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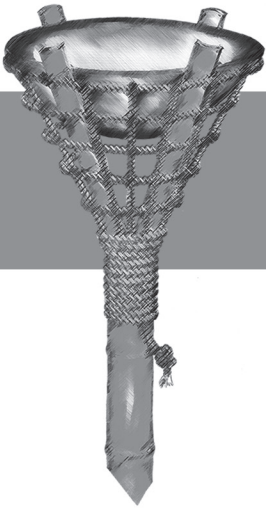
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Quality of Leaders and Barangay Finance

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ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to answer the question: *Is the financial capability of local governments affected by the quality of its leaders?* Financial capability is measured in terms of the Own-Source Revenues generated by every barangay's net of their Internal Revenue Allotment. Ordinary least squares method with log transformations in a multiple regression analysis is used to estimate how much of Zamboanga City's ninety-eight barangays' own-source revenues are affected by the qualities of their chairpersons. The regression results support the existing literature that education of *punong barangays* positively affect the level of barangays' financial capability in Zamboanga City. The leaders' age and experience are also positive contributors. Other qualities of the punong barangay such as civil status, family affiliation, and gender do not significantly affect barangay own-source revenues. These research findings imply that for village councils to have sufficient and sustainable funding, the electorate has to choose quality local leaders who are well-educated, experienced and are old or mature enough to be able to generate and maintain local funds.

KEYWORDS: Leaders, barangay, finance, Zamboanga, local government units

Introduction

Local Government Units (LGUs) play a crucial role in the Philippines' economic development. When each barangay, municipality and city improves economically, economic progress in the entire country follows naturally. For Hector De Leon (1997), LGUs can identify the needs and concerns of their localities best, and they can meet these needs by

channelling the public goods and services to their constituents who need them the most. De Leon asserts that local affairs can be best regulated by the people in the locality rather than by the central authority. Even literature supports the contention that leaders affect economic growth (Jones 2008; Jones and Olken 2005). Moreover, there is no authority more familiar with local needs and concerns than the barangay leaders themselves.

The *Local Government Code of 1991* mandates the following services and facilities that each barangay needs to provide: 1) Agricultural support services which include planting materials, distribution system and operation of farm produce collection and buying stations; 2) health and social welfare services which include maintenance of barangay health center and daycare center; 3) services and facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation, beautification, and solid waste collection; 4) maintenance of *katarungang pambarangay*; 5) maintenance of barangay roads and bridges and water supply systems; 6) infrastructure facilities such as multipurpose hall, multipurpose pavement, plaza, sports center, and other similar facilities; 7) information and reading center; and 8) satellite or public market.

To be able to carry out its mandate, the LGU at the barangay level has two essential needs: 1) The adequate funding to finance all these responsibilities; and, 2) the competency to raise and use these finances efficiently. Both are necessary; one is deficient without the other. However, the latter is the more important of the two because in the case where finances are insufficient, competent leaders can demonstrate resourcefulness in generating revenues.

The focal contention of this paper is that the financial condition of the barangays is directly related to their kind of local leaders. Specifically, the main research question is: *Is the financial capability of local governments affected by the quality of its leaders?* This paper, therefore, attempts to measure the extent to which leadership competency contributes to the financial capability of LGUs, specifically of the barangays. The paper first presents the challenges besetting the finances of the barangays particularly in Zamboanga City, and then examines how leadership qualities may have contributed or eased these challenges.

A Review on Barangay Finance

Like any LGU, the barangay has two main sources of funding one of which is the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). The IRA is a share that barangays are entitled to get from the national taxes as assured by Section 285 in Title 3 of the *Local Government Code of 1991*. Another source of funds is stipulated in section 129 of the same code that allows LGUs the power to generate its own income, which this paper calls own-source revenues (OSR).

With such a daunting mandate, the problem lies on the LGUs' limited financial resources to carry out its responsibilities. Layug et al. (2010) reported in their study that the bulk of the barangay income in Agusan del Sur and Dumaguete is being spent on salaries and wages. Little money is left for fulfilling the devolved functions of barangays, with most of them failing to finance these functions.

Moreover, the many responsibilities of barangays mean that the limited financial resources are thinly distributed among their several functions. Some of these barangays fail to spend on important basic services such as education and health. In all study areas, no amount was spent on agricultural support services, maintenance of barangay roads, bridges, and water systems, and infrastructure facilities. Expenditures on health and nutrition range from PhP 2,000 to PhP 81,000, and these were spent on paying for utilities expense and honoraria of Barangay Health Workers (BHW) and medicines (Layug et al. 2010).

Another financial concern is the barangays' dependency on their IRA and their lack of initiative to raise their OSR.

The 2010 Financial Report by the Commission of Audit (COA) reveals that 65 percent of the LGUs' incomes come from the IRA. In their study, Layug et al. (2010) report that the barangays' dependency on their IRA ranges from 85 percent to 97 percent. This IRA-dependency of the LGUs has been noted and concurred by several papers (Layug et al. 2010; Manasan 1987; and Quaile 2009). Furthermore, Layug et al. (2010) state that barangays do not address the misalignment of revenue and expenditure assignment, as well as the counter-equalizing and disincentive effects of IRA by not raising

enough OSR in their localities and optimizing their use of corporate powers as evidenced by a zero percentage on borrowings.

In a joint project of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 2009, it stated that “without sufficient funding to finance the production, distribution, consumption, or provision of public services, well-meaning public officials are unable to deliver. Given these perennial constraints, local chief executives are faced with a great challenge to be resourceful and innovative, and most of all, to exercise strong political will in overcoming the limitations and in delivering the needed services.”

Among the reasons for the financial handicap disabling the barangays to deliver goods and services to their constituents are the barangay leaders themselves. Layug et al. (2010) identify this as the lack of political will among barangay officials to innovate alternative modalities of revenue generation—or optimal use of corporate powers in terms of accessing credit facilities, among others.

This ‘lack of political will’ is due to the inadequate competence of these barangay officials which hampers them from tackling the financial as well as the public service needs of their constituency. The Besley, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol’s (2011) study reveals that economic growth is enhanced by having leaders who are more highly educated.

Traits of a Leader in Multiple Regression and Econometric Model

Ideas on leadership qualities can be traced as far back as the Greek philosopher Plato. In Plato’s *Republic*, he described that a leader, a philosopher-king, should have the following qualities: Highly intelligent, morally upright, and well-trained.

In the field of leadership studies today, among the theories of leadership that are often discussed is the trait theory. Trait theory assumes that people possess or acquire certain qualities that make them better suited to leadership. This theory asserts that effective leaders demonstrate certain

traits or characteristics. Such traits help explain what makes one leader stand out from others. These traits can be character traits (Esguia and Padilla 2010) or some level of cognitive or emotional intelligence.

This research paper finds its inspiration from Jones and Olken (2005) who assert that quality of leaders mattered for economic—or in this paper’s case, income—growth. They believe that “some leaders are more competent than others and are able to make sensible economic policy choices which enhance economic performance.” This conclusion is supported by Besley, Montalvo and Reyna-Querol (2011) who assert that economic “growth is enhanced by having leaders who are more highly educated.” Butler, Lee and Moretti (2004) add that political affiliation also matters for growth.

This study had drawn some of the variables from the latter literature. It applied multiple regression analysis using cross-sectional data. It estimated how much each of the pertinent qualities of these chairpersons elected last 2010 has affected the barangays’ financial capability. This is expressed in the following model:

Let:

- $FC =$ Financial Capability of the barangay, which is the dependent variable
- $Qual =$ f (qualities of the barangay chairpersons). This comprise the independent variables.
- $\Delta =$ denotes change
- $\varepsilon =$ the error term, which captures all other factors or variables not identified in this study

Where:

- $\Delta FC =$ f (Qual)
- $Qual =$ g (education, experience, affiliation, age, civil status, gender)

Regression model:

$$FC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Qual + \varepsilon$$

$$FC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{education} + \beta_2 \text{experience} + \beta_3 \text{affiliation} + \beta_4 \text{age} + \beta_5 \text{gender} + \beta_6 \text{civil status} + \varepsilon$$

Methodology, Variables and Significance of the Study

This study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative analyses. For the qualitative analysis, the paper first presents an overview of the consolidated financial condition of the ninety-eight barangays in Zamboanga City, to be followed by a summary profile of all the chairpersons locally known as “punong barangays.” The regression test uses the ordinary least squares method to provide the empirical basis for the quantitative analysis of the estimated variables.

The dependent variable is the Financial Capability which is the total income of a particular barangay’s net of its IRA, denoted as OSR. Urbanized barangays tend to have larger incomes and rural barangays have smaller incomes. To remove this bias toward rich barangays, OSR is expressed in a form of a ratio. Mathematically, it is expressed in the following:

$$OSR = \frac{\text{Total Barangay Income} - \text{IRA}}{\text{Total Barangay Income}}$$

To approximate the contribution of the chairperson’s qualities on the financial capability of his/her barangay, the change in OSR is estimated. The change here denotes the difference between the levels of barangay income at the end of 2011 and the level of barangay income prior to his/her assumption of office in 2009. This difference will show if this official has brought about a financial improvement, stagnation or decline in the LGU.

$$\Delta OSR = OSR_{2011} - OSR_{2009}$$

The independent variables that this study will look into include the qualities of barangay chairpersons namely: Education, experience, age, gender, civil status and familial affiliations of the barangay chairpersons.

This paper is interested to find out if educational background is a significant factor in enabling the barangay chairpersons to be good fund-raisers. The level of education represents the knowledge, skills and formal trainings these officials have to make them good leaders of their own locality. This is determined by the highest educational attainment of the barangay

captain, in terms of number of years of formal and informal schooling. This study hypothesizes that leaders with higher educational attainment (college or graduate level) are better economic planners, more innovative and open-minded to new sources of revenues than those with lower educational levels. Experience is measured by the number of years in public service, either as chairperson or any other official position in the barangay. A first-term official is assumed to have less experience in public service than an official with two or more terms in office. This paper hypothesizes that experience of the barangay chairpersons has a significantly positive relation with the financial capability of their barangays.

Affiliation is another important factor to consider. Butler, Lee, and Moretti (2004) point out that political affiliation is related to economic growth. However, the *Local Government Code of 1991* stipulates the apolitical and non-partisan nature of local officials. Hence, generally and by custom, barangay officials have not outrightly engaged themselves in partisan politics. For the purposes of this paper, the term affiliation is referred to as familial which is defined as the number of officials who hold various barangay positions with the same surname. The positions may vary from chairperson, *kagawad*, *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) chairperson, barangay secretary or treasurer. Since it is quite common for families to reside in the same village, this study assumes that officials with identical surnames are, to some degree, related to one another. By practice in this country, candidates of political clans often get elected, even when political dynasties are discouraged by the Philippine Constitution. This research would like to see if having relatives in the village council, either at present or in the past, affects the barangay's OSR.

Finally, this paper tests whether age, gender and civil status of punong barangays can also affect their ability to raise funds.

For the purposes of this paper, the term barangay chairperson is used interchangeably with the terms chairperson, punong barangay and captain; whereas, barangays are also referred to as villages. The city proper is locally known in Zamboanga City as *pueblo* and in this paper is also termed *poblacion*. The OSR is used interchangeably with own source incomes.

The total income is taken from the annual Statements of Appropriation, Income and Expenditures reported by the City Auditor's Office. The OSR is computed using this total income minus the IRA which is prepared by the Office of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) in Region IX.

For the independent variables, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) has compiled a concise profile of all barangay officials in the city.

Meanwhile, this study is important for the following reasons. Firstly, it fills in a research vacuum focusing on barangay leadership and finance. There is limited literature on Philippine barangays per se as more researches tend to focus on cities, municipalities and even provinces due to readily available data. This paper will help provide a picture of the financial as well as economic condition of the barangays in Zamboanga City.

Secondly, institutions that train future leaders, like the Ateneo de Zamboanga University (ADZU) which is a service provider of higher education in Region IX, will benefit greatly from this paper. The research findings can help in evaluating their curriculum and programs and in designing their course offerings that reflect the training of future leaders as well as in inculcating in their students civic duties and responsibilities. More particularly, as a stakeholder and participant of local development, ADZU may find this study helpful in guiding its social development projects.

