from a resort in Sipadan Island in Malaysia. The rescue of some hostages was carried through military operations while others were freed after the ransom was paid. AFP's role during these operations was highlighted in both print and broadcast media but still it was marred by the alleged collusion between the military and ASG.

The honeymoon phase of Estrada with the military was over when the AFP withdrew its support with the influx of people in EDSA known as People Power II demanding the resignation of their Commander-in-Chief after 11 Senator-jurors during the Impeachment trial refused to open the second envelope that purportedly contain evidences in support of four charges against the President - bribery, graft and corruption, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the constitution. AFP's role on this drew mixed reactions. Some pointed out that this might lead to a presidency that will and cannot rely anymore on the military. Others were skeptical that this indicates "that a president's hold on the presidency is now dependent on the support of military, something which the military may exploit and take advantage of."<sup>19</sup> In other words, AFP's role is a critical factor in the making and unmaking of a president, a critical factor that led to the assumption into office of Vice-Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the 14th Philippine President.

Fresh mandate from the people after the EDSA II gave credence to AFP's new look as the protector of the people and defender of the constitution. The Arroyo administration took advantage of people's support to strengthen its hold over the presidency. Arroyo's legitimacy to the presidency was seriously questioned by Estrada's camp in the Supreme Court (SC). Although the SC affirmed its decision of vesting legality over Arroyo's assumption into office on January 20 by declaring that there existed a vacuum of power during those crucial moments in EDSA, still Arroyo's ascendancy into power was still very precarious and uncertain. By renewing and reinvigorating its ties with the military, the Arroyo government was not keen on letting any chances pass and wait for day of reckoning when opportunistic groups would take advantage of a very volatile situation. Arroyo tried to court the military's support by visiting military camps, supported AFP's effort for modernization although allegations of anomalous purchase of military equipment were rife, and appointed outgoing AFP Chief of Staff Gen.

Angelo Reyes as head of the Department of National Defense (DND) amidst the bitter infighting among high ranking military officers in the AFP. When the *Sandiganbayan* ordered the arrest of Estrada in late April 2001, Erap loyalists marched into EDSA and called for the military's intervention by withdrawing its support from the Arroyo administration. Pres. Arroyo declared that a state of rebellion exists in the country against persons who were participants and instigators of a destabilization plot against the government. AFP did not relent its position as it stood beside its Commander-in Chief. Yet, three days after she took office, coup rumors were being peddled around in mass media.

### Arroyo on Shaky Ground: Destabilization Attempts before July 2002

Arroyo's presidency stood on very shaky ground. When the military withdrew its support from Estrada, it could only mean two things. One, which the military has found its justification in the removal of Estrada by invoking the people's will as shown in EDSA. Secondly is the accusation of the Estrada camp that what happened was really a coup d'état in support of Arroyo. This reason alone point to the fact that Arroyo's hold over the presidency is tenuous and portents of what is to come after her inauguration were already in the air. Corollary to this, the loyalty of the military to the presidency is being tested anew.

After three days of assuming the presidency, President Arroyo woke up to find out that a coup plot graced the headlines of newspapers. According to the headline report, allies of Estrada were plotting a move to put the deposed president back in Malacañang. Senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Gregorio Honasan and former Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Director General Panfilo Lacson were identified to be the instigators of the plot. Movements of at least five army companies with allegiance to Enrile and Honasan from Cagayan Valley with intentions of heading for Manila were monitored only to be thwarted in Nueva Ecija by loyal government troops. Honasan denied his involvement in it but admitted meeting with Lacson. He supposedly talked to Lacson to discuss ways in how to strengthen military and police support for the new administration. However, *Akbayan* Party-list Representative Loretta Ann Rosales warned the authorities about Estrada's strong political clout in his efforts to regain his position by consolidating his political and military supporters. Besides, Enrile, Honasan and Lacson, names of Speaker Arnulfo Fuentesbella, Cagayan Representative Rodolfo Aguinaldo and businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco were implicated in the plot in varying degrees. Cojuangco was pointed out as the one funding this destabilization attempt. Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado issued a denial about the veracity of the coup plot. AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Generoso Senga declared as untrue that army companies were moving toward Metro Manila.<sup>20</sup>

Although the military establishment denied the existence of such reports, President Arroyo, on the 11th day of her office, went on national television and delivered a serious and unerring warning addressed to the "enemies of the

state" referring to persons attempting to destabilize the government. She said unequivocally "to the destabilizers", "... I am not a happy warrior, but if forced, I have sworn duty to protect and defend the Constitution above everything else. I shall crush you." The editorial of a national newspaper commented unsparingly that "unless the President has superior intelligence information not available to the public, her statement sounds like a case of nervousness or overreaction." Towards the end of the same, it says that "there's no need to be jittery over exaggerated coup rumors", which sooner or years later, it was to be proven guiltily wrong.<sup>21</sup> In a gesture of support, the AFP through their Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes assured President Arroyo that the military is strongly behind her administration. Reyes, however, confirmed that there were, according to his own words "very, very raw reports" on destabilization activities.<sup>22</sup>

No other person would be very critical in the launching of any destabilization attempts than the ousted President and his loyalists. His assurance that they "will not commit acts of destabilization or any other acts that are outside of what the constitution allows..." could be trusted for the time being but Senate President Aquilino Pimentel believed that there is "the possibility that mobilization can be mounted for other purposes like destabilizing the government." He added that "this may not necessarily come only from President Estrada. Some of his supporters can very well do that."<sup>23</sup> Three months after, his assessment of events came true when a five-day demonstration of some 50 000 Erap loyalists that started on the day of Estrada's arrest on plunder charges, culminated on May 1 as they laid siege to Malacañang. The Palace declared a state of rebellion. After the incident, four people were dead, others were wounded and hundreds were arrested, which includes Senator Juan Ponce Enrile and former Ambassador Ernesto Maceda. Enrile, three months before, was caught saying, "I don't think that is going to happen" referring to rumors of destabilization but it turned out that he was part of one. Yet, Enrile has been released on bail and government considered the dropping of rebellion charges on some of those arrested purportedly in the "spirit of reconciliation."

In an investigation that followed after the "May 1 Rebellion", the PNP intelligence report disclosed the involvement of businessmen associated with the deposed President and former PNP chief Panfilo Lacson. Mark Jimenez and some Chinese-Filipino businessmen were tagged as the financiers of the said power grab attempt. An estimate of more than Php 1 billion supposedly "dirty money" was contributed for with the end of staging the rebellion. Lacson, Senator Gregorio Honasan and Army Brig. Gen. Marcelino Malajacan were named as persons behind the effort to include a military role in the power grab plot. Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. Dionisio Santiago, commander of the anti-coup Task Force Libra, gave credence to the hearsays that huge sums of money were being offered to some military officers for them to join the move against the government.

Amidst these destabilization reports, on the night of June 21, President Arroyo reassured the Filipino people on a brief

taped message aired over PTV-4 that "the government is in full control" such that "no destabilization plot will succeed."<sup>24</sup> The following day, she revealed that there was another attempt to topple her administration. The plotters, she said explicitly, were to stage it on June 26 and 27 in time for the arraignment of Estrada. Again, the loyalty of the AFP and PNP officers were being checked to at least thwart the motives of the plotters in soliciting military backing on their bid to overthrow Arroyo.

In the wake of Senate investigations on the alleged involvement of Senator-elect Panfilo Lacson in money laundering, kidnapping for ransom and illegal drugs trafficking, Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) testified before the Senate Committee on Public Order and Security that there were intelligence reports regarding a military plot to takeover the government. During the Senate inquiry, Senator John Osmeña said that this plot gives the impression that "the people [has] no alternative but to accept a coup and the installation of a military dictator." He alluded to Renato de Villa, former Defense Secretary as the one being groomed to be the dictator. Even Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes was implicated in the attempt to overthrow Mrs. Arroyo, which he denied this before the said committee.<sup>25</sup> On a similar tone, Senator Lacson confirmed reports on a coup plot to overthrow GMA by leftists and other groups. He also said that preparations for the coup are under way with the objective of enticing the military to launch a coup. On the other hand, Senator Gregorio Honasan admonished anonymous groups to abandon their plan to topple the government and replace it with a civilian-military junta. He also urged the AFP and PNP officers to shy away from politics in order for them "not...to be used by some groups out to grab power once again."<sup>26</sup> Now, they are really talking.

Amidst these confirmations coming from government intelligence circles and outside sources, AFP Chief Gen. Diomedio Villanueva "brushed aside" reports that restless military officers were behind the move against GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) although he expressed his assurance that "the AFP will remain vigilant against those kinds of threats." Even President Arroyo tried to hide her fears by calling her visits to military camps and offices as only "social calls."<sup>27</sup> Yet, these visits only confirmed that GMA was making sure that the military is on her side.