Thirdly, social planners, both in national and local government agencies, will also find the results of this paper useful in helping local officials become better fiscal managers and the LGUs, particularly the barangays, perform their functions better.

Finally, this study is opportune and relevant in times of elections, specifically barangay elections. It can reveal the importance of choosing the right leaders and the implication of the electorate's votes on the performance of their LGUs.

Results and Discussion

Financial Status of the Barangays in Zamboanga City

According to the City Auditor's records, as of year 2011, the ninety-eight barangays in Zamboanga City have a combined total income of PhP 390.7 million, higher by 8.5 percent than the previous year. This is higher when compared to the combined total expenses of the same year, which was PhP 275.5 million. In fact, the barangays in Zamboanga City have been saving since 2009, only that the surpluses have been declining from PhP 132.9 million in 2009 to PhP 121.5 million in 2010 and PhP 115.1 million in 2011. Still, what is notable is that each of these barangays has gained surpluses in all these three years. Not one of them had a deficit. As for the reason behind this, perhaps another in-depth research study can be made on the disbursement process of these funds.

On the issue as to whether or not the barangays in Zamboanga City are dependent on the IRA, records from the DBM show that the total combined IRA given to these barangays in 2011 amounted to PhP 335.8 million. This is 86 percent of the consolidated income of the same year (see Figure 1). Apparently, the 14 percent or about PhP 55 million generated by these LGUs themselves or their OSRs are clearly not enough to fund the PhP 275.5 million expenses incurred that year.

Another point of interest is to know whether or not the fiscal conditions of the barangays have improved in real values since 2009—the year before the current elected barangay chairpersons have assumed office up to their first year in office which was 2011. By real values, it meant using common price levels to make the incomes in these two years comparable. This is made possible by removing the effect of inflation on the 2011 total income. When computed, the real incomes of several barangays were actually lower in 2011 compared to 2009. When totalled together, the total real barangay income in 2011 was a mere PhP 8 million higher than the total income in 2009.

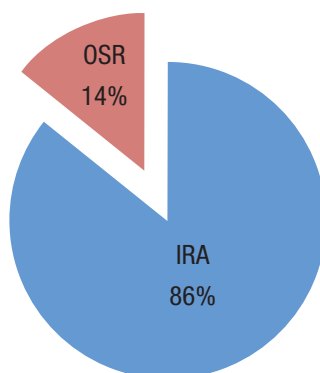


FIGURE 1. Distribution of Total Incomes.

Source: Records from the City Auditor's Office and DBM.

Now, the next question in mind is to find out whether or not the qualities of the current barangay chairpersons have something to do with this poor revenue performance. The next section examines the basic overall profile of the 2010 elected punong barangays.

Profile of the 98 Punong Barangays in Zamboanga City

Majority of the barangay chairpersons elected last 2010 were new. Thirty eight punong barangays out of ninety-eight or 39 percent of them assumed their positions for the first time. Two thirds of them are on their second term or third consecutive term in office (see Figure 2).

But even though many of them are new in their positions, they are not new to public service. Among the first timers, twenty-nine of these have served as barangay kagawad prior to becoming chairpersons, with at least three years to as long as fourteen years as kagawad. A mere nine of these officials never held a position in the barangay before assuming their positions.

Among the incumbents, two of them have been in the position of chairman for twenty-three consecutive years since 1988. These are chairpersons from barangay Taluksangay and Lamisahan. The chairpersons of barangays Mampang and Calarian held their positions for at least seventeen

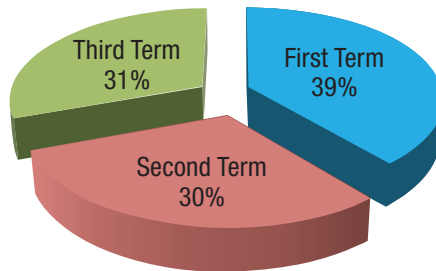


FIGURE 2. Punong Barangays by Terms in Office.

Source: Records from the DILG, Region IX.

years, and the captains of Zone III and Tolosa held theirs for fourteen years. Apparently, the constitutional term limits have not hindered these officials from overstaying in office.

The 2010 elected barangay chairpersons are highly educated. Based on the DILG records, more than 60 percent declared themselves to have reached either college level or have completed college. One of them, the punong barangay of Talisayan for example, is a law graduate. Over a quarter of them have either reached or finished high school, and or have taken up a vocational course.

Majority of these village leaders are quite old. About eighteen barangay captains are senior citizens. The bulk of these officials are of the ages fifty to fifty-nine years old. Only 11 percent is below forty, with the youngest aged twenty-nine. Moreover, 86 percent of them are married. The 90 percent are males, and 10 percent are females.

In terms of family affiliations, 48 percent have relatives or persons with identical surnames holding various positions in the same barangay, either at present or in the previous terms in office. In the case of Barangay Pangapuyan, there are four current barangay officials with the same surname, including the chairperson. Panubigan holds the record with the most number of relatives who held barangay positions in the past. Pangapuyan and Panubigan happen to have the second and fourth lowest real OSR in 2011, respectively.

Top and Bottom Ten Barangays and their Chairpersons

When the ninety-eight barangays in Zamboanga City were ranked according to real OSR, the ten highest and the ten lowest OSRs, there were six barangays whose OSRs reached PhP 1 million to 2 million (see Table 1). Surprisingly, the villages with the biggest OSRs were Mampang, Sta. Catalina and Patalon; both the former and latter are rural villages. According to the COA regional office, the reason for Mampang's and Patalon's sizeable OSR in 2011 was the large congressional fund given to these barangays allotted for medical equipment. For instance, Mampang received about PhP 1.9 million for this purpose.

It is worth noting that the richest barangays with the highest total income were not on this list: Talon-Talon, Baliwasan, Pasonanca, Tumaga, Calarian, San Jose Gusu and Tugbungan. These villages have the biggest total income because their IRA are also the largest due to their sizeable populations and land area, while their OSRs may not be as substantial.

TABLE I. Barangays with the Highest and Lowest OSRs

Top 10 Barangays				Bottom 10 Barangays			
Rank	Barangay	2011 OSR	Share	Rank	Name of Barangay	2011 OSR	Share
1	Mampang	2,548,212.58	23%	89	Dita	345,617.95	16%
2	Sta. Catalina	2,518,114.82	28%	90	Tumalutab	344,487.88	19%
3	Patalon	1,806,030.09	37%	91	Landang Gua	342,469.94	21%
4	Tetuan	1,710,235.08	13%	92	Busay	341,320.13	19%
5	Sta. Maria	1,208,654.07	13%	93	Manalipa	341,148.37	22%
6	Zone III	1,063,821.21	41%	94	Panubigan	340,436.63	28%
7	Zone IV	937,725.74	29%	95	Landang Laum	340,399.79	14%
8	Zone II	915,329.10	35%	96	Tigbalabag	338,372.16	23%
9	Camino Nuevo	904,676.85	18%	97	Pangapuyan	336,437.62	28%
10	Canelar	884,821.45	16%	98	Kasanyangan	106,426.83	2.8%

Source: Records from the City Auditor's Office.

In terms of the percentage of the OSR to total income, the barangays with the biggest share were Zone III at 41 percent, Zone II at 35 percent, and Zone IV at 29 percent. This result is not surprising because they are

all located at the central district of the city. Their OSRs are generated from establishments located in this area. Meanwhile, Tetuan and Sta. Maria had the smallest share in the top ten at 13 percent. Moreover, all these barangays are mostly situated within 4 kilometres of the city proper and are classified as urban areas except Mampang and Patalon which are 6 kilometres and 31 kilometres away from the poblacion, respectively.

The villages with the smallest OSRs are Kasanyagan, Pangapuyan, Tigbalabag, Landang Laum, Panubigan, Manalipa, Busay, Landang Gua, Tumulutab, and Dita. Notice that six of these are island villages and are economically classified as rural areas, except for Kasanyagan which is an urban village located 2 kilometres from the city proper. The six poorest villages with the smallest total incomes are not on this list. These are Latuan, Lumayang, Dulian (Upper Pasonanca), Taguiti, Pasmanta and Capisan. They were not in the bottom ten barangays because their OSRs were among the smallest.

Table 2 reveals that on the average, the top ten barangays have a relatively larger share of OSR to their total incomes than the bottom ten barangays. This means that the former are relatively less dependent on their IRA allocation than the latter.

TABLE 2. Profile of Punong Barangays of Villages with the Highest and Lowest OSR

	Top 10 Barangays	Bottom 10 Barangays
Mean Share of OSR to Total Income	25.3	19.2
Mean number of years as chairmen	6.8	4.1
Mean number of years of Experience	9.0	5.4
Mean number of years of schooling	12.0	8.0
Gender	All males	9 Males; 1 Female
Civil Status	All married	9 Married; one single
Mean Age	53.3	48.4
Family Affiliation	4 have or had relatives in the barangay council	9 have or had relatives in the barangay council

Source: Records from the DILG, Region IX.

On the average, the chairpersons of the top ten barangays have more years of experience in public service, more years of schooling and are older than

the village captains in the bottom ten on the OSR ranking. Moreover, the punong barangays of the top ten villages happen to be all males, all married and less than half of them has or had relatives serving in the barangay council either at present and/or in the previous terms of office. As to whether these variables (that is, experience, education, gender, civil status, age and family affiliation) significantly affect OSR, these have to be tested empirically.

Regression Results

When the econometric model was tested using all independent variables, it appears that only education and age significantly affect the OSR of the ninety-eight barangays in 2011. Affiliation, gender and civil status have low *t* values, hence, do not significantly affect the barangay’s OSR (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. Regression Result Using All Independent Variables.

$Log(OSR_{2011}) = 8.70 + 0.49 \log(education) + 0.12 \log(experience) + 0.70 \log(age)$		
$SE = (1.12)$	(0.16)	(0.07)
$p\ value = (0.00)$	(0.003)	(0.11)
$- 0.03\ Affiliation + 0.13\ Gender + 0.12\ Civil\ Status$		
$SE = (0.10)$	(0.17)	(0.18)
$p\ value = (0.77)$	(0.46)	(0.49)

$R^2 = 0.20$	$DW = 2.17$
$F - Stat = 3.82$	$Prob(F - Stat) = 0.0019$

Excluding the insignificant independent variables, the best econometric model with the lowest Akaike Info Criterion (AIC) and Schwarz Criterion is shown in Figure 4. Regression tests reveal heteroscedasticity and spatial autocorrelation problems. The presence of heteroscedasticity is brought about by outliers, with a few barangays having very large OSRs while some others with very small OSRs. Log transformations of the variables in the model have been used to address this problem. The autocorrelation is not

a surprise since Zamboanga is a small city. Spillover effects of both positive and negative externalities nature on adjacent barangays are common. To correct this complication, a first-order autoregressive (AR) process (1) is used on the model.

FIGURE 4. Regression Result of the Best Model on OSR

$Log(OSR_{2011}) = 9.19 + 0.05 \log(education) + 0.12 \log(experience) + 0.70 \log(age)$		
$SE = (1.00)(0.01)$	(0.07)	(0.25)
$p\ value = (0.00)(0.001)$	(0.08)	(0.003)
$R^2 = 0.20$	$Adjusted\ R^2 = 0.17$	$DW = 0.17$
$F - Stat = 5.77$	$Prob(F - Stat) = 0.0003$	

Figure 4 reveals that for every additional year of schooling a punong barangay possesses, the OSR of the barangay increases by 5 percent. For every 1 percent increase in the age of the punong barangay, OSR increases by 0.77 percent. Both figures are significant within the 95 percent confidence level. Whereas, for every percent increase in public service experience, the barangay’s OSR gains by 12 percent. The low *t* statistic of the variable experience reveals that the latter result is still within the 90 percent confidence level. However, this interpretation should be approached with caution. If the autocorrelation is uncorrected [or the AR 1 is excluded in the model], the *p* value of the variable experience is raised, thereby making it less significant. Nevertheless, the F-Stat of this model and its probability value show that this is moderately significant. This model, therefore, can explain and predict 20 percent of the movements in the barangays’ OSR.

It is possible, though, that the education variable depends on the OSR. It is not uncommon for barangay councils with high financial capability, and those who belong to progressive villages with high standard of living, to have an educated electorate. Such progressive villages tend to elect educated officials. To test this possibility, the Granger Causality was used to determine the direction of dependence between these two variables. Results in Table 3

show that the probability of having OSR not causing the variable education is moderately significant at 90 percent confidence level.