Coming from a summit abroad, GMA arrived at 2 a.m. on October 22 only to be back to confront rumors about a destabilization plot. In a closed-door meeting with Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, GMA learned about the plot called "Black October", which involves key players in EDSA II with a plan to set up a civilian-military junta. Two days after this meeting, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez confirmed the existence of a destabilization plot but it was not clear from the report if he was referring to the "Black October" plot. Golez revealed the name of one besides other groups as the "Urban Poor Liberation Front" and described it as the "paramilitary wing" of the People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP), an

organization led by a known Erap loyalist, Ronald Lumbao. He further elaborated that this group has been training for the past two months under the supervision of an army colonel, whom he refused to identify. Nonetheless, he said that authorities had talked to the colonel to desist from what he has been doing or face sanctions. About the group, he belittled its capability since it is “just a fledgling group” “that could not muster a hundred members.” Regarding the “Black October” destabilization attempt, the opposition claimed that former President Fidel Ramos and former National Security adviser Jose Almonte, which the former denies vehemently, have hands in this plot saying the two were contriving a crisis situation to force the Supreme Court to affirm the constitutionality of the plunder law as Estrada faces his charges before the Sandiganbayan. Earlier than this, the opposition even accused the government of hatching these destabilization plots to divert public’s attention to the allegations of corruption against the First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo with regards to his alleged Jose Pidal accounts.<sup>28</sup>

In two unrelated cases reported on the month of January, two separate angles on alleged destabilization plots were revealed. The first angle involved Sen. Panfilo Lacson. Col. Victor Corpuz, chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP), said that close associates of Lacson in the former Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) were suspected of plotting a destabilization attempt against the government. Corpuz specifically named Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Mirafior, head of the defunct Special Reaction Unit as one of those plotting “destabilization efforts using C4 and TNT explosive devices.” For his refusal to turn over C4 and TNT explosives and other paraphernalias to Special Warfare Group (SWAG) Commander Rosauro Sarmiento, Mirafior allegedly ordered Petty Officer I Ruben Sotto to keep them. Mirafior also acquired explosives more than twice he originally procured from the Philippine Navy. On this basis alone, Corpuz intimated about Mirafior’s motives other than to destabilize the government but still pending to investigation. The other angle came out when former Lt. Baron Alexander Cervantes, self-appointed spokesman of Young Officers Union (YOU) was shot and killed on New Year’s eve. Boy Saycon, president of the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa) did not discount the fact that YOU has motives for killing Cervantes because the latter earned the anger of some YOU members when he disclosed on radio that some members of YOU and *Rebolusyunaryong Alyansang Makabayan* (RAM) had a secret meeting in Puerto Azul, Cavite for plans to stage a coup codenamed “Oplan Noche Buena.” YOU’s name, however, was once associated with destabilization attempts against GMA when its president, Supt. Rafael Cardeño was invited by the police in his alleged link to coup rumors. Retired Brig. Gen. Edgardo Abenina, head of the RAM, was also implicated in the killing of Cervantes. Yet, instead of facing squarely the issue that his group was involved in a coup plot against GMA, Abenina put the blame on former President Ramos. Ramos, he said, and his group were hatching a coup plot against the President. FVR’s response was predictable. He denied he has

anything to do with the plot arguing that he won’t let himself into a fix that would destroy his legacy as former president of the Philippines. The following day, Abenina disowned what he has supposedly said about his accusations against Ramos.<sup>29</sup>

As January 20 was fast approaching to mark the first year of GMA’s presidency, the PNP assured the public that coup rumors were nothing but psychological warfare concocted to create panic in people’s minds such that there was nothing to worry about. Yet, it also disclosed another group “Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino” as having an alliance with a faction of the YOU headed by Senior Supt. Diosdado Valeroso. In its statement, it urges among its members “an uprising of the masses in fusion with a mutiny of soldiers” with the aim of establishing “a government of the poor.” On the other hand, some quarters in the political scene called for a snap presidential election to stop coup rumors once Arroyo won and questions regarding her legitimacy will die down. The government refused to accede to this clamor because besides being unconstitutional, it was also a political ploy on the part of the opposition to let the government eat its own word when its legitimacy was already affirmed by the highest court of the land. GMA also expressed her confidence in her government that any planned mass demonstration on the 20th would not entail tight security measures to foil any coup attempts on this day.<sup>30</sup>

Government efforts to foil any attempt of coup and destabilization drives seemed successful but some political groups and individuals, in their private capacities, raised doubts about its validity and fostered apprehension to the public. Retired Commodore Domingo Calajate, chairman of the executive committee of the RAM, dismissed the allegations that his group had something to do with a coup plot and even took the challenge of thwarting one. His move at least calmed the already tense political climate. This was coupled with the announcement of GMA that destabilizers have been thwarted in their move to sow anxiety and announced that the government is ready in any eventuality should Erap loyalists be mobilized in an effort to show support for Estrada since the latter dismissed his lawyers, which brought stalemate in court proceedings. Yet, here comes Retired Maj. Gen. Ramon Montaña, former chief of the defunct Philippine Constabulary-Integrated National Police (PC-INP) accusing the government of concocting coup plots, which were, according to him, “product of imagination” of the intelligence community. Here comes another in the person of Linda Montayre, one of the convenors of the People’s Consultative Assembly (PCA) singling out GMA’s top officials as planning to stage a “house coup” with the participation of Boy Saycon of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa) in an attempt to replace GMA with a civilian-military junta. All these accusations, although some may have a hairbreadth of evidence, only demonstrated the fragility of the current administration and also showed its apparent weakness in dealing with matters that affect national security.<sup>31</sup>

What has caught the public’s attention from May to July was the filing of charges against top military officials who

allegedly staged a coup d'état against deposed President Estrada. Defense Secretary Angelo T. Reyes, AFP chief of staff Gen. Diomedio P. Villanueva, and two retired generals were charged with coup d'état in a case filed before the Office of the Ombudsman. Although the case hypothetically has substantial evidence against the respondents in support of Article 134-A of the Revised Penal Code or Republic Act 6968, a decision favorable to the complainants will prejudice the legitimacy of the present administration and hence, begs the reversal of the Supreme Court's decision in upholding the constitutionality of Arroyo's presidency. Acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable also has this in mind when he said that "it would be very difficult for this case to prosper because to give validity to (the complainants') arguments would in effect (to reverse) the legitimacy of the entire administration." Then, on July 4, the Office of the Ombudsman dismissed the coup d'état case against Reyes et. al citing three reasons with one reason stating that "the act of Reyes and his group should not be separated from the legitimacy of EDSA II because the event had already been declared legitimate by the Supreme Court."<sup>32</sup>

From the moment Arroyo assumed the presidency, her ascendancy to power was subject to questions of legitimacy that escalated into destabilization moves and even coup plots to overthrow her administration. Feisty at first, such that she minced no words when she said that the government shall, her word, 'crush' 'the enemies of the state' but still coup rumors swirled around in media, which led her unpredictable temper to accuse the media of fanning the fire of destabilization attempts. Instead of forging alliance with the media towards government's effort to thwart any coup plots, GMA alienated herself from the media that stood as the fourth estate, a strong pillar in any democracy. This presidential lapse, the failure of her government to implement genuine reforms when it could have done something for the betterment of Filipino society as a legacy for EDSA II and the illusion of a total military support for her regime created the fertile conditions for a plot to be hatched in July that eventually gave birth to a mutiny in the same month the following year.

## Conclusion

The legacy of military interventionism in Philippine politics will always haunt the government as long as its leaders lacked the political will of penalizing people involved in any coup plot. For sure, Marcos had been very crucial in the politicization of the military and it was a good move on the part of the framers of the 1987 Constitution to take note of this but its politicization in order to be mitigated does not end in dead letters. The Aquino government has failed to crack down organizations within the AFP that endangers the cohesion it needs. This failure encouraged organizations like RAM and YOU to foment and stage coup d'état against the government. Although Aquino insisted that they surrender unconditionally and demanded her generals to capture and arrest them, negotiations and in the end, compromises were made not long after the rebel organization collapsed as one

rebel leader after another was arrested. Soon after with the election of Ramos to the presidency, the National Unification Commission (NUC) granted "absolute and unconditional" amnesty to all RAM rebels. Instead of being punished as the instigators of the coup d'états that wreaked the economy and going back to the time of martial law, they were the right-hand men of the dictator, they were easily integrated into Philippine society, some were even elected to top positions in government.

During the time of Aquino up until Ramos, the expose and the redress over the excesses of the military in the affairs of the state were never considered to be a part of the reconciliation process. Reconciliation was looked upon as letting go of the past afraid to confront the horrific crimes committed against the Filipino people. Thus, the collective memory of a people falters as historical memory becomes distorted, perverted and subverted because a national catharsis has been postponed and then forgotten but it unconsciously remained.

Again, the phantoms of the past kept on resurrecting the fears of the present. Estrada, although accusations against his administration were legitimate, had been a victim of a military intervention in politics that helped his Vice-President to power. Without a critical support from the military, the protests in EDSA could not have led to what is now called as People Power II. Arroyo, therefore, benefited from the switch of allegiance from the top officials of the AFP. Months after her assumption into office, Estrada loyalists attacked Malacañang forcing her to decree a "state of rebellion" and arrest some familiar personalities like now Senators Honasan and Enrile, the two were involved in coup d'états against Aquino. Enrile who was arrested, posted bail and later released in "the spirit of reconciliation." These same people were said to be the instigators of a plot only three days after Arroyo took over. If one adds these two to the list, there were at least five coup plots from the moment she took power until July 2002. Of these five plots, four had military and police involvement either to lend legitimacy or as a method of tactical alliance with other interest groups. The May 1 Rebellion involved an Army brigadier general and retired officers of the AFP while the Black October plot, a colonel whom they refused to identify oversees the training of the paramilitary wing of the PMAP, the Urban Poor Liberation Front. Names of the RAM and YOU resurfaced for they were tagged as part of the destabilization attempts against Arroyo government. This was not surprising for Honasan and Enrile who were founders of the RAM and once RAM had tactical alliance with YOU during Aquino's turbulent regime.

The involvement of the military in Philippine politics will always be there as long as the government is not serious in confronting some of its men, guilty of numerous crimes against the people. Now that the military establishment has learned how it can make or unmake a presidency, it will in the near future arrogate unto itself the taking of power and the likelihood of a military takeover is not farfetched.

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# Corporate-Community Engagement in Upland Cebu City, Philippines

by Francisco A. Magno

## Abstract

This study examines the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in strengthening resource management and environmental sustainability in the upland barangays (villages) of Cebu City located in the central Philippines. In this effort, Philippine Business for Social Responsibility (PBSR) partnered with companies such as the Aboitiz Group of Companies in implementing a package of interventions embodied in the Cebu Hillyland Development Program (CHDP). The Area Resource Management (ARM) strategy developed by PBSR was used to improve the organizational, socio-economic and environmental systems of communities in the target sites.

The early signs of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Philippines appeared in the 1950s. These came in the form of corporate philanthropy exhibited through donations made to churches, orphanages, hospitals, and other welfare institutions. Corporate philanthropy gained policy support in 1958 when the National Science Development Board was mandated to certify contributions to social development that can be deducted from the taxable income of business firms. This measure encouraged the formation of corporate foundations.