TABLE 3. Pairwise Granger Causality Tests

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 Sample: 1 98
 Lags: 2

Null Hypothesis:	Obs	F-Statistic	Probability
EDUC does not Granger Cause OSR2011	96	2.21117	0.11543
OSR2011 does not Granger Cause EDUC		2.87704	0.06144

When the difference between 2011 real barangay income and 2009 nominal income was regressed, only experience was the significant factor. All other variables do not directly affect nor contribute significantly to the change in barangay income. The result in Table 3 reveals that for every percent increase in the number of years of experience, the change in OSR increases by 50 percent. However, this result is not conclusive since the regression tests accepted only eleven out of ninety-eight observations in the model.

FIGURE 5. Regression Result of the Change in OSR

$Log(\Delta OSR) = 13.5 + 0.09 \log(education) + 0.5 \log(experience) - 1.04 \log(age) - 0.5(gender)$			
$SE = (3.44)(0.05)$	(0.11)	(0.74)	(0.29)
$p\ value = (0.01)(0.15)$	(0.007)	(0.22)	(0.14)
$R^2 = 0.93$		$DW = 2.17$	
$F - Stat = 13.36$		$Prob(F - Stat) = 0.0069$	

One probable reason for this result in Figure 5 was the short interval between the years the data have been taken. By 2011, the current barangay chairpersons had been in office for just over a year. By this time, only second and third term chairpersons were able to exercise their taxing powers more effectively than the first-time barangay captains. Moreover, the inclusion of the gender variable generates better regression results than without this variable in the model.

Delimitations of the Study

This paper covers chairpersons of all the ninety-eight barangays of Zamboanga City who were elected last 2010. This excludes the other barangay officials elected on the same year, such as kagawad, SK chairperson, barangay secretary and treasurer. It also excludes other city or municipal officials whether elected or appointed. Hence, the results, conclusions and implications of this research may not directly be applicable to other LGUs and elective officials. However, the information derived from this study provides evidence and support to the premise that abilities of local officials can and does affect the financial capabilities of the localities they serve.

Another limitation is that not all qualities of the punong barangay were included in this study due to non-availability of data such as profession. Only thirty-three out of ninety-eight chairpersons indicated their profession or means of livelihood in their file at the DILG. Among the explanations provided by the regional director of DILG is that these officials are bound not to report their means of livelihood because several of them ceased practicing their profession to devote themselves to full-time public service.

As to the latest available OSR used in this study which is 2011, the current barangay captains were in office for just a little over a year. The fiscal impact of these local executives on their villages' OSRs is not yet fully realized, especially for the first-termers.

Moreover, the OSR may include endowments, grant and gifts that may be freely given to certain barangays or may be attained through a collective effort of the barangay council or even by some private individuals residing within or outside the concerned barangay. Consequently, the entire OSR may not be directly attributable solely to the personal leadership efforts of the village chairperson. Nevertheless, this paper was written on the premise that the qualities of the chairperson are important considerations to the willingness of private individuals or government officials to financially help the pertained barangay. In other words, the OSR is a product of both the direct efforts of the punong barangay, and indirectly of his personal qualities.

Finally, the financial conditions of these barangays depend solely on the financial reports filed by the barangay to the City Auditor and DILG. This research study assumes the figures on these financial records are accurate and has, therefore, no means of verifying unreported funds.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this research study is to answer the question: *Is the financial capability of local governments affected by the quality of its leaders?* with ‘financial capability’ defined as OSR, and local government specified in this paper as barangays. The regression results support the hypothesis that education, age and experience of punong barangays positively contribute to the barangays’ financial capability in Zamboanga City.

However, in terms of raising real incomes in future years, only the experience of local chief executives appears to matter. This implies that to be able to have sustainable barangay funds, it is advantageous for a barangay chairperson to have years of experience in public service.

Both findings imply that for village councils to have sufficient and sustainable funding, the electorate has to choose quality local leaders who are well-educated, experienced and old or mature enough to be able to generate and maintain local funds. This paper recommends that villages in the bottom ten barangays in terms of the lowest OSR, as well as the poorest barangays should elect educated, mature and experienced village officials. This recommendation is also applicable to other LGUs. One possibility is for the government to appoint qualified local leaders in poor localities instead of having the usual democratic elections, but only until such time when a certain level of development has been achieved in these areas.

This paper also recommends that further research studies be conducted on the revenue structure, disbursements of funds, even case studies on the barangay chairpersons and other relevant issues which this paper was unable to cover. Further research can be conducted where the OSR is itemized and

divested of grants such as congressional funds and endowments that are not directly attributed to the personal efforts of the barangay chairperson.

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Comparative Ecclesiology: A Way Toward a More Accountable Roman Catholic Church

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the importance of comparative method in today's ecclesiological reflection. The appearance of 'historical-comparative ecclesiology' in Roger Haight's recent writings on ecclesiology counters the prevailing belief among many in the ecumenical circle that comparative ecclesiology has met its end in the Lund's (Sweden) Faith and Order Conference (15-28 August 1952). Haight's version of comparative ecclesiology takes a step forward from Lund by creating a space for the churches to learn and embrace the common ground of human existence, which is no other than the God revealed in Jesus. Karl Rahner's theology of grace is expounded in this paper to support the claim that the foundation of comparative ecclesiology is inherent in the very human and divine exchange. It is, likewise, argued that comparative ecclesiology is a 'learning ecclesiology,' which makes 'love' as both its source and aim.

KEYWORDS: Ecclesiology, Rahner, Haight, common good, comparative method

Introduction

What is the nature of the Roman Catholic ecclesiology? Does the Roman Catholic Church have a distinct and uniform ecclesiology, or in Francine Cardman's (2004, 47) term, a 'default ecclesiology'? One thing that comes directly in mind is the paradigmatic event of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1962-65) and the monumental character of the documents produced in this council. Because of their nature as documents produced by a council, many assert that these be *the* norms

of Roman Catholic ecclesiology, that is, these documents must be seen as absolute, thus must be implemented unconditionally and uniformly in all the local churches of the world. However, differences in understanding the nature of the council and its teachings have emerged right after the end of the council and are still very pronounced today. (Some even say that these differences are already present during the council mainly between the so-called ‘reformers’ and ‘conservatives’). One theologian calls these differences ‘narratives,’ which in one way or another, have “weakened the awareness of Vatican II as a historical event” among today’s Christians (Faggioli 2012, 765).¹ We can safely say that what we have in our history as a church, including those who experienced Jesus historically, is multiplicity of ecclesiologies that are mostly different or even in extreme contrast from one another (Brown 1994). Simply speaking, there is no uniformity in our ecclesiology.

What we need in this situation of utter multiplicity is a ‘bridging’ mind to be able to see the underlying principle behind the plurality of experiences. Openness is, of course, an intellectual asset that must be fostered in order to navigate the misty river of human society, both its banal and sacral aspects. In fact, inherent in the nature of Vatican II is its ‘openness’ to ‘others,’ may they be other theological positions, other denominations, religions or even those who have no religious affiliations. “Vatican II looks at the whole of the great tradition...and orients itself by looking at the margins and outside the margins of the Catholic *communio*: *Ad extra*, the poor, the ‘separated brothers and sisters,’ the non-Christian religions, the atheists” (Faggioli 2013, 816). From this experience of openness exemplified in Vatican II, one can postulate the future of the church with the aim of revealing the kingdom of God in the world (Rahner 1966, 31), a kingdom of love and forgiveness. Love of God must be revealed in our relationship with our neighbors, and such relationship has its source and summit in the love of God. This is, indeed, a classic formulation of our Christian activism, but the lack of it is a tearing reality in our life today.

This paper is not an attempt to give an easy answer to this reality—the lack of resonance between our love of God and the way we deal with one another. Our presupposition is clear, however: That the more we know about the complexities

of human nature and its dynamic relationship with the creator, thus, acquiring a better appreciation of the nature of human faith and its many forms, the better we are equipped in mending this tearing reality. This paper will try to propose *a* way, not *the* way, for a more accountable Roman Catholic Church by employing comparative ecclesiology. While there are other ways in demonstrating how the church is more accountable for her actions, the contention of this paper is that comparative ecclesiology can be a starting point in addressing the pressing questions in our church today. The comparative method may have become necessary in our contemporary context characterized by cultural diversity and its hatred to what is ‘absolute,’ that is, “there is no one central interpretation around which all interpretations focus” (Tracy 1981, 346). Comparative ecclesiology is not simply a sociological product of our society nor an answer to a particular need of our present cultural diversities. This paper will contend that comparative ecclesiology is rooted in the very dynamic of human and divine relationship. Further, since a theological enterprise devoid of context is weak, claims in this paper will be made in view of the ideal of loving one’s neighbor vis-à-vis the social realities of injustice and suffering. I want to achieve these tasks with the help of Karl Rahner’s theology of grace, Roger Haight’s comparative ecclesiology, as well as the latter’s understanding of plurality as ‘unity in diversity.’

Karl Rahner’s Theology of Grace: Foundation of Comparative Ecclesiology

In the history of Christian scholarship, grace is one of the most slippery words to define (Haight 1979, 6). But let us take this concept in the way it appears in the history of our theology. Perhaps, by being intellectually slippery, grace reveals its own nature. According to Louis-Marie Chauvet (1995, 443), “grace [is]...*irreducible* to any explanations,” and this is the reason why in the history of Christian theology we can see different formulations of how grace operates in human lives. This means that our experience of grace cannot be limited in well-defined conceptual boundaries. Like some aspects of human experience where one is left bewildered, for example, when one is confronted with the reality of death, our experience of grace touches the inner core of our existence. Experiences like these defy human reasoning. They cannot be

conceptually ascertained. There is always what Rahner says in his theology of symbol as an ‘overplus’ of meaning (1966b, 225).

This kind of bewilderment is intensely true to a religious person. Though sometimes accused of immature postulation, a believer’s intense experience of something unexplainable is characterized by a deep and sincere self-knowledge. This is because, according to Rahner, the more a human person is aware of a force that is more than the human self, the more s/he acknowledges his/her own self. Rahner (1975, 175) proclaims that “the original and ultimate experience of God constitutes the enabling condition of, and an intrinsic element in, the experience of self in such a way that without this experience of God no experience of self is possible.” In a believer’s point of view, this ‘surplus’ or ‘overplus’ of meaning is always associated with God as the horizon, not as an object of knowledge, but the very possibility of this knowledge.² In the Christian language, this ‘horizon’ of meaning is the very communication of God’s self to the whole creation and to the innermost part of the human person, which Rahner calls ‘experience of grace.’ In his first entry into the delicate discussion on nature and grace, he defines the latter as ‘ultimately God himself,’ or as the self-communication of God (1974a, 313). In another essay, he says, “Grace is God himself, the communication in which he gives himself to man as the divinizing favour which he is himself” (1966c, 177). In a talk given before his death, Rahner revivifies this concept by reiterating its primary role in Christian consciousness. For him, “the true and sole centre of Christianity is the real self communication of God to creation in God’s innermost reality and glory” (Rahner 1966c, 7-8).³ What is peculiar in this Rahnerian definition of grace is the attempt, first, to abandon the extrinsicism of the Scholastic position on the relation of grace to nature, and second, to affirm firmly the gratuity of grace that is abandoned in the position embraced by the ‘new theology,’ represented by a certain ‘anonymous D’.

In his criticism against the extrinsicism of the Scholastic position on the relationship between grace and nature, Rahner (1974a) finds himself on the side of the ‘new theology’ movement. His main point against the Scholastic position is that in extrinsicism, nature has the supernatural order of grace and glory as its highest goods but there is no guarantee that nature

will attain this supernatural order because nature left to itself can function as normal without the supernatural goods stated above. In this extrinsicist understanding, nature is already an intact entity, rendering the supernatural end secondary or even unnecessary. Obviously, this extrinsicist position has served its purpose in theology. It was invoked to safeguard the gratuity of grace in relation to nature. If nature is intact as an entity, then the coming of the supernatural goods, which are grace and glory, can surely be understood to be gratuitous because nature does not force these supernatural ends to complete itself. Here, we can see the main contribution of this Scholastic position. But this leads to a complete separation between what is holy or supernatural from what is natural. According to Henri de Lubac (2008, 621), the emergence of secularization in our society can be traced back to this dualistic understanding of nature and grace:

Out of a desire to protect the supernatural from any contamination, it had been isolated, set apart both from the living spirit and from social life, and the field was left open to the invasion of ‘secularism.’ Today, this secularism, having often become atheistic and following its own path, is trying to invade the consciousness of Christians themselves.

It is naturally human that when one reacts against the shortcomings of another’s position s/he would end up eliminating the whole, including the good things. This is true to the reactionary position of the ‘new theology’ presented by the ‘anonymous D’ (who claimed to follow the position of de Lubac) in his reaction against the shortcomings of the extrinsicist position. For de Lubac (1999, 372), there is “(p)aradox of the human spirit: [C]reated, finite, it is not just added on to nature, it itself its nature. Before being a thinking spirit, it is a spiritual nature.” He continues, “therefore, before loving God, and in order to be able to love him, it desires.” For ‘anonymous D,’ this position of de Lubac does not only discard the extrinsicist approach, but also explains the real order of the human spirit. He says: “The supernatural finds point of contact in us. It corresponds to an inclination, an emptiness which is to be fill [*sic*], a yearning.”⁴ This position seems to solve the problems of the extrinsicist position. Nature desires not only what is proportionate to itself, but it desires God, the nature’s supernatural end. However, according to Rahner, this position does not really

differ much from the extrinsicist position, though at first glance it seems to answer its shortcomings. For him, when one posits the idea of a 'desire for God' in nature, this does not answer why there is this 'desire for God' in the first instance. 'New theology' proposes that this desire is inherent in nature because God in *intentione* puts grace as nature's supernatural end, which is of course God. For Rahner, this schema questions the freedom of nature in receiving grace, since this postulation of desire becomes the determinant of how nature acts in relation to its supernatural end. It seems that this natural desire is not natural after all for it *must* act according to what is already set in God's intention. Therefore, his main objection about this view is that in its structure the supernatural end(s) orders nature here and now, and for him, gratuity cannot be considered as a proper characteristic of the relationship between grace and nature.

For his part, Rahner does not content himself in simply criticizing the position of de Lubac and 'D,' and also that of the extrinsicist position of the Scholastic school. He raises his view on the subject of grace and nature by invoking the concept of *relationality*. He begins his view by saying, "God wishes to communicate himself, to pour forth the love which he himself is. That is the first and the last of his real plans and hence of his real world too" (Rahner 1974a, 310). In this way, Rahner shows that it is proper for God to create a creature worthy of this relationship. He is concerned primarily on the instance of the creation of nature and 'not only' in its inner natural desire. 'New theology' speaks about grace in God's intention, but Rahner insists that this postulation of grace in God's intention does not constitute the reality of human existence, for nobody would experience this kind of grace.⁵ For him, grace is experiential. God creates a creature that is fully capable to be God's partner in relation, and so already endowed with grace, which is 'God himself.' That is why Rahner uses the word '*always*' in referring to human's experience of grace. Further, he maintains that the gratuity of grace is preserved in his schema. It is when human nature knows the personal love of God, for it is God's own self, that human knows the free gift character of grace. God creates a nature capable of this loving relationship. So for Rahner, it is not possible to think that grace is not freely given, for as God's self communication grace can

only be conceived as free. Also, it is not possible to think of God as not free in creating human nature, or being not free in self-communication. Therefore, it is not possible to think of an *unfree* nature in its relation to grace, since nature itself is already endowed with God's presence. In other words, human nature is already in the state of 'supernatural existential' here and now, and so full of grace, full of God's self-communication.

The Social Nature of Grace: Roger Haight and His Comparative Ecclesiology

There are two things that we must bear in mind when we talk about Rahner's theology of grace: *Universality* and *intimacy/particularity*. God bestows Godself in the very instance of creating nature, and this divine presence becomes nature's horizon. For Rahner, there is no such thing as 'pure nature' but 'supernatural existential.' This status affects all human beings. All are in the state of 'supernatural existential,' that is, all are endowed with God's presence, God's own self-communication. It is in this line of thinking that we can imagine Rahner and his positive understanding of people outside the classical boundaries of Christianity. Though it is much debated and more theologians today begin to abandon this category, Rahner's view on the 'anonymous Christians' always flow from his concept of grace (Galvin 2000, 264).⁶ God's self-communication is *universal* and proper to the entirety of human nature.

In human experience, however, one values a relationship based on its intimacy, rather than its distance. The Rahnerian definition of grace as God's self-communication allows us to understand God's action in the world as intimate. The whole creation is colored with what is proper to God. God does not see us 'from a distance,' but we communicate to God from the intimacy of our being as creatures. Rahner's 'supernatural existential' allows us to see the intimacy of our being. A human person is not something far away from the concreteness of the world, but s/he can find himself/herself in the innermost aspect of human experience which is governed by particularity. This is the most accurate definition we can attribute to every human being. Likewise, it is inherent in this existential experience that God's

self-communication be situated in the *particularities* of concrete human existence. Human cooperation, then, is integral in the definition of Rahner. Though nature is already graced with God's presence, active cooperation in the part of human nature is not overruled.

It is in this discussion of the universality and particularity of God-human relation that we can situate Haight and his historical-constructive-comparative ecclesiology. Toward the end of his first book [which is an historical survey on the understanding of grace in Western theology], Haight (1979) shows his interest to follow the Rahnerian line. His leaning to follow the position of Rahner is visible in his adherence of affirming the factuality and existentiality of God's communication. According to Haight, God's self-communication is not abstract, but factual and existential. The affirmation that God enters into human history in grace is an act of faith to a God who is known only through self-revelation which cannot be conceived away from human historical particularity. Our consciousness of history, according to Haight, leads us to affirm that God works in human nature according to the particularity of that nature. It cannot be otherwise, since God's personal communication indicates human cooperation, that is, active exercise of human freedom which can only happen in a particular situation as part of being historical and contingent. God's presence does not only operate in us, but *cooperate* in all our being. It is a kind of presence that does not replace human freedom, rather respects and fulfills its potentiality (Haight 1993, 458). He calls this form of freedom, which is the result of human active participation in the immanent movement of God, as 'transcendent' (Haight 2012). This kind or dimension of freedom "transcends the bonds of earthly logic and reason and occurs when one is grasped by a transcendent reality that may lead along uncharted paths" (Haight 1979, 138-139). This freedom is characterized by 'personal commitment' to ultimate reality. It is personal—it gives way to experiencing the graced world in an intimate way. Therefore, according to Haight (1979, 146), "there will be a great variety of ways in which individuals experience God's grace."

This *cooperative* dynamism between human freedom and God's presence is carried into the public domain which, in its turn, determines the way we

understand the inner dynamism of grace. We are social, and so is our experience of God. In line with Rahner, Haight (1979, 179) asserts: “The grace underlying human history does not remain merely secret but breaks through into the public sphere and often takes an organized form.” In his other work, he says “a freed or loving freedom, that is, freedom endowed with God’s presence open up out into relationships with others, in society and in history” (Haight 1985, 153). For Christians, according to Haight (1979, 179), the Church is the social or institutionalized manifestation of this primordial subjective grace.⁷ In his other work in ecclesiology, he voices out this conviction: “The church *is* the institutionalization of the community of faith”⁸ (Haight 1987, 352). It is clear that Haight follows Rahner in this regard. The latter is a strong advocate on the universality of grace, but this universality of grace is always associated with the particularity of the *Christ Event*, which is the foundation of the Christian movement. Basing from Rahner, Haight (1979, 165) asserts that, “for the Christian, in the advent of Jesus, his life, death and resurrection, one has the concrete and unsurpassable event in history manifesting the saving love of God [that is, grace] for the human race.”⁹ The experience of Christians finds its center in the person of Jesus Christ.

However, though Christians found Christ at the heart or at the center of how they understand God and His presence, the long history of the Christian movement tells us that human expression of this centrality varies in many ways. For instance, Marcia Colish (2004, 68) asserts that “the church has never been monolithic in its practice. It is also the case that the church has never been monolithic in its faith.” In his work, Haight asserts that though Christians profess that their experience of God’s grace is *through* Christ alone, this experience of grace in Christ is subjected to the social and historical pluralities inherent in human existence. In his book *Dynamics of theology*, Haight (2001, 62) develops the idea of ‘mediated transcendence.’ This means that “all human consciousness of transcendence, all revelation, is and must be historically mediated.” In the context of Christianity, ‘mediated transcendence’ means that God’s self-communication, which is perfectly manifested in Christ, adapts to the particularities of human situation. Simply speaking, there is no such thing as direct entrance to the fullness of God’s

presence in Christ. Human awareness of God's presence has always been the contingent world, with all its inherent particularities, as the starting point (Schillebeeckx 1966, 39). It can even be said that based on the distinct individualities of human beings, those who have lived closely with Jesus experienced this self-communication of God in him, that he is the bringer of God's salvation in many different ways. In understanding how the early communities relate to Jesus as the foundation of their faith, Haight (2004, 112) says, "they [early communities] all agreed that Jesus was their salvation and as such the foundation of their new communities. But because there was a pluralism in the understandings of Jesus, so too a variety of aspects or ways in which Jesus came to be bear on different communities defined his being foundation (*sic*)." One would simply open his/her New Testament Scriptures and be reminded of the four gospels, supposedly talking about how God acts in Jesus, but written in various 'perspectives and purposes' (Cardman 2004, 35). For Haight, the same factors of historical existence are set to underline the experience of God in the subsequent unfolding of history. It is always associated with the inevitable pluralities of existence, though always in the context of the underlying experience of God's self-communication in Christ. It is only in this that one can get rid of any polemical attitude against the existence of many Christian confessions. In this way, appreciation of plurality in our confessions does not entail succumbing to the dangers of relativism. Rather, plurality is 'unity in diversity.' There is a diversity of forms, but stemming from the same fundamental communication between God and the human person in the name of Christ.

The emergence of comparative ecclesiology in the later writings of Haight can only be understood in these interlocking poles between particularity and universality, diversity and unity, with grace as its foundation. The grace-filled history reveals the importance of comparative attitude in the contemporary reflection about the meaning and purpose of the church, and the consequence of belonging to a particular confession. When history is seen as a field of God's self-communication in grace, then all that is in it is a manifestation of this intimate presence, including the plurality of faith

confessions. Clearly, this is the reason why Haight opted to change his ‘strategy of telling the story’ of the church in his first volume of *Christian community in history*, to a ‘comparative study’ in the second volume. This change is not a simple preference in method, but is intimately related to the unfolding of history which, when viewed in the Rahnerian perspective, is a history that is full of God’s presence.

Haight does not discuss explicitly the nature and purpose and the premises of comparative ecclesiology in his second volume. He simply passes on to the readers his ‘shift’ in approach and strategy. However, he discusses them fairly in the third volume, and in some of his recent articles about the church. In these writings, the foremost aim of Haight is to construct an ecclesiology that takes into immediate consideration the commonalities beneath the appearance of divisions between and among Christian churches. For instance, in his editorial essay in the journal *Horizons*, written in the same year as the publication of his second volume, Haight (2005, 333) regards comparative ecclesiology as an essential element in constructing a ‘transdenominational ecclesiology,’ a form of theological reflection that aims “to achieve a unified understanding of the church that all churches could recognize and in some measure claim as their own.” We can see here his drive to understand the church with the plurality of churches in the background, without diminishing this plurality into a false form of unity. What is very important for him is to see the unifying factor that connects one confession to the others, hence constructing the ‘common possession’ of all the churches. It is a form of ecclesiology that is not a monopoly of one particular church, but a result of an ecumenical awareness. It is his belief that today’s understanding of the nature and purpose of the church must always be fitted within the broader context of ecumenical movement, rather than merely confessional (Haight 1994, 13-22).

The positive attitude that Haight exhibits in this aspect is surely due to his Rahnerian understanding of grace as God’s intimate presence in each of us according to our very nature, not due to our belongingness to particular confessions. A Christian theologian, according to him, must be able to appreciate this God’s intimate presence in each of us, and thus represent the

truly Christian message of love. This positive attitude is marked by the very nature of human history, a history that is full of God's presence.