However, it was in the 1970s that firms started to view CSR as a strategic imperative. With the explosion of social unrest and the resurgence of radical politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s, leading companies banded together to form the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSR). Through this venture, the business sector sought to finance community development projects and moderate drastic demands for social change. In 1972, some fifty corporations declared PBSR as the private sector's united and systematic response to the country's socio-economic problems. Each member company allocates one percent of its pre-tax profit for social development. Twenty percent of the amount committed for social development will be channeled to the PBSR to support projects undertaken by low-income communities while the remaining 80 percent will be used to fund the development initiatives of individual members.

The establishment of PBSR signaled a shift in perspective regarding the pursuit of CSR in the Philippines. It pioneered the promotion of the community development approach to CSR with a focus on strengthening corporate-community relations and building self-reliant and empowered communities. This makes it different from earlier models based on dole-out assistance mechanisms.

From an original membership base of 50, PBSR has grown and now counts 180 companies as members. In 2003,

membership contributions of PhP 42.61 million were used to leverage PhP 164.17 million from donor agencies and corporate benefactors.

Good corporate social performance has become a key objective for many firms. Corporate support for community-based development was fueled by a confluence of factors. First, business firms realize the importance of investing in social capital by contributing to capacity building and public goods provision in strategically defined host communities. Second, poorer sectors that were organized through civil society efforts acquire the skills to interface with the private sector. Third, the experiences and lessons gained by pioneer companies on CSR engagement begin to create ripple effects on the rest of the business community (Luz and Montelibano 1993).

## The Cebu Hillyland Development Program

This paper will examine the role of CSR activities in strengthening resource management and environmental sustainability in the upland *barangays* (villages) of Cebu City located in the central Philippines. In this effort, PBSR partnered with companies, such as the Aboitiz Group of Companies, in implementing a package of interventions embodied in the Cebu Hillyland Development Program (CHDP). The Area Resource Management (ARM) strategy developed by PBSR was used to improve the organizational, socio-economical and environmental systems of communities in the target sites.

This case was chosen because of the comprehensive nature of the development strategy adopted as well as the multiple partnerships created in the process of implementing the CSR interventions. The CHDP, with more than a thousand beneficiary households, is also a showcase of community organizing, multi-stakeholder participation, and appropriate technology for PBSR. In 2003, a third of these households registered incomes surpassing the poverty threshold of PhP 6,400.00.

## Context of Corporate-Community Relations

The study site was the setting for bitter resource conflicts. For two decades, real estate developers staked their claim on the ownership and use of lands occupied by the upland farmers. In this case, PBSR sided with the farmers and confronted the threats of land developers to convert the watershed into a golf course. Eventually, a legal ruling came out in favor of the farmers.

The key partner of PBSR in this effort is the Aboitiz Group of Companies. It is one of the country's largest conglomerates with interests in power, shipping, banking and real estate. The firm is identified with two foundations – the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (RAFI) and the Aboitiz Group Foundation Inc. (AGFI).

## Effects of Experience on the Community

The farmers were organized into a cooperative. After ten years of training and technology transfer, including knowl-

edge on contour farming and inter-cropping, the farmers are now assured of regular income from weekly harvests of high-value crops and from savings invested in a cooperative started with the support of PBSP. Producing mostly high value crops, such as bell pepper and lettuce, the farmers have adopted organic farming technology using vermin, farm discharges, and household wastes. An average of 21 tons of vegetables is directly delivered to Makro-Cebu, a large super-market chain, each month. The cooperative takes charge of marketing and finding buyers for their products.

More than 300 hectares of farmlands and grasslands maintain agro-forestry features such as contours, hedgerows and fruit-bearing trees. By employing crop rotation, farmers have discovered they not only improved their volume of harvests but also restored soil fertility and helped in alleviating Cebu's water shortage as well.

**Corporation's Motives for the Intervention**

This is a story of three generations of the Aboitiz family's involvement in CSR activities. Roberto Aboitiz, CEO of Aboitiz Land Inc., is a member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee of PBSP. Aboitiz' father, Eduardo, set up RAFI and engaged a full-time staff to draw up long-term social development projects to help the communities where the company is present. Eduardo Aboitiz was also a founding member of PBSP in 1970 because of the belief that there is a need for organized and institutionalized methods of doing social projects, since many individual companies lack the expertise to do it on their own.

In 1966, Ramon Aboitiz, father of Eduardo, endowed shares of his personal stock to establish RAFI as a way of giving back to the communities that have played a significant role in the growth of the Aboitiz business conglomerate. RAFI is a foundation dedicated towards improving the quality of life of poor communities. It espouses participatory and people-centered development. Its activities focus on gender, environmental sustainability, livelihood development, and local governance. Currently, overall management of the foundation is in the hands of Roberto Aboitiz. He is a third-generation member of the Aboitiz clan.

On the other hand, AGFI started its operations in 1988. It serves as the Aboitiz Group of Companies' response to social and civic responsibility. Education is the main thrust of AGFI. It continues to support the public school system through infrastructure building by constructing classrooms and science laboratories for public schools in areas where its companies operate. Its computerization program is still the biggest program of AGFI since 1999. At present, it was able to donate a total of 71 computer units with printer to public schools in the province of Cebu. Erramon Aboitiz served as the president of AGFI. He is part of the third generation of the Aboitiz.

While RAFI serves as the family based foundation, AGFI acts as the social development arm of the Aboitiz Group of Companies. Both foundations work hand in hand to see the vision of the great patriarch Don Ramon Aboitiz comes to reality.

Aside from having two foundations, the Aboitiz Group of Companies is consistently among the top five contributors of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). As a matter of fact, Don Eduardo Aboitiz was a founding member of PBSP in 1970. He is among the second generation of the Aboitiz.

In 1987, the Visayas Regional Operations of PBSP were reactivated in Cebu after a lull period during martial law. Wanting to stage a grand come back, PBSP under the chairmanship of Erramon Aboitiz decided to engage in a series of consultation with the city government to identify the areas in which they could assist. Thus giving birth to an engagement with Cebu Hillyland Development Program. According to Mr. Aboitiz: "We needed to get the local business community involved or interested in PBSP and social development. The hillylands project of the city government was the impact program we were looking for. I personally thought that business and government could do a lot together, as partners in development" (Pavia 1998). At present, PBSP Visayas Regional Operations has 28 Cebu-based member companies.

**Cebu City: The Development Challenges**

The early 1980s saw the emergence of Cebu City as a dynamic growth center in the Philippines. High-rise commercial buildings, residential subdivisions, and tourism sites expanded like mushrooms. The influx of investments had attracted people from nearby provinces to migrate to Cebu for better job opportunities.

Cebu's rapid urbanization is impeded by severe topographical constraints. Cebu City has a total area of 32,880 hectares. Of the total area, 27.7 percent is already classified as highly urbanized area. At the rate it is going development is expected to will move to the rural areas. However, the rural areas of Cebu City are mostly classified as upland or hillylands. Only 7.4 percent of the rural areas are classified as lowland.

**Table 1: Land Classification in the Rural Barangays**  
(Source: GIS-Cebu City/CCLUC, 1998)

Land Form	Area (has.)	Percentage
Lowland	1,865	7.4
Upland	5,796	23.2
Hillyland	10,766	42.9
Highland	6,656	26.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,083</b>	<b>100</b>

Topographical concern is not the only issue that accompanied the rapid growth in Cebu City. It is also faced with a growing shortage of water arising from serious forest denudation and soil erosion. Confronted with these challenges, Mayor Tomas Osmena came out with his pet project, the Central Cebu Hillyland and Development Program (CCHDP).

CCHDP is a product of the Central Visayas Rural Project (CVRP) that sought to provide a development strategy for Cebu's rural *barangays*, which had been neglected. It is funded by a loan agreement with the World Bank. The CCHDP Ad Hoc Committee was created with Mayor Tomas Osmena as the chairperson; Mr. Santiago Academia as Program Manager; and Dr. Florendo Zablan as consultant. The members of the ad hoc committee include counselors representing committees on Infrastructure, Agriculture, and *Barangay* Affairs, Association of Hillyland *Barangay* Captains, Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, RAFI, San Miguel Corporation, Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corporation, and PBSP.

The committee has four (4) components comprising of the Human Resource Development, Infrastructure, Agriculture and Administration. The Human Resource Development team was tasked to handle community organizing in the *barangays*, while Infrastructure team was tasked to conduct survey and feasibility of farms to market roads. Likewise, the Agriculture team was tasked to conduct lectures on upland technological innovations while the Administration team took care of the logistics.

After a series of consultation, PBSP decided to adopt three (3) *barangays*. City government adopted nineteen (19) *barangays* while the Department of Agriculture took in eight (8) *barangays*. Other NGOs declined to adopt *barangays* but pledged to support the program through livelihood and technology support.

PBSP decided to adopt *Barangays* Sinsin, Sudlon I and Sudlon II. Although Caridad Rivera-Corridor, Senior Manager at PBSP Visayas Regional Operations claim that there was really no scientific tools or indicators used in choosing the three *barangays*, These three *barangays* proved to be good catch.

All three *barangays* are under the protected area status as identified by the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992. Among the three *barangays*, Sudlon II has the largest area covered by NIPAS at 94 percent. It was followed by Sinsin with 89 percent and Sudlon I with 70 percent.

**Table 2: Barangays Within NIPAS Areas** [Source: Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP), 1998]

Barangay	Area Coverage (Has)			Total Area
	Inside NIPAS	%	Outside NIPAS	
Sinsin	731	89	90	821
Sudlon I	908	70	384	1292
Sudlon II	2501	94	166	2667

The NIPAS Act recognizes the impact of man's activities on the natural environment particularly the effect of increasing population, resource exploitation and industrial advancement. It emphasizes the importance of protecting and maintaining the natural biological and physical diversities of the environment, notably in areas with biologically unique features to sustain human life and development, as well as plant

and animal life. Thus, it provided the establishment and management of the National Integrated Protection System.