The Future of the Roman Catholic Church in the Light of Comparative Ecclesiology: Toward a Listening-Learning and Humble Ecclesiology

As what I have said in the beginning, it is not appropriate to exclusively assert comparative method as the only way toward a brighter future of the church. What we have hoped to accomplish so far is to see the foundational character of comparative ecclesiology as a discipline. Comparative method is not only sociologically appropriate, but also theologically guaranteed. In this connection, the remaining task is to highlight the possible avenues where a comparative method becomes beneficial to our present-day ecclesiological reflection and, in the horizon, the future of the Roman Catholic Church. I want to address this by posing three challenges that comparative ecclesiology wishes to bring into the discussion. They are intellectual, ecclesial, and ethical challenges.

Intellectual challenge. Comparative ecclesiology, as an intellectual discipline, thrives in its paradoxical nature. While we are concerned about the possible engagement of the concrete and contextual human experience, comparative ecclesiology also attempts to free ourselves from the entanglement of our own contextuality. The stimulus behind the appearance of comparative ecclesiology is an attempt to free ourselves from the polemical nature of denominational adherence. There is a kind of a 'detached' engagement in our intellectual search. For instance, one can study one particular confession in comparison with another confession, or other confessions. This study involves self-denial. A Roman Catholic theologian, for instance, who engages in a comparative ecclesiology must strive to detach himself/herself from one's own confessional biases. Otherwise, the result of the study simply reiterates what is already cemented in his/her own confession, which is normally set to define its own identity against the others. In this phase of the study, in one way or another, one has to adopt a 'helicopter perspective.'

According to Haight (2008a, 387-401), this stage belongs to the first of his five variations of comparative ecclesiology.¹⁰ This stage deals with the objective analysis of different traditions. It has a normal methodology of pairing the similarities and differences of two or more ecclesiologies. Most criticisms hurled against those who practice comparative method dwell particularly in this stage. According to these critics, consciousness of the contextuality of human knowing means that one can never go away from the chains of confessional membership, thus making comparative method unrealistic. However, this is not the end of comparative ecclesiology as an intellectual tool. The contextuality of human experience presupposes that this ‘helicopter perspective’ is set to land in one particular place with an enriched understanding of one’s own belief and the beliefs of others. There is always what Gerard Mannion (2008a, 21; 2008b, 187) says ‘a sweet homecoming,’ a “‘return home’ to one’s own tradition after such explorations with one’s own appreciation and understanding of that tradition *enhanced* as a direct result of one’s encounter of other...[ecclesial] traditions.” In other words, there is always that return that transforms our perspectives of the present, enabling us to envision a unified future. What we have in this ‘return home’ is a widened understanding of our interpersonal relationship under the horizon of God’s eternal bestowing of self. In short, comparative ecclesiology establishes a very important point of contact after the exploration, and that this common point is set to break apart the chains of confessional boundaries.

Ecclesial challenge. What we have in this ‘return home’ is a renewed appreciation of our own ecclesial confession with the knowledge that one confession alone cannot exhaust the richness of God’s presence in Christ. Comparative ecclesiology responds affirmatively to the challenge raised in *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) #8 about the elements of sanctification and truth that are present outside the visible boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church (Flannery 1996, 9). This implies a positive evaluation of other confessions and even that of other religions. Dialogue is a key factor in this area. Though as a term, dialogue already has a long history in our theology, a new awareness of its importance must be given priority. In this

phase, comparative ecclesiology looks at dialogue not simply as an intellectual endeavor, but more importantly to see the ‘unity’ underlying the differences in form.¹¹ Basing from our discussion above, the foundational character of God-human relationship presents dialogue in two different but unifying directions. First, comparative ecclesiology supports dialogue between different Christian confessions.¹² Second, comparative ecclesiology strengthens the link that connects the different elements of confessional structure.

Haight (2008b) explains that the principal purpose of comparative ecclesiology is to remove the polemical atmosphere that colored the relationship between Christians in the long and complicated, and sometimes also bloody, history. The final volume of his work on ecclesiology presents the places where Christians can find the common ground of unity. It is a synthetic work that highlights the importance of common understanding and common interest. It is a work that describes “what the churches possess in common” (xi), though it also presents the areas where Christians have difficulties in working together.

However, a learning ecclesiology, a hopeful result of comparative ecclesiology, cannot be satisfied only with dialogue *ad extra*. The second directive of comparative ecclesiology presents a self-examination as a necessary ecclesial element in order to be truly faithful to the workings of the Holy Spirit and to truly become a living hope to the world. The ‘return home’ that we are envisioning must also include the challenge of self-examination. It was Rahner who popularized the concept of church as a sacrament. Rahner’s objective is, on the one hand, to affirm the historical character of God’s salvific revelation, and on the other hand, to also affirm that it is in Christ that the salvific action of God is fully made manifest. It is inherent in this concept that the church must also manifest this salvific reality. “Now the Church is the continuance, the contemporary presence, of that real, eschatologically triumphant and irrevocably established presence in the world, in Christ, of God’s salvific will” (Rahner 1964, 200). It is here that human *accountability* finds its place.¹³ Comparative ecclesiology envisions an accountable church, a church which, as Rahner (1974b, 71-75, 93-101) says, ‘with open doors,’ that is, open and ready to learn from other confessions in order to fulfill its own salvific mission.

Ethical challenge. It is a common understanding that the church is a moral community. However, its real collective strength is somehow sidelined by a one-dimensional approach. Normally, when Christians talk about the church's moral obligation, it implies a one-directional relation *from* the church *to* the world, in which the latter is defined as a place outside the explicit boundaries of the former. According to Keith Ward (2000, 209): “The Christian church accepts...that God has a moral purpose for the created universe, and that human beings (which mostly narrowed to Christianity) have the responsibility of forming a society which will enable that purpose to be realised.” Since this is a ‘from-to’ relation, it is often aggressive and polemical. The world here is associated with sin, and the church is associated with holiness. Thus, we hear the church condemning and announcing anathema against the world. The distinction between God and the world is here translated as a separation between the holy church and the sinful world. However, what is lacking in this perspective is the church's responsibility towards its own self.

Perhaps, the foremost challenge posed by comparative ecclesiology to the present church is that of *attitude*. This is so because, according to Schillebeeckx (1990, 93), “the face of the other person [appears] as an ethical challenge to my [our] free subjectivity.” Basing from the social nature of our belief and our relationship with God in Christ, which is manifested in the structures of various confessions, inner dispositions and motives are important aspects of our social relations and ecclesiological reflections. This ethical aspect of our ecclesial existence becomes a measuring stick on how we function as individuals and as communities of faith in relation to the coming of the kingdom of God. Likewise, it is to be highlighted that in Christian tradition, formation of right attitude is important and indispensable. In talking about productive reform in the church, change in attitude takes precedence over policies, and even over ecclesial structures. Change in policies and structures will happen only if there is a change in attitude (Reese 2004,149). Back to the two-fold function of love as love of God and love of neighbours, the absence of which is a scourge to our Christian faith, an ecclesiology that is consistent to its call to form an accountable church must have love as its priority (Mannion 2007, 223). This call of love and to love is not an external accessory, but a fundamental horizon of an ecclesiology

that yearns to be faithful to the gospels. According to Mannion (2007, 230), “If what we do actually *contradicts* the gospel of love, then no amount of reasoning or appeal to higher authorities and long-term ends can make right what is, according to gospel values, *wrong*.” We do not disregard the importance of an ecclesiology that is designed to explicitly affirm the distinctiveness of one particular confession. What we want to underline, however, is the contribution of comparative method in developing an ecclesiology that is conversant to the realities of the postmodern world. In its basic nature, engagement in comparative ecclesiology is an acknowledgement of this *ecclesiology of love* that is characterized primarily by openness to dialogue, it is a dialogue that “provides the path of discovery in the ways of love and friendship with God and with other human beings” (Hinze 2000, 209). Or in the words of Walter Kasper (2000, 293), a dialogue that entails human person’s entirety. There is no other way where we can measure the effectiveness of our attachment to the Christian mysteries than in the way we give our love to others. This, of course, starts from the innermost aspect of our being, a being created in the image and likeness of the creator, a being that is endowed with the creator’s very self.

Renewing the Classic Formulation of Christian Activism: Love of God and Love of Neighbours

I have discussed above the importance of comparative ecclesiology in our search for a common ground underneath the many forms of Christianity. I introduced Haight’s idea that it is profitable for Christians to focus more on what unites than on things that divide them, though the latter must not be seen as irrelevant. In his elaboration on the importance of Haight’s ecumenical effort, Mannion (2013, 400) observes that Haight believes “that the more opportunity Christians have to reflect upon and to come to appreciate just how much they share in common and the importance of what they already have in union, then, despite the remaining significance of overcoming what doctrinal, cultural, and practical differences remain, Christians will come to appreciate that such differences are much less enduring than what they

share—than ‘where they dwell in common.’” This observation surely applies to all Christian churches and faithful.

Further, the social aspect of human freedom, as what I have attested above, obliges us to widen the horizon of our ecclesiological reflections by traversing the boundaries of the established Christianity. Consciousness of historical events presents Christianity in a web of ways on how to understand the world vis-à-vis human existence. In relation to the complexities of the larger world and the presence of other religions and other ways of thinking, differences inside Christianity seem to be minor. Focusing mainly on things that seem internal to Christianity, especially if this is defined in opposition to what pertains to the world, does not give justice to the inherent nature of human living. The appearance of the so-called ‘wider ecumenism,’ in theological discourse, that is, “dialogue across the human family with people of all faiths and none, addressing a multitude of challenging contexts” confirms the need of going away from the traditional way of thinking which is mainly characterized by opposition and condemnation (Mannion 2013, 398). A learning ecumenical ecclesiology, hinges upon the premises of comparative attitude where it acknowledges the acts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the many aspects of human existence.

This involves an act of choice, which I call ‘priority without negligence.’ A thorough involvement in comparative activity obliges us to prioritize one or some aspects of Christian faith without compromising or neglecting the other aspects. For instance, in relation to the present state of the human world, one is asked to prioritize *love* over doctrine. Certainly, this is not to put love against truth in a radical and exclusive way. Rather, differences in truth or doctrine must not cover the importance of mending the tearing reality of the love of God and love of neighbours. Borrowing the words of Ward (2011, 65) “The implication is that it is the goodness of the heart, and not the orthodoxy of the mind, that is the qualification for entering the kingdom.” One simply cannot proclaim the truth of loving God without giving priority to that love through loving the neighbours, or one simply cannot proclaim the many truths and doctrines of Christianity without love as their ground.

Like what is in the long history of humanity and that of Christianity in particular, it is not alien nowadays to be confronted with what Schillebeeckx (1990, 5) terms as ‘negative experiences of contrast,’ which elicits a basic attitude of “‘no’ to the world as it is,” a no to the basic human experience of suffering and unhappiness. It is safe to say that an ecumenical endeavor that does not tend to address the present-day contrast experience is not faithful to the dynamics of God and human relationship, as what I have attempted to present in the first part of this paper. It is then wise to affirm the belief that “God is speaking most vividly and emphatically through the poor, marginalized, the oppressed” (Bluck 1987, 9). In a Rahnerian assertion, one is obliged to discern the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the voiceless, in the marginalized.

This is not alien to the project of Haight. It can be asserted that the emergence of comparative method in his later work on ecclesiology is a development from his concern on human suffering and its particular manifestations. His earlier works attest to the importance of social contexts in his theology. This allows him to employ a method that is attuned to the complexities of human faith-filled life, a certain method that takes particularities seriously in which application of human freedom is extremely necessary. Haight (1996, 256) says: “It may be said that the real causes or bases of the divisions between churches lie less in doctrine and theology and more in ordinary sociological factors.” He continues, that “the killing of the innocent in wars, massive poverty, social degradation, and dehumanization in our world provide other urgent reasons for more Christian unity and collaboration.” For him, these concrete and dehumanizing social factors urge Christians to give public witness to a God revealed in Jesus. In his elaboration on Haight’s contribution to ecumenical discussion, Martin Madar (2012, 222) connects the desire to say ‘together,’ which characterized the prevailing atmosphere of ecumenism from the early stage of its development, to that of ‘common action.’ It is a common endeavor among Christians to affirm the legitimacy of Christ in the contemporary world. It is no other than ‘ecumenism in action,’ a discovery and celebration of “Christian unity in action around issues directly affecting other people’s lives” (Kobia 2005, 200). This is especially true to those who have been victims of

social injustices. Simply speaking, what we have in comparative ecclesiology is an attempt to seek together the places where Christians dwell in common in order to relate to the world consistent with the call of Jesus that ‘all may be one’ in faith though expressed in many different ways, and in order to answer in a unique way the Christian call of establishing the kingdom where the love of God is expressed concretely in the love of neighbours.

Conclusion

Understanding the nature and purpose of the church today is a real problem. However, though there is a tragic fragmentation of our Christian confessions, the new awareness of the importance of the uniqueness of ‘others’ seems to gain its ground in today’s human consciousness. It has been suggested in this paper that a comparative method in our ecclesiology is a timely discipline, not only as it befits our cultural sensibilities, but mostly because it is grounded in the dynamism of God and human relationship. I have highlighted two interlocking poles in comparative ecclesiology. First, is the importance in our search for a ‘common dwelling place’ among Christians of different confessions. A constructive comparative ecclesiology will bring into the ecumenical discussion the importance of respect, love, and Christian commitment in realizing the prayer of Jesus that ‘all may be one’ in our journey toward human fulfillment. I have appealed to Rahner’s theology of grace. God’s intimate presence in God’s creation is a great resource to understand anew the role of the church in our postmodern world. It gives a renewed understanding of what a human person is, the subject of any aim of Christian unity in the whole scheme of salvation history which cannot be separated dualistically from our own experience of history. Second, comparative ecclesiology underlines the importance of ‘learning,’ and not just ‘telling,’ in our ecclesiological reflection. Comparative method brings additional resources for self-reflection.

Though not exhaustive, I have suggested three areas where comparative ecclesiology can be effective in addressing the problem of credibility in the church today. Firstly, comparative ecclesiology dares us to think more, that is, thinking ‘outside the box’ of our established confessional boundaries. It dares us

to learn from other Christian confessions, or even from other faith confessions. Secondly, comparative method in our ecclesiology asks us to act and behave differently, to embrace a more loving and humble attitude in our reflection. And lastly, everything that I have elaborated can become worthless without a firm conviction to return to the concreteness of human situation by looking at the inconsistencies of human living. This is summed up by ‘acting together’ what have been discussed, compared, and agreed to be essentials to the Christian faith, and so acting together to bear witness what have been seen as concrete ‘marks of the Christian life’ (Ward 2011, 54).¹⁴

Notes

- ¹ Faggioli identifies three most prevailing ‘narratives’ in understanding the nature and purpose of the council. These are: 1) The ‘ultratrationalist narrative’ which looks at the council as a complete and illegitimate rupture from the past; 2) the ‘ultraliberal narrative’ which portrays the council as a failed promise; and, 3) the ‘neoconservative narrative’ that treats the council as only ushering the agenda of economic freedom.
- ² In his elaboration of Rahner’s understanding of language in relation to our understanding of God, Robert Masson says, “Rahner holds that the ‘more’ or ‘horizon’ which is foregrasped cannot itself be an object since it is the condition necessary to explain the possibility of grasping objects in the first place.” In Robert Masson’s “Can Rahner Bridge the Linguistic Divide?” published in *Horizons* 6, no. 2 (1979): 226, he give his critical response to Charles Wood’s “Karl Rahner on Theological Discourse,” found in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12 (1975): 55-67.
- ³ Here, we can see the centrality of this theology in the works of Rahner. He began with identifying the characters of God’s self-communication in his early articles, and he ‘ended’ his career with the same theme.
- ⁴ The whole essay of ‘D,’ “Ein Weg zur Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Natur und Gnade,” *Orientierung* 14 (1950): 138-41, is translated into English by David Coffey as Document 2, in “A Way Toward the Determination of the Relation of Nature and Grace,” of his “Some Resources for Students of *La nouvelle théologie* published in *Philosophy and Theology* 11, no. 2 (1999): 367-402. According to Coffey, ‘D’ wants to ‘convey de Lubac’s theology on this matter in a systematic style, as distinct from de Lubac’s rhetorical style’ (*Ibid.*, 367). Rahner’s reason of reacting to ‘D,’ and not directly to de Lubac, is that D’s essay “is perhaps the clearest, and also the most extreme exposition of the standpoint here rejected.” He continues, “most of the essays from this circle (that is, *la nouvelle théologie*) were primarily historical in character, and are consequently not easily to be interpreted as regard their theoretical and systematic intentions” as found in “Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace,” 304, n. 3. According to Coffey’s “Some Resources for Students of *La nouvelle théologie*, Rahner is, first, reluctant to criticize de Lubac, who is already under attack, and, second, Rahner found de Lubac’s thought ‘too elusive.’

- ⁵ It is interesting that Nicholas Healy comes up with the same observation saying, “. . . de Lubac’s natural desire for the supernatural is not grace; it is not the supernatural effect of the actual call to the beatific vision. It is, rather, the natural infrastructure placed by God in intellectual nature for the sake of realizing his plan to bestow the call to supernatural happiness in a ‘second’ moment that is logically and ontologically distinct with respect to the act of creating intellectual nature in the first place.” This is found in Nicholas J. Healy’s “Henri de Lubac on Nature and Grace: A Note on Some Recent Contributions to the Debate,” published in *Communio: International Catholic Review* 35, no. 4 (Winter, 2008): 537.
- ⁶ Though it is not possible to discuss here, Rahner’s understanding of the universality of grace is always associated with the particular event of Jesus Christ.
- ⁷ This affirmation does not disregard the other social manifestations of grace which, for Haight, can include other charitable institutions, as well as other religious traditions.
- ⁸ “The church is . . . self-constituted by human freedom and in the power of the Spirit,” as found in Roger Haight’s “Ecclesiology from Below: Genesis of the Church,” published in *Theology Digest* 48, no. 4 Winter, 2001, 327.
- ⁹ Elsewhere, Haight (1979, 165) says, “for Christians, the event and whole life of Jesus constitute the primary tangible historical symbol, which identifies and objectifies consciousness of the content of the inner working of God’s spirit, or grace.”
- ¹⁰ The other four variations of comparative ecclesiology are: Constructing the foundations of ecclesial existence, dialogical analysis in ecumenical context, convergence on a common ecclesiology, and interreligious comparative theology of the church.
- ¹¹ Dialogue is a recurring theme in Haight’s writings. In fact, the last three of his five variations of comparative ecclesiology have dialogue as their underlying principle.
- ¹² Haight is also very concerned about dialogue with other religions and with the world.
- ¹³ Though some theologians today speak about the problem of a lack of accountability in the church, already in his 1976 article on the church, Haight brought up the same problem though he called it by a different name—the problem of *credibility*. These two terms are inherently connected. The lack of accountability brings lesser credibility to the church.
- ¹⁴ “So the marks of the Christian life are practical concern for those who are in need or in despair, and joy in the knowledge of the presence of God, who, though God might change in the ways in which the divine love is expressed, will never change in passionate care that all created souls will find a fulfillment of their unique personal potentialities, and joy in their conscious unity with the divine life” (Ward 2011, 54).

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The Sulu Sultanate: Foreign Relations, Contacts and Collaboration with other Asian Kingdoms¹

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the importance of founding the sultanate which served as a significant instrument for the propagation of Islam, trade and cultural development in the Philippines. It explores the sultanates' relationship with traders, missionaries and dwellers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, as well as the Hindu, Arabs and Chinese which shows the vitality of this far and away kingdom—the Sultanate of Sulu. The paper argues that while it remains as a debate whether or not Sulu and its sultanate was in a direct line of communication with the other kingdoms of the Old World, what is certain is that it was not totally isolated on matters pertaining to trade, missionary activities and politics particularly in the fourteenth century.

KEYWORDS: Datu, sultan, kutbah, slavery, Sulu sultanate

Pre-Sultanate Society: Early Social Classes and Community

Understanding the founding of Sulu Sultanate is a matter of understanding the social classes from the age of its conception. In Sulu genealogy, before the sultanate was established, the recognized leaders in the area around Buansa are composed of *datu*s, *tuans*, *sheikhs* and *orangkayas*. The datu was considered to have the highest political stature, followed by the tuan. The sheikh was a religious personage while the orangkaya was a commoner of means (Majul 1999, 378). This political hierarchy also reflected the social classes at that time.

The first class refers to datu, such as the descendants of Raja Sipad and Tuan Mashai'ka; the second class refers to the *sayk* ("shiek" in Arabic); and the third class includes orangkaya such as the Baklaya chiefs. According to Salleby (1963), the datu and orangkaya are considered to be of Malay origin, while *Raja* and *Baguinda* (Baginda) are Sanskrit. Baginda (as highest) was also referred to an emperor, while Raja to king.

In pre-sultanate times, Muslim merchants played a pivotal role in the success of Islamic penetration in Sulu. They established close relationships with the chiefs who had absolute authority over their followers. The latter obeyed whatever pleased their masters including conversion to Islam. These prompted the growth of larger communities in Sulu and the Manila Bay area. Trade contacts with the Asian neighbors further developed in the fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries (Jocano 2001, 151) including those in Butuan, Panay, Cebu, Leyte, Manila, Bicol, Laguna Lake, and Pangasinan. Following the growth of barangays in the sixteenth century, Islamic conversion eventually reached Maguindanao. Consequently, territories that were influenced by Islamic teachings and practices were formed under one political system—the Sultanate of Sulu.²

Formation of the Sultanate and the Introduction of Islam

Early scholars of Islam believed that Prophet Mohammad is said to be the first Sultan in Mecca and regarded as a messenger of God. This belief has become part of Islamic tradition, which also holds the belief that the sultan is God's representative on earth—a direct patrilineal descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. The sultan is believed to be the replacement of the prophet—a belief held by all countries under the sultanate system. As sultan, his behavior should ideally live up to the standards expected of a prophet (Kiefer 2003), who, as *nabi*, is God's messenger. Accordingly, everyone must be submissive to the sultan who inherits his power from God through Prophet Mohammad. Hence, the latter is considered as the first sultan based on religious context.

The word “sultan,” believed to have been first used in the Ottoman Empire, originated from the Arabic word which signifies power, ruler, or a person with authority over a given territory or dominion. The word “sultanate” refers to the institution or domain ruled by the sultan. Later, the idea of sultanate found itself in the eastern part of Southeast Asia such as Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. In the case of the Philippines, various sultanate kingdoms were formed in Mindanao, one of which was the Sultanate of Sulu.

The discovery of Tarsila, (or *Sarsilah*, *Salsilah*), associated with the Arabic word *Silsilah*, meaning chain or linkages, is an important source for the study of the Sulu Sultanate. It is the only primary written material pertaining entirely to the history of the Muslims of Mindanao or the Sultanate in particular, before the arrival of Spanish missionaries in Sulu (Salleby 1963). It provides for example, the *genealogical account* of royal family members of the Sultanate of Sulu. The Sulu genealogy shows the list of sultans of Sulu where the linkage between one sultan and another can be gleaned. As such, all succeeding sultans descended from the first.

The founding of Islam in Sulu contributed to the rise of the Sulu Sultanate. Without the Islamic religion, it would not have been possible for the sultanate to develop as an institution and as a system. The political basis of the sultanate follows the religious dogmas of Islam since the head of the sultanate is also the head of the Islamic religion in his dominion. All political, social and religious powers vested on the sultan are all covered in accordance with the Islamic law. The power and influence of the sultanate—be it political, trading and social—penetrated Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, China and as far as Saudi Arabia, and later, Britain, France, the Netherlands and Germany. At some point when the sultanate reached its political and economic vitality, it transformed Sulu as one of the most elegant kingdoms in Southeast Asia.

The expansion of the sultanate started along the coasts of Mindanao, spreading into some areas of the Visayas and Luzon (including Palawan). Consequently, Islam spread to other kingdoms in Luzon, as well as in Balayan, Bonbon, Cebu, Oton, and Mindoro. The tribes that accepted Islam were those from the Palawan group of islands and mainland Mindanao.

The ideology of the sultanate was based upon the Tausug understanding of Islamic political ideas unique to its own culture, and upon the conceptions of state and kingship common to Southeast Asia as these had filtered through Malay influence (Kiefer 2003, 12). The sultanate, then, is a form of government for the Tausug, who adheres to the law and worship God as an *ibadat* (in Arabic, *ibadat*, meaning duty of worship), in recognition of God's authority (Kiefer 2003, 13). For all Islamic believers, it is necessary to practice *ibadat*—a way of submission to Allah. Because the sultan is considered as a representation of God's authority, to be submissive to God requires that one must also be submissive to the sultan.