Prior to that, Presidential Proclamation 56 of 1936 set apart and designated the Sudlon National Park, a parcel of public domain situated in the City of Cebu, for park purposes and for the benefit and enjoyment of the Philippines. The park serves as the recreation or breather to balance the loss of natural space due to the rapid urbanization in the city. Among the five protected areas identified were The Central Cebu National Park, The Mananga Watershed Forest Reserve, the Kotkot and Lusaran Water Forest Reserve, and Buhisan Forest Reserve.

### Barangay Sinsin

The name of the *barangay* came from the Cebuano word "sinsin" which can be traced back during the Spanish occupation. The chieftain known as Don Leon Kilat who fought against the Spaniards with Lt. Rafael Tabal, a guerilla leader used to inform the civilians to hide in "sinsin" (means "in group") to a certain place. This term became popular among the rebelling Filipinos in the area that always formed a group to fight and hide against the Spaniards. Later on, this usual way of hiding became the name of the area they used to hide.

The total land area of the *barangay* is 1,293 hectares. It is about 28 kilometers away from Cebu City proper with very rough road linkages from Tabunok via Manipis road. *Barangay* Sinsin is composed of 9 sitios namely, Kabiabsan, Alfagate, Nangka, Rac-ac, Udloom upper, Udloom lower, Latawan, Loblob and Sinsin proper.

The main source of livelihood is farming. Their average annual income is P11,350.40. This comes from the productions like vegetables (tomatoes, bell pepper, beans, etc.), livestock raising such as goat, cow, pig, chickens, etc., mango production, coconut, banana, and corn.

The total population of *Barangay* Sinsin is 2,305 with a total of 491 households. There are 1,244 females and 1,061 males with an average number of household member of 5 and a population density of two persons per hectare.

### Barangay Sudlon I

Presently, there are two *Barangays* known as Sudlon. These are *barangays* Sudlon I and Sudlon II. The history of the name "Sudlon" came from two different stories. It is known to the people that Sudlon has a beautiful cave with a river and lake inside of it. However, the cave is located at the side of the cliff. If people want to see it, then they have to enter (which means "sudlon" in local dialect) the hardest way because of its location.

The other story was that Sudlon was used as a settlement of a group of people who were known to have extraordinary powers like the "kublan" (an invincible person who cannot be killed by bullets or knives) and those who had "anting-anting". Their group was called Juan Sapi-Sapi and if somebody wanted to join the group and learn their teaching, they have to enter ("Sudlon").

*Barangay* Sudlon I is 35 kilometers from Cebu City. It is geographically situated in the southwestern side of Cebu,

which has a total land area of 1,347 hectares. It has ten *sitios*, namely, Sep-ac, Batang-batang, Conset, Sangi, Napayran, Morga, Panas, Bitlang, Tabla, and Sitio proper.

It has a total population of 1,656 people. 844 of the population are male, 812 are female. It has 276 households with an average number of 6 family members.

Twenty five percent of Sudlon I land area is dedicated to farming. It is known as the “*Vegetable Center of Cebu City*”. It is the source of tomato, corn, squash, string beans, gabi, camote, and mango for the city. They also have livestock production and a few number of people are engaged in small businesses.

## Barangay Sudlon II

Sudlon II has an area size of 2,613 hectares and is 32 kilometers away from Cebu City. It has 15 *sitios* namely, Guindawon, Tungkay 1 & 2, Gabi, Kansagahan, Sudlon 2, Balisong, Mara-ag, Satuhan, Cantipla, Panas, Kulabtingon, Sankugi, and Butong. The terrain of Sudlon II is from hilly to mountainous with an elevation of 800-900 meters ASL. The area is classified as Timberland - National Park.

Current population of Sudlon II stands at 2,332 people. Comprising 1,202 males and 1,117 females. Presently, there are 722 households in the area with an average household population of 6 persons. Seventy percent of the people are farmers. About twenty percent are businessmen or self-employed and the rest are employed in government or private institutions.

## Involvement of the Philippine Business for Social Progress

Initially, the city government envisioned the Cebu Hillyland Development Program as mere reforestation or tree planting activities. However, after the visit of PBSP and the city government to the *barangays*, they witnessed that there was a lack of toilet facilities, water and medical services in the area. Initial findings of PBSP survey also indicated that

“...the people in the communities had more immediate needs than planting trees. They wanted to be able to send their children to schools close to home, to have better access to a doctor when they were sick, and earn higher incomes.”

Given the circumstances, reforestation was immediately put off as an immediate activity and concentrated on five major components such as community organizing, basic social services, technology development, enterprise development, and reforestation.

PBSP committed to support the Cebu Hillyland Development Program from 1989 to 1996, which was divided into three phases. Phase 1 involved fund raising and mobilizing resources for the uplands; Phase 2 took on technical and managerial help for community enterprises; and Phase 3 engaged business to take a stand for communities' land tenure and watershed protection.

## Phase I (1989-1992): fund raising and mobilizing resources for the uplands

The Cebu Hillyland Program became a model for deep membership involvement for the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). Although, getting business to participate was difficult at first. PBSP Visayas Executive Committee chairperson Erramon Aboitiz set the ball rolling by getting his company involved.

In 1990, PBSP initiated the “Adopt-a-hectare” scheme aimed towards saving the Cebu Hillyland by establishing nurseries for seedling production and maintaining the reforested area. Companies can adopt a hectare by providing monetary contribution equivalent to the cost of planting and maintaining trees for three years. The cost of one hectare is twenty five thousand pesos (P25,000).

According to Caridad Rivera-Corridor, Senior Manager of PBSP Visayas Regional Operations, farmers in the three *barangays* were hesitant at first to allocate at least one hectare for the “Adopt-a-hectare” scheme.

“It is understandable since farming is their primary source of livelihood and every hectare of counts. Nevertheless, after series of discussion regarding the merits of the program, the farmer groups decided to embrace the program. Although, they can only give much since they also have to use the remaining for farming.”

On the other hand, business communities showed unwavering support to the program. There were more than 60 companies that participated in the campaign and gave out a total of P977,400 for reforestation alone. Ms. Rivera-Corridor stated that

“It is easy to mobilize business, as long as you show them their money's worth. Business would not want to fund if you tell them that you're going to use their money for training because they want to see visible results. We need to tell them that we need twenty five thousand pesos for a hectare, let's go plant trees”.

Following the success of the “Adopt-a-hectare” scheme, PBSP decided to go an extra mile from companies signing checks for reforestation cause to actual planting of trees. Through the “*Reforestation Caravan*” companies' employees and at times, chief executive officers get to do actual tree planting on weekends. Companies who have adopted a hectare likewise encouraged their employees to join the caravan.

Mr. Augusto Carpio III, Executive Vice President of Aboitiz Group Foundation Incorporate shared that as the social arm of the Aboitiz Group of Companies it is their task to organize community activities for their employees. And, the caravan has become a regular activity for the Cebu based Aboitiz companies. On average they send one hundred employees per one caravan. They adopted almost 2.5 hectares from PBSP and have since then used it as the tree-planting site.

“Reforestation Caravan” has become a regular activity for the employees of Aboitiz Group of Companies. Often times, it is the employees that come up to me

and request for a tree-planting activity. I tell them, go organize yourselves and I'll handle the budget for the transportation, food and seeds to be planted.

You'd even be amazed because during the scheduled tree planting day (annual activity of the company but there are unscheduled tree planting days upon the request of employees) the Aboitiz would join the employees under the sun, side by side in planting trees."

As of September 2002, PBSP takes pride in the 2,213.60 hectares (since 1990 up to September 2002) reforested areas through the initiatives of the PBSP assisted community-based organizations.

In 1991, PBSP launched the "Hillyland Christmas Card" project. The objective of the activity is to increase awareness about environment and raise funds for the adopted barangays. This project involves children in a drawing contest that is judged by representatives from the business sector. The winning drawings are featured on Christmas cards sold to the business communities. The cards come with a return slip that allowed the recipient of the card to have a tree planted in his or her name.

## **Phase II (1992-1994): Technical and Managerial help for community enterprises**

Majority of the areas in the adopted *barangays* are dedicated to farming. When PBSP first came in, they discovered that farmers were having difficulty in selling their products because they lack the technological know-how, enterprise skills and credit facilities.

During that time, farmers only knew how to plant tomatoes all year round. Therefore, come harvest and market time prices of tomatoes go down. Farmers had no option but to sell their products at low prices, even up to the point lower than break-even.

Likewise, farmers lack the appreciation for the value of reforestation or preserving the environment. They only see the vastness of the forest as a mean for them and their family to stay alive. Cutting trees have been a source of livelihood for them.

The first thing that PBSP did was to organize cooperatives in the adopted *barangays*. They provided trainings on contour farming, inter-cropping and crop rotation. Farmers were introduced to high-value crops like bell pepper, cabbage, carrot, and celery to name a few. They were thought inter-cropping instead of just planting tomato. They were trained to implement contour farming to prevent soil erosion and organic farming technology using vermin, farm and household wastes.

At first the farmers were pessimistic to plant other crops having been used to planting just tomatoes. However, having seen the output of the demonstration farms set up by PBSP all of their hesitations were erased. PBSP set up two demonstration farms in each *barangays* to serve as model farms for farmers to see the value of contour farming, inter-cropping and crop rotation.

Likewise, PBSP also coordinated exposure trips for farm-

ers to Laguna, Davao and Benguet. This provided Cebu Hillyland farmers avenues to meet other farmers from all walks of the country to exchange ideas and techniques on how to improve their production. This activity also provided the farmers with on-the-farm trainings and experiences.

As of September 2002, there were about 8,507 households that participated in various trainings conducted PBSP at the adopted *barangays*.

Dindo Pagatpat, President of Sudlon II Farmers Livelihood and Training Service Foundation (SUFALTRAS) shared that the demonstration farm created a bandwagon effect to the communities. Upon seeing the success of the demonstration farm, everybody would imitate it by planting and applying the same technology to his or her own farm. It is good that PBSP was there to monitor the activities, they helped the cooperatives schedule their crops. Heterogeneity of crops prevented prices from going down.