The Sulu chiefs were given the title *Paduka Batara*, which was based on the Ming Annals.⁴ As part of the divine authority of the sultan, the title *Maulana* signifies that the first ruler was part of the religious hierarchy (Majul 1999, 378). The sultan constitutes part of *dar ul-Islam*. As a sultan, he shall take command in times of war or invasion, and protect his kingdom at all cost.

It was believed that without the sultan there could have been no community, nor system nor a Muslim to acknowledge God. It was the sultan who served not just as a political symbol but also as religious icon at that time. In the same way that every Muslim gives importance to God, s/he must acknowledge the sultan accordingly.

The political organization in Sulu was mainly represented by the *barangay* system based on kinship, with each *barangay* operating independently of each other and where *barangay* chiefs were under the jurisdiction of the paramount chief (Jimenez 2004).³ The sultan resides either in Maimbung, Patikul or in Dungon in Tawi-Tawi where he controlled all the *datu*s.

The Muslims who settled in the various islands came to Jolo not only for trade but also for Islamic learning, an indication that the people of Sulu finally embraced Islam as a monotheistic religion.

The Sultan and His Powers

The sultan was considered as “the mother-father of all the people. He would care for all his subjects who are considered his children to be treated equally (sic)” (Tan 2005, 47).⁵ The sultan, therefore, exercised an almost absolute power over his subjects in all aspects of life as expressed in such specific terms as *huduldullah* (punishment imposed), *piagdatuan* (area of jurisdiction), *addat sarah* (customary law), *sapda sin nabi* (the prophet seal on him), *lambung sin Tuhan* (the shadow of God), and *ha lupah piagdatuan niya* (in the land he rules) (Tan 2005, 47).

On the other hand, it was also believed that the sultan was just a datu, like all the rest; however, he holds certain power to maintain order in his territory. Among other powers that he possessed, he had jurisdiction over domestic quarrels such as divorce, marriages, guardianship, dead man’s estate and crimes.

It was also widely practiced that the public would kiss the hand of the sultan as a way of showing homage or respect. Kissing his hand was a form of acknowledging the presence of the nabi or prophet. “It is obligatory for the sultan to nurture the people who know the *Koran* (*Kor’an/ Quar’an*) and who know the customary law” (Tan 2005, 47). The sultan was, therefore, recognized as an *alim* or a religious leader.

The sultan had the religious power called *barakat* (charismatic grace), “his words and his commands (*tita*) ascended to the heaven where they would be heard by the dead as well as the living” (Kiefer 2003, 14). This took the form of giving blessings and graces received from God. In which case, the sultan played the role of a messenger, or a substitute of Prophet Muhammad.

During Friday’s prayer, the *imam* (Muslim priest) would offer a prayer for the sultan. This prayer was included in *Kutba*, which was part of the Friday’s ritual of worship. The written Kutbah’s (or Kutba) of the imam was an important source of information in understanding the life and history of the earliest sultans in Sulu.

In accordance with the divine mandate, the sultan could not give or turn over the sovereignty of his territory: “No transfer or surrender of sovereignty

was possible from the Sultan to colonial power, except, to another Muslim” (Tan 2005, xxxiv).

All conversations or communications must pass to the *Julbahasa* or the interpreters commonly known as speakers before they reach the sultan. The sultan would be so inaccessible he would not even eat with the commoners (Kiefer 2003, 15-16).

In matters of protocol, it is the *quadi* who is tasked to carry the royal headgear and regalia. He would then approach and give these symbols of power to the sultan so that the latter could put them on. The *Datu Bendahara* would then proclaim the sultan but not without some prayers being said first by the *quadi* (Majul 1999, 394).

When the sultan would travel or perform state visit, he would do so by boat or on horseback. The sultan was escorted by an entourage of followers (*tindug*) covered by umbrellas. With him were “four bodyguards (*munari mukahil*) who normally stood next to the sultan in audience. They accompanied him on trips in complete fighting gear, including chain armor, guns, and swords. Ideally, they were younger datus who had houses near the palace” (Kiefer 2003, 16). Male slaves were evident in the palace of the sultan to ensure efficiency of serving him and the immediate members of his family.

The first wife (*asawa puun*) of the sultan was considered higher than the others, and ideally took the position as the headmistress of the house next to the sultan. She took care of the internal affairs of the house including the hosting of special ceremonies. Interestingly, many of the sultan’s concubines (*sandal*) were debt slaves; others were regular slaves who had been given to the sultan (Kiefer 2003, 16).

Samuel Tan (2005, 48) writes:

The sultan is free to give honor to anyone, even the small person, if his character and conduct exceed that of a big person; his conscience is always good and worthy emulation. It is proper that he should be included in any affair and be given respect because it is the will of God to express in the Koran *wa padhal na, bah dahum, ala’ pa din da rajat*. It means we shall increase half of what they are from half of what we are. That is why the Sultan can interpret the customary law *pa-alun limayasa* in the community he rules.

The actions and power of the sultan were basically guided by Islamic principles. The *imam muwallam halipa* was the highest religious title in the state commonly recognized by the sultanate—equivalent to the high priest. The same title was thought to be possessed by the sultan. He was considered as “the Caliphal representative within the community over which he ruled to establish the judgment of the Islamic religion and rightfully the one to govern according to customary law, all his subjects” (Tan 2005, 48). Pardoning was one of the special religious elements of the sultan. As such, he was providing a second chance to his subjects who committed sinful acts. It is a way of portraying God as forgiving.

The sultan has his local headmen appointed to the three lower ranks of the religious hierarchy: *Bilal*, *hatib*, and imam.

There was also the so-called regional or community headman that may be viewed as a petty sultan in his own domain. For some scholars, he is equivalent to a lesser sultan, while the real sultan was recognized as a powerful headman.

There was an important group of aristocrats serving as an advisory council of the sultan called the *wajil* or *wajir* (wazier). The *wajil* and the influential *datus* comprised the advisory assembly called the *Duma Bichara* (*Ruma Bichara*) or the house of speech. They literally spoke about potential problems, issues and suggestions including persuading both the sultan and other members of the *Duma Bichara* (Kiefer 2003, 16). The *Ruma Bichara*, the highest state council that was composed of the most powerful royal *datus*, had its share in the taxes imposed on all vessels trading in Jolo. There were the so-called *ulama* who supported the sultan for the centralization of power in order to ensure that political and military affairs were in good shape. The selection or election for the succession of the sultanate was participated by the *Ruma Bichara*, the *sharifs*, *panglimas*, chiefs of the interior of Jolo, and the most prestigious *orangkayas* (Majul 1999, 392).

Sara' (*shari'a* in Arabic) refers to laws, rules and regulations under the influence of the sultanate. This may refer to a law as a body of legal rules; it may also refer to the officials who enforced the law.

According to Tan (2005), “[i]t is obligatory for the sultan to order towards the attainment of good, to prevent the work of evil because it is the will of the prophet from the command of God *wah mulbil ma'ru wan ha ani munkal*

was bilalama asabaka in na dalika la min hadz mil umul which means ‘you order to do what is good oh! Muhammad and the omission of what is bad and submit to anything that happens to you.’”

With this power vested upon the sultan, he could command his subjects for the benefit of the entire populace under his jurisdiction. Grievances may be brought to the local headman or any other official. But it was the role of the sultan to mediate if internal feuding could no longer be resolved by a local headman. This indicated that the sultan was given the authority to decide on cases pertaining to his subjects within his dominion.

“The Sultan is the receiver of all his subjects’ concerns including all their business affairs from whatever origins and to take care of them so that they will not be hurt by people” (Tan 2005, 49). It is, therefore, accepted that public properties shall be under his jurisdiction as well.

Meanwhile, the financial resources of the sultanate may come in the form of *baytal-mal*, *sarakka*, piracy-slavery and trading. These are the various elements that in most cases supported the internal revenues of the sultanate. As in any other institutions or kingdoms, the sultanate would not survive without financial resources that are used to maintain order and implement policies and functions.

Baytal-mal refers to certain percentages on various fines such as bride wealth payment and divorce fees which were collected by the official in charge of the case. Normally, one-half of these fines and fees would be kept by the local headman, and the other half would either be given directly to the sultan or to a higher headman, who in turn would give a portion to the sultan. “Officials were not required to keep a record of fines, and there was no way for the sultan to know if his subordinates were cheating him or not” (Kiefer 2003, 24).

Additionally, the sultan’s religious status gave him the right and opportunity to receive gifts as a *sarakka* (voluntary alms). This may be in the form of money, food, cloth, gold or any other objects of great value (Kiefer 2003, 24).

The sultan is free to do anything he wishes for the community where he rules and even up to the outlying islands that recognize his sovereignty. Nobody can oppose him because he is conferred by the prophet as *asultano jullanda fiardi*, meaning that the sultan is the Shadow of God in the land that he rules (Tan 2005, 50).

The territories of the sultanate did not have well-defined boundaries. While its sovereignty was recognized beyond its boundaries, it was done only in relation to a center. This means that the power of the sultan was strong in the inner parts of Sulu and gradually decreased in farther places. The farther the place, the lesser was the chance for the power and influence of the sultan to be felt. In Basilan, for instance, it was mainly symbolic, and the Yakans recognized his authority insofar as they felt it vital to maintain their self-image as Muslims. His political power extended as far as North Borneo, Zamboanga, and coastal Basilan (Kiefer 2003, 27). However, such power was said to be symbolic in nature and did not provide a direct effect on the people.

The sultan held the right as the owner of all lands, extending to other lands according to the sound of his gong as he traveled. He was the direct owner, or the *tagamustak*, of all the lands around the capital.

The founding of the sultanate signifies that the royalty was as influential as the rest of its Southeast Asian counterparts. The sultan did not govern defined territories or population. Instead, he “exercised power based on individual ties with local leaders who, in turn, exercised power in similar but smaller segments of the Sultanate” (Salman 2001, 61). The sultan had charismatic charm that would attract members of his community in order to maintain power and prestige. Politicking was already evident at this point in time—from members of the royal family down to ordinary individuals, as their status would certainly affect their economic enterprise.

The sultan was then accepted as the supreme ruler of the land next to God as he makes the final decision, be it in the fields of politics, civil economics and civic affairs or on moral virtues.

Slavery, Trading, and Taxes in the Sultanate

The presence of slavery in the sultanate was said to be more of political than of religious obligation. It was institutionalized by the sultanate as part of its formative years. Its presence was somehow supported by various sultans because of its beneficial effects to maintain the latter’s supremacy.

Islamic scholars argue that the acceptance of Islam is an acceptance of slavery as provided by the Islamic law, the *Sharia' ah*. Slavery was recognized but on a very strict condition. Fatawa Islamiyah (2002, 5 & 97) states: "...[T]hat the basis of slavery is only through prisoners-of-war or captives obtained when fighting jihad against the disbelievers." However, it was also evident at that time that slavery was already institutionalized in other parts of Southeast Asia, including those in Europe. Slaves were either captives from war, or bought from slave market, from debts, and those convicted of crimes. Slave raids and slavery, including piracy, were practiced by various ethnic groups from the south. Unsurprisingly, they were also evident among Hindu kingdoms in Luzon and the Visayas, as part of the natural order of the social structure.

The practice of slavery and trading provided gigantic opportunity for the sultanate to maintain its operations. Slavery provided human power for various commercial marine centers. Slaves were sold as human capital and women were particularly used as offerings to visitors or as concubines of public officials in the sultanate. The expansion of trading activities of the sultanate provided international linkages. This resulted not in market competitions but higher incidences of slaveraids which were necessary at that time. The stiff market competition also brought to the fore awareness on foreign exchange services and on the production of goods and their role in the economy. Above all, it provided the opportunity to collect taxes from visiting trading vessels in the Sulu Sea.

As regard taxation, taxes collected were used for the maintenance of the sultanate and other necessities. A percentage of the taxes also went to the datus to feed their wives, children, relatives, and paid servants. Other than taxes, it was also doctrinal that their participation in the war in the form of jihad was obligatory to all Muslim to protect the sultanate and, above all, to preserve and protect Islamic religion.