"Sang ma-kita sang mga upod ko nga dako gali ang kita sa pag tanom sang high-value crops, nag si tanomna sila sadto. Mayo na lang kag ginbuligan kami sang PBSP nga mag rotate o schedule sang anom pananum. Indi na kami dungan kung mag-tanum, amo na mabaligya na namon ang produkto namon sa tama nga presyo."

PBSP thought the cooperatives the value of the environment and the need for reforestation in their area. Aside from hosting a number of tree-planting activities by companies, PBSP involved cooperatives in taking care of the seedlings and nurseries in the areas. This created a sense of ownership among the communities. As a result, the communities organized themselves to serve as "watch dogs" for young trees against firewood gatherers.

## **Phase III (1994 - 1996): business takes a stand for community's land tenure and watershed protection**

As farmers experience improvement in their quality of lives, they began to express yearnings for ownership of the lands that they till. However, one of the stumbling blocks was the fact that all three adopted *barangays* of PBSP fall under the protected area category as identified in the NIPA Act of 1992 making all three *barangays* government-owned properties.

Seeing this concern, PBSP adjusted its program to include land security. In 1994, it facilitated 17 farmers to acquire Certificates of Stewardship contract from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The certificate is in pursuant to Executive Order 192 to promote environmental awareness, social equity, economic development and sustainable resources management by adopting an NGO-Assisted Community-Based Mangrove Forest Management (NGO-Assisted CBMFM). The key element of CBMFM is provision of security tenure for coastal residents/ mangroves dependents.

However, matters got worse when a Cebu-based real estate developer staked its claim on ownership to the lands inside Sudlon National Park and threatened to convert the

watershed into a golf course. In one incident, Sudlon II farmers were surprised when a bulldozer suddenly entered the national park and destroyed their trees and crops. Sudlon II farmers were left helpless with their trees and crops destroyed and they don't even know how to defend themselves against the rich developer.

Looking back, Dindo can't help but feel grateful to all the help that PBSP has showed them especially during the "demolition". According to him, everybody was in shock, they didn't know what to do. The company was equipped with big bulldozers. They were left with no choice but to watch their livelihoods be destroyed in front of them.

PBSP came to the rescue by providing paralegal services to the affected farmers. They even went up to the extent of providing lawyers for the farmers. The case was a long and winding one but PBSP was always there to see everything through. Their initiative did not go in vain as the regional trial court released a decision siding with the farmers. Although, the company filed a motion for reconsideration in the Supreme Court, this event is still considered a landmark victory for hillyland farmers.

### Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Water (CUSW)

The incidence in Sudlon National Park served as precedence to future conflicts between companies wanting to convert the watershed to golf courses and friends of the environment. Communities both from the upland and highland realized the great threat of water shortages imposes once the companies succeeded with the conversions.

Following that, the dismantling of Mananga Watershed Development (MWDA), a multisectoral body established in 1989 to coordinate development in the Mananga watershed caused so much alarm to the community that it eventually lead to the creation of the Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Water (CUSW) in 1995.

Non-governmental organizations and people's organization decided to join forces and form the CUSW for the achievement of a holistic approach towards the protection, management and development of Cebu's water resources including, but not limited to, central Cebu's watersheds and coastal.

The organization started with only 34 members has grown to 138 non-government organizations, 82 individuals, membership as of 2001. PBSP took an active role in CUSW as business sector representative.

The creation of CUSW demonstrated how a community-based organization has developed and grown increasingly influential in the political arena. One of the engagements of CUSW is through the Cebu City Land Use Committee (CCLUC) tasked to formulate an interim land use plan and resource management policy guidelines for the Hillyland Barangays of Cebu City.

Aside from the representation of PBSP in CUSW, the Aboitiz was in the core front of the committee. There were only two non-government organizations represented in the Committee, the other, RAFI represented by Cristina Aboitiz, wife of Roberto Aboitiz.

### Solid Waste Management

Recent developments in the three barangays brought solid waste management concerns to the attention of PBSP.

In the recent survey conducted by the city water resource committee in the Cebu City upland barangays, it was revealed that about 80 percent of the population in the area do not practice proper waste disposal of both solid and liquid wastes. About 83 percent of the upland barangay residents did not even have sanitary toilets. Shrubs and open space were the common areas for human waste disposal.

Household, domestic wastes were generally dumped in creeks or river channels and carried away during heavy floods into the sea. Some residents threw their garbage anywhere. Burning waste in the backyard has always been observed in the upland *barangays*. Compost pit disposal is not widely practice by the upland *barangays*. Regular garbage collection by the government or any agency is practically non existent.

As a matter of fact, during the time of interview with PBSP they are organizing their initial social waste management project in Sudlon I. They are hoping to expand this program to Sudlon II and Sinsin in the near future.

### Successful Aspects of Experience

The CSR interventions strengthened the social and institutional infrastructures to support the transfer of appropriate technology and the application of upland agricultural production systems. The establishment of agricultural cooperatives and credit fund facilities were important in improving resource mobilization and marketing strategies. The partnership arrangements with the local government units were also crucial in the successful implementation of the program.

The Cebu Hillyland Development Program highlighted that partnership between the government, civil society, and business can go a long way in preserving the environment and alleviating the economic condition of the community. The Cebu Hillyland experience proved that CSR is an effective tool for companies in giving back to communities that have long been there for them, instead of just focusing on profit. The CSR interventions strengthened the social and institutional infrastructures to support the transfer of appropriate technology and the application of hillyland agricultural production systems.

Many Cebu upland farmers have reduced the use of chemicals and have started with backyard production of compost using vermi, household and farm wastes. More than 300 hectares of farmlands and grasslands maintain agroforestry features such as contours, hedgegrows and fruit-bearing trees. By employing crop rotation, farmers discovered that they not only improved their volume of harvests but also restored soil fertility and helped in alleviating Cebu's water shortage as well.

One of the prominent improvements in the community is the revival of forest cover. Ms. Corridor shared that during one of their meetings with the upland communities, one of residents jokingly commented that prior to the reforestation project they can see PBSP staff approaching at a far distance,

but after the project they could no longer see them thus could not hide from them. The experience also gave importance to the role of the civil society organizations in organizing poor sectors to have a better position to interface with business concerns.

The establishment of agricultural cooperatives and credit fund facilities were important in improving resource mobilization and marketing strategies. The partnership arrangements with the local government units (LGUs) were also crucial in the successful implementation of the program.

The partnerships with the various Local Government Units and the Policy Reforms instituted provided positive results: 6,501 households gained access to potable water from 364 systems installed or constructed; 10,180 households provided with medical assistance, and 250 malnourished children were provided supplemental feeding. Furthermore, there are about 2,590 farming households that gained access to the land they till.

### Lessons Learned

Among the major lessons in CSR interventions, as seen in the case of Cebu Hillyland Development Program, is the importance of forging multi-sectoral partnerships with national and local governments, donor organizations, civil society and the business community.

It is imperative for the local government to exert leadership in program implementation. With limited resources, it is important for the local government to be open in partnering with civil society and business sector in its continuing quest to develop its communities. Corporate-community partnership should be supportive of poor people's efforts to gain ownership and control over resources critical to their prosperity. Corporations should have a sincere heart in engaging in CSR activities and not just apt for media mileage.

Non-governmental organizations are crucial in linking corporate-community partnership. The success of CHDP with PBSP can be attributed to the vast experience PBSP had on community organizing. The large active company membership of PBSP is key to mobilizing the business community.

Social change is about leadership by example. Officers, be it in government, non-government organizations or business sector should have a vision and exhibits sincerity in every endeavor he or she engages in. A good leader should also know how to motivate its subordinates or members to accomplish goals, taking charge but should also be willing to compromise. One of the factors that led to the success of CHDP is the leadership exhibited by then PBSP Visayas Regional Operations chairperson Erramon Aboitiz. He was able to show to his fellow businessmen the true meaning of CSR, which is giving back to the community.

He did not lose hope when at first when only few companies would follow his initiatives for the CHDP. In fact, he showed the business that it is worth their money to invest in CSR by getting his own company involved in it first. He even planted trees for other chief executive officers to see and follow.

Major policies have been enacted to clearly delineate

roles, functions, and responsibilities among stakeholders. The 1991 Local Government Code is a key policy tool in encouraging business and civil society to participate in local governance. In this context, LGU can serve as a critical function as CSR enablers.

In terms of environmental protection, the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992 is a landmark piece of legislation. For Cebu City, where five of the protected areas can be found, the NIPAS Act is crucial in providing framework for a decentralized, community-reserve strategy. Once bombarded with resource conflict one can always go the NIPAS act for clarification.

The CHDP also highlights the need for participatory local governance. The program also calls for greater integration of the cooperatives in the barangay operations and at the same time for the barangay officials to provide support for the project.

One of the stumbling blocks encountered during the early years of implementation of the program was the presence of uncooperative *barangay* officials. This incidence could have been avoided if greater coordination between the cooperatives and the barangay officials were seen. PBSP tried to bridge the cooperatives with the Barangay Development Council but was not able to sustain it. Partnership arrangements with other organizations that have resources and expertise on capacity building for participatory local governance are needed.

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**Interviews conducted****Constantine Samson**

Technical Officer  
 Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, Incorporation  
 Lopez Jaena Street, Cebu City

**Joselito Baclayon**

City Agricultural Officer  
 Cebu City  
 former Technical Manager of the Central Cebu Hillyland Development Project

**Caridad Rivera-Corridor**

Senior Manager  
 Visayas Regional Operations  
 Philippine Business for Social Progress  
 Molave Street, Cebu City

**Danilo Cabantug**

Technical Officer  
 Visayas Regional Operations  
 Philippine Business for Social Progress  
 Molave Street, Cebu City  
 Officer-in-charged of the Reforestation project in the adopted barangays

**Raymund Bandalan**

Training Officer  
 Visayas Regional Operations  
 Philippine Business for Social Progress  
 Molave Street, Cebu City  
 Officer-in-charged of the adopted barangays

**Dindo Pagatpat**

President  
 SUFALTRAS  
 Sudlon II, Cebu City

**Allan Bautista**

Administrative Officer  
 CREMDEC  
 Former technical staff of CCHDP

**Augusto Carpio III**

Executive Vice President  
 Aboitiz Group Foundation, Incorporation  
 Cebu City

**Francisco A. Magno** is Associate Professor of Political Science and Development Policy at De La Salle University, Manila. He obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Hawaii in 1997 with the support of an East-West Center scholarship grant. Dr. Magno is the Executive Director of the La Salle Institute of Governance. Dr. Magno was formerly the Director of the Social Development Research Center (1998-2001), Chair of the Political Science Department (1998-1999), and Graduate Coordinator of the Development Studies Program (1997-1998) at De La Salle University, Manila. In 2001, he became a Visiting Associate Professor at Waseda University (Tokyo) as the first holder of the Yuchengco Professorial Chair in Southeast Asian Studies.



## Worlds in Collision

by Carlos Villa, M.F.A. and Andrew Venell, M.F.A.

### Abstract

This electronic website publication and link introduces "Worlds in Collision," the brainchild and passion of the presenter, and the first website devoted to Filipino American art history. It will first describe the formation of "Worlds in Collision" as an organic historical document, and the creators' intent for it to grow through use. Then it will demonstrate how the website represents a lineage of Filipino American artists and makers and their cultural achievements in painting and sculpture, graphic design, graffiti writing, turntablism, music, writing, and film. Finally, it will explain how this website can function as a historical and cultural resource, for and by all who are interested, especially because of the inclusion of a weblog and discussion forum for ongoing comment on community issues.

The content of this paper consists of the link to the site:

<http://www.usfca.edu/classes/worldsincollision/mtimeline.html>

**Carlos Villa** has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute since 1969, and taught at the Maria Elena Yuchengco Philippines Studies and Arts Department of the University of San Francisco. He received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MFA in Painting from Mills College. His many accomplishments include the feature of his work in a number of local and international exhibitions, and several awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Professor Villa is also co-producer of San Francisco Art Institute's Sanchez School program, serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the College Art Association, was project director of Worlds in Collision, New Dialogues in American Art History (co-edited with Reagan Louie and published in 1995 by the San Francisco Art Institute and International Scholars Publications), and is project director for "Worlds In Collision," the first website devoted to Filipino American Art History (<http://www.usfca.edu/classes/worldsincollision/>).

**Andrew Venell** is a digital artist and freelance designer. He received his B.A. in Art Semiotics from Brown University (2001) and his MFA in New Genres from the San Francisco Art Institute (2004). His interactive and multimedia artworks have been exhibited internationally, most recently at the Festival of Artistic Investigation at the Museo de las Ciencias in Valencia, Spain. As a graphic and web designer, his clients have included artists, academic institutions, small businesses and record labels. He currently teaches at the Art Institute Online and the ASUC Art Studio at UC Berkeley, and consults on humanities computing projects throughout the Bay Area.

## Poems from Diaspora

by Rofel G. Brion, Ph.D.

### Abstract

This article is a compilation of three poems, each in Filipino and English. The Filipino versions were first printed in his book, *Story*. They are reprinted here with permission. "Poems from Diaspora," the English translations, which were written in San Francisco, have never been published. (Translations are on the right.)

### ANG GALING NI INAY

Napakahusay manulsi ni Inay,  
Ano mang laki ng butas  
Kaya niyang tagpian  
Ng sinulid at karayom lang.  
Madalas ay ganito--  
Pinagdidikit niya ang gilid ng maliit ng butas  
Kaya walang maiiwan kundi munting tuldok  
Ng sinulid na kakagatin niyang sagad sa buhol.

Ngunit kung minsan--  
Pinaglalawa-lawa ng karayom niya  
Ang pagkahaba-habang sinulid,  
Masinop, mabagal, maingat na maingat,  
Hanggang magulat ka na lamang  
Sa kanyang nalikha, at malimutan  
Mong dati itong pagkalaki-laking butas.

### ANG GALING NI ITAY

Mahusay umawit si Itay,  
Bidang-bida raw siyang lagi  
Noon sa mga haranahan.

Sabi nga'y "Bituing Marikit"  
Ang ipinanghalina niya kay Inay.

Ngunit minsa'y huling-huli siya ni Inay  
Na binibituing marikit, sa tinig lang naman,  
Ang bagong-lipat naming kapitbahay;  
Pagkaraa'y matagal silang walang kibuan.

Isang gabi, sa plasa,  
Nanonood kami ng santakrusan  
At akay nila ako sa magkabilang kamay,  
Humulagpos ako nang biglang-bigla  
At nagdampi ang kanilang mga kamay

Naglapat at nagpisilan  
Nang pagkatagal-tagal.

### MOTHER'S GIFT

Mother is an expert at mending;  
She can make a hole, no matter how big,  
Disappear with just a needle and some thread.  
It usually happens this way—  
She captures the edge of a small hole  
Until what remains is just a tiny dot  
Of thread that she has bitten off  
At its knot.

But sometimes—  
Her needle turns a very long  
Piece of thread into a web,  
Neatly, slowly, very carefully,  
Until you simply marvel  
At her creation, and forget  
That it used to be a very big hole.

### FATHER'S GIFT

Father sings very well.  
He was always the star  
At serenades.

They say he captivated Mother  
With his "Radiant Star".

But one night, Mother caught him  
Singing "Radiant Star" to a neighbor,  
So she refused to talk to him  
For a very long time.

One evening at the park,  
As we watched a procession  
And they held me at each hand,  
I suddenly let go  
And their hands touched,

And clasped tightly  
For a very long time.

**OO, UMUULAN**

Kina Dax at A.F.

Umuulan, oo, umuulan,  
 Banayad ang patak  
 At tahimik na tahimik  
 Ngunit puwede na ito

Dahil pakiramdam ko  
 Ngayon din sa San Pablo,  
 Umuulan, malakas nga lamang,  
 Kaya wala kayong pasok--

Katatapos ninyong mananghalian  
 Ng pritong baboy at talong  
 (Ang isa'y ketsap ang sawsawan,  
 Ang isa'y toyo't kalamansi naman)

At nagpapaantok kayo  
 Sa harap ng telebisyon;  
 Baka-sakaling iniisip ninyo  
 Kung anong ginagawa ng inyong tiyo

Kung umuulan din nang malakas  
 Ngayon, dito.

**YES, IT'S RAINING**

For Dax and A.F.

It's raining, yes, it's raining,  
 Very gently,  
 And very quietly,  
 But this will do

Because I have a feeling  
 That at this moment in San Pablo,  
 Rain falls, too, only heavily,  
 So you're free from school—

You've just had your lunch  
 Of fried pork and eggplant  
 (One dips his food in catsup,  
 The other in soy sauce and lemon)

And the television  
 Lulls you to sleep;  
 Maybe, by chance, you're wondering  
 What your uncle is up to

And if it also rains heavily  
 Now, here.

**Rofel G. Brion** was Visiting Fulbright Scholar with the Maria Elena Yuchengco Philippine Studies Program of the University of San Francisco. Dr. Brion is Professor at the Interdisciplinary Studies Department of the Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. He has degrees in economics and literature from the Ateneo, and a Ph.D. in English Studies-Creative Writing from the University of the Philippines. *Baka Sakali*, his first book of poems, won the National Book Award from the Manila Critics' Circle in 1991; *Story*, his second, was published by the University of the Philippines Press in 1997. Two more books of poetry will be published this year. Professor Brion has received Fulbright and British Council study grants. He has been lecturing on Philippine literature and popular culture for many years, and has been Coordinator of the Ateneo-USF Philippine Immersion Program since 2000.

# Reflections on Philip Vera Cruz and the Filipino Diaspora

by Joaquin L. Gonzalez III, Ph.D.

## Abstract

As Filipino Americans celebrate the centennial (1906-2006) of the Filipino diaspora to the United States, Gonzalez puts into critical analysis the life of eminent Filipino agricultural labor leader, Philip Vera Cruz through the contemporary economic benefits and social costs of migration. Vera Cruz stands alongside well-known farm worker activists Larry Itliong and Cesar Chavez. Gonzalez argues that just like Vera Cruz and his contemporaries, the millions of overseas Filipinos of today are the modern-day heroes and heroines of the world we live in, a world without borders but still very much a world with limited protection and social justice for them.

As Filipino Americans celebrate the centennial (1906-2006) of the Filipino diaspora to the United States, I put into contemporary perspective the life of eminent Filipino agricultural labor leader, Philip V. Vera Cruz (1904-1994). In my point of view, Vera Cruz stands alongside well-known farm worker activists Larry Itliong and Cesar Chavez. Leaving his home town of Vigan, Ilocos Sur province, Vera Cruz finished high school at Lewis and Clark and then took undergraduate courses at Washington State College and Gonzaga University before being drafted into the U.S. Army. He later on became a grape picker in Delano, California. Vera Cruz went on to become the president of the local farm worker's union and, at more than 60 years old, was one of the oldest strikers on the fields. During the height of the strikes, Larry Itliong could be likened in the fields as the Filipino revolutionary Andres Bonifacio while Philip Vera Cruz provided fighting wisdom like the wheel chair bound Apolinario Mabini. Vera Cruz and Itliong were just two of the many Filipino farm workers activists that changed the face of the agricultural labor movement in America. Because from the moment they arrived in Hawaii and California, Filipinos, as born revolutionaries for human equity and social justice, already began organizing for a non-violent struggle against the greed and abuse of capitalist America.

Philip Vera Cruz' rise to farm worker leadership might no longer be representative of the current context of global migration. However, it nevertheless continues to be relevant in terms of its transnational value to the present-day Filipino migrant's journey. As I reflected on Vera Cruz' life, my own, and countless stories I have encountered in my academic fieldwork, it has become evident to me that the struggles that come with a migrant's journey have remained the same, transcending time, race, and boundaries. Every migrant can connect to Philip Vera Cruz as well as his contemporaries, and the unique social, political, economic, and cultural milieus

they encountered as migrants, whether one worked as a crewmember on board a Spanish galleon in the 1600s or a 21st century immigrant nurse attending to patients at a New York hospital.

Philip Vera Cruz left the Philippines in the beginning of the 20th century along with thousands of young Pinoy males who may have wanted to pursue an education at first but ended up changing their long term plans for the rich agricultural fields of the United States. A millennium after, eight million Filipinos have become part of the exodus this time to more than 100 countries, making the Filipino diaspora the second largest contemporary human migration in the world. Unlike the early predominance of farm workers, their occupations now vary widely: from domestic workers and entertainers in East Asia, construction and maintenance workers in the Middle East, to nurses and managers in North America and Western Europe. Not to mention, close to a million seamen on passenger and commercial ships that traverse the oceans and seas of the world.

Most Filipino migrants enter their countries of destination legally but some cross national boundaries illegally, risking their lives. Others arrive on tourist visas then become contract workers. A number come in lawfully at first but then overstay their visas therefore becoming "illegal aliens". Many arrive by themselves while others are lucky enough to be able to bring their families. Filipino migrants originate from every ethno-linguistic region of the Philippines—including: Ilocanos, Tagalogs, Cebuanos, Kapampangans, Bicolanos, Ibalays, Boholanos, Ilongos, Samals, Igorots, Chavacanos, Maranaos, and Tausugs.

Many of the early Filipino migrants benefited from the rigorous public school system developed by the United States. Philip Vera Cruz was one of them. His quest for more learning led him to travel across the Pacific to the "land of milk and honey". His writings illustrated scholarly potential. But just like many of his contemporaries, he ended up working to support himself and be able to dutifully send money to help his family in the Philippines. Vera Cruz' experience is still very much the present situation for most Filipino migrants. Altogether, the Philip Vera Cruzes of today send more than US\$10 billion, annually, to the Philippines. The money remitted has kept household budgets afloat, educated siblings and children, paid for medicines and hospitalization for aging parents and grandparents. Balikbayan (returning and visiting overseas Filipinos) spending accounts for a significant portion of domestic earnings and investments. Not surprisingly, the foreign exchange remittances, approximately five percent of the country's Gross National Product (GNP), have even helped the Philippine government address its burgeoning fiscal deficits. How will the homeland survive without them?

Unfortunately, like many Filipino migrants who were led to believe that America was the "land of the free", Philip Vera Cruz immediately came face-to-face with realities of freedom, justice, and equality upon walking the streets and working the fields of California. Harsh labor conditions, unequal treatment, low pay, and racial discrimination came at him and his

peers head on. Even after years of immigrant labor rights protests, strikes, reforms, and deaths, many of the social costs and issues of migration still remain, way beyond Vera Cruz' time. Even before they leave the Philippines, Filipino migrants today have to deal with the prohibitive costs of government and recruitment agency fees and regulations, illegal recruiters, denied visas, and onerous contracts. Once overseas, many have to cope with social costs: from culture shock to maltreatment, over and above some of the lingering problems from Vera Cruz' times. Ironically, aging Filipino World War II veterans granted citizenship by the United States still do not have the same benefits as other American veterans.

Even in this day and age, in some destination countries Filipino migrants are accorded little protection from abusive employers, have no social security nor health benefits, have no labor or employee rights, are not allowed to organize unions and even worship, and are essentially second-class citizens. Those in vulnerable work settings like domestic workers and entertainers, many of whom are women, encounter the harshest social costs, including incidences of rape and forced prostitution. Far away from home, it is hard to provide protection and safety nets for them. In many countries, labor organizations protect only their nationals or could

even be prohibited by repressive laws. International laws and conventions are weak and unenforceable. In many cases, only the goodwill and respect of their new homelands are all they can hope for. So is the migrant journey really worth it? Was Vera Cruz' sacrifice worth the victories he achieved for the larger labor movement? Are the current sacrifices of Filipinos and Filipinas in Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, and North America worth the billions of dollars of remittances that get sent 'back home'? The mixed feelings are reflected in their testimonies, stories, conversations, letters, phone calls, e-mails, blogs, and text messages.

Yes, it has been a century but given the perennial dismal economic, social, and political situations in the Philippines, I anticipate the Filipino diaspora to continue, increasing in scope and magnitude. That is why serious efforts must be made both in the Philippines and destination countries, including the United States, to safeguard the welfare and reduce the social costs for these bold sojourners, who contribute immensely to both their new homeland as well as the Philippines. Just like Philip Vera Cruz and his contemporaries, the millions of overseas Filipinos of today are the modern-day heroes and heroines of the world we live in, a world without borders but still very much a world with limited protection and social justice for them.

**Joaquin "Jay" L. Gonzalez III** is Director of the Maria Elena Yuchengco Philippine Studies Program and Director of the Asian American Civic Engagement Project of the Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good. He was co-investigator with The Religion and Immigration Project ([www.usfca.edu/TRIP](http://www.usfca.edu/TRIP)). Professor Gonzalez also teaches at the USF' Politics Department and the Center for the Pacific Rim and has authored, co-authored, and co-edited numerous books, including *Philippine Labour Migration: Critical Dimension of Public Policy* (1998), *Development Sustainability Through Community Participation* (1998), *Governance Innovations in the Asia-Pacific Region* (1998), *Culture Shock! Succeed in Business: Philippines* (2000), and *Opting for Partnership* (2000). He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Utah.

## An Interview with Philip Vera Cruz, Spring 1971

by Sid Valledor

### Abstract

An interview prepared and conducted with Filipino-American agricultural labor leader Philip Vera Cruz' college speaking engagements in the Pacific Northwest in the spring of 1971. It is an edited transcription of a tape recorded personal interview on his life, held at his home in the fall of the same year. For over thirty years the tape recordings and Vera Cruz' writings remained dormant. With mixed emotions Valledor, a retired labor leader, prevailed upon himself to let the world know of what Philip Vera Cruz had to say outside the context of the Great Delano Grape Strike as he understood it. The interview essay is one part of the farm workers movement story as seen from a unique historical capacity. The writings, interviews, and recordings occurred mostly during the 1969 – 1971.

On that historic day—the signing of contracts at Forty Acres by the table grape growers with UFWOC at the Roy L. Reuther Memorial Building, the union's headquarter—all seemed well, at least for that moment. Thereafter, much of the union's attention focused on the administration of the contracts; the crisis in the lettuce fields, particularly in the Salinas area; the accompanying boycott, and political participation in its struggle for recognition and standing at the legislative level.

In this interview, conducted more than six months after 29 July 1970, Philip speaks of the union's difficulty in dealing with the conspiratorial relationships of the lettuce growers, Teamsters, government, and the courts. He notes also the difference, as he sees it, between the students of the past and the present generation. Finally, Philip calls for the participation of those most concern with the welfare of people, emphasizing "that all the basic principles being fought for by the people...are all the same."

### *"How difficult is it to strike?"*

"We in the union, tried very much to get the growers to negotiate with us through the formal way of picketing. But the strikes in the fields are very, very different from the strikes in the factories. The difference is this: when you strike the farmers and the growers, you have to picket a great number of square miles of fields. And really, we don't have enough people to go to all the numerous passageways and look for those workers in the vineyards.

"These workers usually get inside and you don't see them. The only way that you could tell that they were there were the presence of their cars because they cannot get them inside. And, sometimes they do hide them there, too. Now, the failure of our union to get the growers to negotiate with us by picketing has forced us to shift our tactics to boycott. And, it was really a hard thing to do. But, it was the only alternative left for us. We had been striking for about five years. When

finally the grape boycott proved effective the growers shifted their tactic; all wanted to sign at the same time. Well, you can imagine the difficulties that faced us as it related to the administration of the contracts. Our lack of people, particularly those who did not know what they were doing, just caused us all kinds of problems, confusion, and misunderstandings."

### *"What is the situation with the current lettuce strike?"*

"It's been difficult. The growers signing contracts with the Teamsters have created complications. When Bud Antle, Inc., the giant lettuce agribusiness, signed a contract with the Teamsters Union, Local 890, only five percent of the workers had voted for it. That was the first time and the last time that the contract between Bud Antle and the Teamsters was ratified. The contract has been renewed eight times with the workers never notified of the terms of the contract. They didn't even know whether they had a union or not. All the time they thought they had no union.

"The lettuce workers felt justified going on strike. You see, in our understanding of the democratic process, in order for a union to duly represent a group of workers, fifty-one percent of the members must ratify the contract. Furthermore, one million dollars from the Teamsters Pension Fund were loaned to the Bud Antle Corporation. According to our lawyers, this was technically immoral and illegitimate. A union cannot represent the interest of both business and workers.

"When the lettuce workers went on strike, we proved we have the workers. But, we are dealing with a very big and well-connected adversary. The Bud Antle Inc., which farms 43,000 acres all together, is second only to Inter-Harvest in the production of lettuce. It sold 17,000 acres to Dow Chemical with Dow Chemical in turn returning 3,000 acres with lettuce. C.F. Weaver, an official of one of Dow Chemical's subsidiary corporations, became a member of the board of directors of Bud Antle. There is also a styrofoam container company jointly owned by Bud Antle and Dow Chemical. The extent of the economic power of Dow Chemical is worldwide in 23 countries, 44 offices and 55 manufacturing locations. The sales of Dow Chemical products amounted to about two billion dollars.

"Because of the economic power and connections of Bud Antle, Inc., it was able to dump its lettuce onto the U.S. Government. The Defense Department spent \$750,000 in the first quarter alone of 1971. The amount exceeded the previous fiscal year's purchases of Bud Antle, Inc. lettuce. You can see that the neutrality of the Defense Department, as claimed, is false. We appealed to the American public that this tax money should not be spent to break legitimate strikes and deny the rights of workers to establish or form unions of their own choice.

"There's no way of saying how much boycott pressure we should put on Bud Antle. What we need to do is continue hitting and hitting 'till Bud Antle comes around and signs a contract. We have also appealed to the GIs and protested in the form of demonstrations at military installations."

*“What about the courts?”*

“You see, because of the conspiracy between Bud Antle Corporation and the Teamsters Union, our lawyers have filed suit to the extent of ten million dollars punitive damages, and I think it comes to about \$425,000 for each client.”

*“And the impact of the courts?”*

“Gordon Campbell, the local judge in Salinas, has a very anti-union record. Thirty years ago, when there was some agitation for unionization of the workers, this same judge deputized every white male to arrest anybody involved in organizing the workers. Today, he has placed an injunction that we are appealing. He has required the union to post a bond of \$2.75 million. The union does not have that much money. That is why Cesar had no choice but to go to jail because he refused to comply with the injunction. The injunction interferes with the freedom of speech and assembly. Our lawyers have therefore filed suit against Bud Antle, Inc. and the Teamsters Union on the grounds of unconstitutionality.”

*“It seems to me UFWOC is not building for a garden variety union.”*

“That’s correct. We have the service center operating, helping people to do their income tax, welfare, things like that, little things. They are simple things, but people who are workers on the farm are not educated enough to know or understand how to go about those things. So, it attracted people, and then, if somebody got sick, then there’s the clinic. We also have a credit union; one share cost five dollars. Its purpose is to help people financially. Workers are able to borrow for only a one-percent interest rate. I’ve been the president of the credit union for two years now and we have helped a lot of people. We also have the idea of a co-op, although for now we have just begun with the gas station. Finally, we plan to build in the near future a retirement village. I think this idea will be very significant. Because you see, the growers who use workers all their lives will discard them as they reach the age of retirement.”

*“It seems the Forty Acres concept is a new way of doing things.”*

“Well, that’s true. We’re in the formative period of the union. That’s why people who have the right vision and the right hearts should be coming around into the union to help us.”

*“What do you think of the young people today?”*

“There is a great difference between the students of the past and the present generation. You know, I have been here over forty years and I have seen them, and really, they have changed. College students before were all dressed up with neckties, clean-shaven, and even had haircuts. But, they were too busy looking nice, and they forgot the most important things in life. These students in the past, all they wanted to do was get good grades in school, have good recommendations, and land good jobs with good money. That was all the ambi-

tion of the people before, with exceptions of course of some, but the numbers were not very significant. This time, these young people, they are not concern very much about what kind of pants they’re going to wear because their minds are directed towards human values. Their values have changed from material things to something worthwhile. And, their values center on human beings and not on business or getting good homes, etceteras. There’s a complete turn around of values.”

*“Why do you think this is so?”*

“I think the young students today are more realistic because all the good things they learned in school and in their churches do not really coincide or correspond to what they see outside. Now, it is very amazing to know that despite the country’s huge Gross National Product, there are thirty million poor people. I think we cannot make the whole world believe that the American form of government or the American society is the ideal society that the world should follow when you have thirty million poor people.”

*“Do you think there is an ideal society?”*

“I think that all depends on how you make it. We really cannot exactly get everything perfect, but at least we can get closer to a system where people could be served with their needs in life. Now, right and wrong has not been static: it has been changing from time to time. Why? Because right and wrong is based on the needs of people. What is important is that the principles must suit the needs of the time and the people, otherwise the principles are mere empty words.”

*“What do you call yourself?”*

“Well, I don’t call myself anything, but I’m working for the benefit of people, and I don’t pay attention to labels.”

*“Is the world in revolution?”*

“Whether we like it or not, it’s going on. Whether this revolution starts from the bottom or the middle class, the principles that we are fighting for are identical. They are the same. We are allies in order to make progress for the human race. And, we in the union, we could not build a union by farm workers alone. We get the food, the clothing, and the money from the middle class. We get the knowledge, the skills, and the professional services from the middle class because you cannot get a professional from under the vineyards. If he has those skills and knowledge and professional training, well, he’s not picking grapes.

“And so, here, I would like to emphasize that all the basic principles being fought for by the people in the revolution from the bottom to the middle class are all the same. And, we should cooperate. And, I wish that those people, who are most concerned with the welfare and benefit and protection of the people and who are for peace, would come around and help us build the union.”

**Sid Valledor** is Visiting Fellow at the University of San Francisco's Yuchengco Philippine Studies Program. He is the author of an upcoming book, *The Original Writings of Philip Vera Cruz*, the first in a series on Americans with a Philippine heritage. He was the special assistant to Larry Itliong, then Vice Director of United Farm Workers Organizing Committee of the AFL-CIO and National Director of the Boycott. Valledor has served as a trustee and director of UBAC and on the advisory boards and task force of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, Board of Education, Civil Service Commission, and the Pilipino Studies at San Francisco State University.



## USF Center for the Pacific Rim Announces the Yuchengco Media Fellowship Recipient

(San Francisco) - The University of San Francisco Center for the Pacific Rim announced on May 1, 2006 the first recipient of the Yuchengco Fellows Program for Young Professionals in the Media for Fall semester 2006. The program is designed to support young Filipino journalists of accomplishment and talent and provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the Philippine diaspora.

Mr. Jeremaiah Manuel Opiniano is a journalist and an advocate. He is the president of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) Journalism Consortium, a non-profit media-civil society coalition involved in migration journalism and executive director of the Institute for Migration and Development Issues, an organization that promotes migration and development approaches to benefit the Philippines. Since November 2000, Mr. Opiniano has been teaching research methods and journalism subjects at the University of Santo Tomas. He was previously a fellow for "Migration and Development Policy in the European Union" of the Freidrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Brussels.

Mr. Opiniano holds Liberal Arts in Journalism and Master of Arts in Public Administration degrees from the University of Santo Tomas, and a Master of Professional Studies-Development Communication degree from the University of the Philippines Open University. He has written numerous articles and several books on the Philippine diaspora.

The Yuchengco Fellows Program for Young Professionals in the Media awards a stipend of up to \$27,500 per semester to cover expenses including travel, lodging, room and board.

Deadline for applications for the Spring semester 2007 fellowship is August 30, 2006. For [more information](#) on eligibility and application requirements, please call USF Center for the Pacific Rim at (415) 422-6357.

For more information, please contact:  
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## APSSR Call for Papers

The *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review (APSSR)* is an internationally refereed journal published biannually, in June and December, by the College of Liberal Arts, De La Salle University-Manila (Philippines). It publishes original articles that focus on or relevant to Asian and Pacific affairs. It is a multidisciplinary and scholarly journal that encompasses the disciplines and sub-fields of political science, economics, geography, demography, sociology, anthropology, history, and psychology. The *APSSR* is committed to theoretical rigor, methodological sophistication, and policy orientation. It allows both British and American English spelling, but there must be consistency within the individual article. Articles will be subjected to language editing.

The *APSSR* seeks three (3) types of submission. These are: research manuscripts with an approximate length of 8000-10000 words; research notes, intended to capture shorter manuscripts containing valuable ideas and findings but is limited in some aspects to qualify as a fully developed research article (length approx 3000-5000 words); and book or film reviews (length approx.800-2000 words).

Manuscripts submitted should be typewritten, double-spaced (including notes and references), and formatted in Microsoft Word. The entire text should be typed or printed on one side of standard-sized paper (A4 or letter) with an ample left margin. Charts and tables should either be in Microsoft Word or Excel format. Moreover, the author is responsible for obtaining permission to reprint illustrations, tables, charts, pictures, etc., from copyrighted publications.

The submission of a manuscript is to be accompanied by a brief biodata of the author (150-200 words). It is understood that a manuscript submitted for APSSR's consideration should not have been published elsewhere nor should it be under review with any other publications. Articles that appeared in APSSR are not necessarily representative of the views of the editors or the publisher. Responsibility for opinions expressed and for factual accuracy lies solely with the individual authors.

Authors are requested to submit two (2) hard copies of the article for review. Manuscripts can be sent by post to APSSR's mailing address (see below) along with an electronic version in Microsoft Word on floppy or compact disk. Alternatively, electronic copy can be submitted via [aguilarf@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:aguilarf@dlsu.edu.ph) or [buendiar@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:buendiar@dlsu.edu.ph). Referencing style should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

The *APSSR* welcomes submissions of manuscripts any time of the year. All correspondence for article submission and editorial matters should be sent to:

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# 100 Years of Filipino Presence in the United States: A Journey of Hope

The University of San Francisco Center for the Pacific Rim Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco Annual Lecture Series and The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program and The Bay Area Filipino Centennial Working Committee present 100 Years of Filipino Presence in the United States: A Journey of Hope.

Friday, October 6, 2006

1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

University of San Francisco McLaren Complex, Room 250

2130 Fulton Street San Francisco

Admission is FREE but RSVPs are required as seating is limited.

In commemoration of the Filipino Centennial (2006), this symposium will recount the historic struggle of Filipino immigrants from plantation workers in Hawaii in 1906, to cannery workers in Alaska, to soldiers in the military, to professionals during the 1960s immigration wave, to the 21st century diaspora. The second part of the symposium will discuss contemporary issues now facing Filipino Americans from veterans and seniors to women and youth. The symposium will also include topics on discrimination and political empowerment.

## List of Speakers:

**Dean Alegado**, chair and professor, Ethnic Studies Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Catherine Ceniza Choy**, associate professor, Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley

**Rene Ciria Cruz**, consulting editor, Filipinas Magazine and editor, Pacific News Service and New America Media

**Fred Cordova**, founder, Filipino American National Historical Society

**Christopher Dacumos**, youth leader

**David Della**, Seattle City Council member

**Joaquin Gonzalez III**, Ph.D., professor, University of San Francisco

**Dawn Bohulano Mabalon**, Ph.D., assistant professor, San Francisco State University

**Melen McBride**, associate director, Stanford Geriatric Center

**Linda Ordonio-Dixon**, senior trial attorney, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), San Francisco

**Lourdes Tancinco**, chair and founding member, San Francisco Veterans Equity Center

For reservations call (415) 422-6828. [For more information](#), call (415) 422-6357 or email [msyuchengco@usfca.edu](mailto:msyuchengco@usfca.edu).