Because of this, Sulu then was at its peak of trading glory. Commercial rivalries and the quest for political and strategic control of the lucrative marine trade encouraged the entry of Spanish, Dutch, French, German and

the British traders. This somehow shaped the political, economic and cultural image of the Sulu Sultanate in Southeast Asia.

The sultanate of Sulu dominated the marine trading activities in Sulu, extending as far as the Celebes Sea. The sultan had the sole authority over the islands including the nooks and corners where the mother of pearls were located. The datus did not have the authority on such activities unless granted by the sultan (Tan 2005, 100).⁶

Undeniably, the growth of the economy brought greater demands for labor which resulted in slavery. However, development and infrastructure projects in Sulu would soon decreased, leading to the weakening Sulu's position in local and international markets, as Zamboanga, Cebu and Manila provided better facilities.

Recorded Contacts with Brunei

In 1369, Raja Narawangsa sacked Brunei and took with him two giant pearls from the kingdom of Brunei (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 45). Decades later, Sultan Mohammad, the first Brunei Sultan, had a daughter but with no male heir. She married Sharif Ali, an Arab missionary from Saudi Arabia, who came to Brunei and established Islam. Sharif Ali's active participation in the internal and external affairs of the sultanate later made him the third Sultan of Brunei with the title Sultan Berkat.⁷ It was said that Sharif Ali (Sultan Berkat of Brunei) arrived in Sulu, converted the Hindus to Islam, and later died in Jolo (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 55-77).

The conversion of the Hindu Kingdoms to Islam in Sulu ended the reign of these kingdoms, leading to the eventual rise of the sultanate.⁸ From the founding of the Sultanate of Sulu, other sultanate kingdoms were also established such as in Maguindanao and even as far as Lanao.

When Sultan Bolkia conquered Sulu (as a continuation of Sharif Ali's mission) during his reign in 1485, he took the ruling family (Alawaddin, his two sons and daughter) to Brunei (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 80).⁹¹ It was during this ruling family's exile in Brunei that Sultan Bolkihah married Alawaddin's daughter.

Interestingly, it was also this daughter who told Sultan Bolkiah about the two pearls that her father possessed. The said pearls, taken from Brunei in 1369, were handed down to her father, Alawaddin, by her grandfather Sultan Shariful Hashim during his coronation. Upon knowing this, Sultan Bolkiah ordered the return of the pearls and promised them freedom in Brunei.

After the sultan died, his successor Sultan Abdul-kahar set up a viceroy (an *Adipati* or *Batara*), who was stationed in Sulu and who controlled the archipelago.

Recorded Contacts with Indonesia and Malaysia

The Malay tribes were grouped into distinct classes during Spanish colonization. These were the *Indios* (who have adopted the religion or faith and the manner of dressing of the Spaniards) and the Moros (Muslim converts) (Aguilar 1994, 4). In 876, thousands of these foreign merchants who were mostly Muslims flocked to Kalah in Malaysia (Majul 1999, 42) resulting in the economic growth in the region. Such economic flourishing was not only evident in Kalah but also in the west coast of Sumatra in Indonesia in 878. When Islam was established in Aceh in Sumatra (Indonesia), it signaled the rise of Islamic civilization in the region.

The Malays who came to the Philippines brought with them the cultural traditions and ways of life of the peoples of the Hindu-Malaysian states which were influenced by the Arab traders and missionaries (Zafra 1974, 5). Evidence also shows that there were trading activities that occurred in China with the presence of Arabs and Persians. Trading activities in the Visayas with Borneo did not clearly specify Muslim influence among the Visayans. Their main activities were purely commercial in nature.

Recorded Contacts with India

The desire for greater wealth such as gold, spices and resources led early Indian traders to explore Southeast Asia, bringing with them the concepts of religion, culture and governance. The Tamil Indians occupied Java and then took over

the Sulu trade and directed the trading activities as far as western Asia, making China as a gateway. Another group of Indians, the Champas, took over the Sulu trade, ushering in the coming of the Srivijayan Empire. Srivijaya became the most powerful empire in Southeast Asia. Incidentally, the first mention of the datu system as a title was recorded in this period (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 34-35).

The idea of datuship and rajaship in the Philippines came as early as the tenth century before the founding of the sultanate. Accounts of the popularity of datuship and rajaship were recorded in the seventeenth century. In fact, the datuship (Malay) co-existed simultaneously with the rajaship (Sanskrit) in the same period. Datu was an official Malay title meaning lord, or a powerful chief who was usually in charge of a region within the state. The title of datu was later used among the Sulu royalties to mean “prince.” Later, the Srivijayan seat of power in Borneo became the Bandjarmasin that introduced kingdoms in the Philippines, and with it came the rajaship and the datuship before the end of the tenth century (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 38).

Because of trade rivalry, a war erupted between the Javanese and the Srivijaya in the tenth century. The withdrawal of Srivijaya prompted the Philippines and Borneo to have a direct trade link with China. During the reign of the Madjapahit Empire from 1049 to 1369, there were no recorded direct contacts among Southeast Asian kingdoms with China. There was however, the establishment of the tributary states of Sulu (Soloo), a region near Lake Lanao and Salurong near Manila Bay.¹⁰

Recorded Contacts with China

Based on various Chinese annals, the Chinese traders came to the Philippines centuries before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. When settlements were established along the river beds of Mayumbung and Dungen in Tawi-Tawi, there was no mention of any kings except in areas ruled by chiefs based on the Tang Annals. The richness of Sulu, particularly in pearls, attracted the Bandjarmasin and the Champa traders. Indo-China, Ofunan (Cambodia) and Champa (South Vietnam) played an important role in the Sulu trade and the expansion of its commercialization of sea products.

The Ming Annals reported that in 982, an Arab vessel from *Mai* (Chinese name for the Philippines) went to China for trade purposes. This gave the Chinese the idea of exploring farther the Sulu Seas. “The exploration of the pearl beds was not open to foreigners in ancient times until again by social contract the sultan and the people granted the first royal permit to a Chinese trader who came to Sulu. The Chinese trader was given *surat katarangan* or certificate of right on the condition that fees were paid to the sultan” (Tan 2005, xxxvi).

In 1011, Ali Bakhti, an Arab Muslim, went on a tribute mission to China. Sulu sent a tribute mission to China as well in 1370, and Brunei sent one in 1371 to meet China’s demand for marine and forest products of Sulu and Borneo, respectively. The Chinese food market imported seaweed, shark fins, tortoise seashell, pearls and salt. The forest products included camphor, bird nest, pepper, clove bark, medicinal beetle nuts, rattan, bees wax and lumber.

A group of Chinese traders on board the *sampan* came to Sulu for trading purposes. They requested for as many mother pearls as possible. “This was the beginning of pearl extraction by the foreigner until nothing was left” (Tan 2005, 107).¹¹ There was no tribute mission coming from Java to China in 1293-1368. In 1368, the founder of the Ming dynasty sent Hung Wu to Java, Brunei and Sulu, asking these places to send tribute missions to China. At this time, the Madjapahit already became a tributary to China after the Mongol invasion in 1293.

The Ming Annals (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 42) reported that:

[The] three kings from Sulu went on a tribute mission to China in 1417—Paduka Batala (Sulu east king), Maja Raja Kolamating (Chinese for Kamaluddin) of the West Country, and Paduka Palabu from Duon (Chinese for Dungun) state in Tawi-Tawi... Kalamuddin was proclaimed by the emperor as king of the west (because he lived in the western part of Jolo islands).

Paduka Batala, king of east Sulu, got sick and died in China. During the Ching dynasty in 1731, his descendants requested to be naturalized. The emperor granted them the family names of *Wen* and *An* and they became Chinese citizens (Ututalum and Hedjazi 2002, 42-48).

At any rate, the last tribute to China was sent in 1424, marking the end of the Sulu kingdoms and the beginning of the sultanate.

Recorded Contacts with the Arabs

As early as the seventh century, Muslim Arabs and Persian missionaries introduced Islam in India (Gujerat and Bengal). By the eight century, they set up communities in Guangzhou (Canton) and other coastal cities where many Chinese were converted to Islam and were known as *hui*. Internal domestic conflict, including their foreign policy, made Arab trading activities difficult in China. The Arabs were forced to shift their trading network to Southeast Asia in 874. Another conflict in India in the tenth century prompted the influx of Arab traders in Southeast Asia.

Tuan Mashai'ka was believed to be the first messenger of Islam to arrive in southern Philippines. He married the daughter of a local chieftain, Rajah Sipad (George 1980, 16-17). A series of conversion drives took place, from Hinduism to Islam. Under the Islamic influence, the Sulu trade expanded as far as China, India, Arabian Peninsula and Morocco. Al Makhdum, whose full name was *Makhdum Ibrahim Al-Akbar Bin Malajuddin Al-Hussaini*, was the most prominent among all missionaries who made a strong conversion drive. Makhdum was also known as "sharif aw-iyā." He constructed the first and the oldest existing mosque in the Philippines, which is in Tubig Indangan, Simunul Island in Tawi-Tawi. The marker on the mosque and his tomb signify that he arrived in Sulu earlier than Abu Bakr.

The spread of Islam was made possible through trading activities, missionary outreach, marriages, alliances with the royal families and the conversion of local rulers. Contact with the Hindu, Chinese and Arab traders before the arrival of Spain made significant contributions to the development of Southeast Mindanao in the field of economics, governance and cultural enrichment.

Concluding Note

The formation of the sultanate coincided with the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia, particularly in Mindanao. Islamic dogmas influenced the beginning of the sultanate. Meanwhile, the trading activities, missionary outreach, marriages, alliances with the royal families and the conversion of the local rulers also contributed to the spread of Islam. The acceptance of the sultan as a representation of God's authority to rule over them helped shaped the institutionalization of the sultanate. Likewise, slavery became part of the natural order present in other parts of Southeast Asia. It provided gigantic opportunity for the maintenance of the sultanate which made it strong enough to resist foreign invasion particularly from Spain in the late fifteenth century. Sulu's early contacts with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and with the Hindu, Arab and Chinese traders strongly indicated its vitality in Southeast Asia.

Notes

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- ² No literature can best identify as to the number of men/constituents governed by each leader. By estimate, early scholars simply said they were composed of family members. Furthermore, they do not rule in a defined territory—whatever they see becomes part of their territory.
- ³ This was the analysis of Rizal on Morga's book written by Jose Victor Jimenez (2004).
- ⁴ Attached to the title of the Emperor of China in the fifteenth century was Paduka Batara.
- ⁵ Surat 19 – The sultan on his authority and prerogatives, see Samuel K. Tan (2005). *Surat Sug: Letters of sultanate of Sulu, vol. I*. National Historical Institute, Manila. 47-52.
- ⁶ Surat 40 – Paduka Mahasari Maulana Sultan Hadji Jamalul Kiram II to the Governor of Sulu, Major Hugh Scott, 1904 (21 Ramadan 1322). See Samuel K. Tan (2005). *Surat Sug: Letters of sultanate of Sulu, vol. I*. National Historical Institute, Manila. 100-101.

- ⁷ During the reign of Sultan Mohammad and Sultan Ahmad (the second Sultan of Brunei), Sharif Ali served.
- ⁸ The sultanate of Sulu was established in the fourteenth century covering 1300-1400 as crucial years. Other sources suggest 1401, 1405, or 1450.
- ⁹ Sultan Bolkiah of Brunei (1485-1524) was known as Nakhoda Ragam (the singing captain), Amir Ul-Umara (the prince of princes-Arabic) and Maharaja Diraja. Sultan Bolkiah married the daughter of Alawaddin, Princess Putri Laila Menchanei.
- ¹⁰ When Tuan Mashai'ka arrived in Sulu, the chief of Maimbung (Baranuns) was worshipping the Hindu gods. He married Iddah, the daughter of Rajah Sipad and this gave him the power to rule.
- ¹¹ Surat 44 – Sultan of Sulu Hadji Muhammad Jamalul Kiram II to the Civil Governor of Sulu, Major Scott 1904 (10-11 Shawwal 1322). See Samuel K. Tan (2005). *Surat Sug: Letters of sultanate of Sulu, vol. I*. National Historical Institute, Manila. 107-119.

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Philosophy and Nation Building: The Case of the Philippines

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ABSTRACT: The Philippines, being a divided nation, is still unable to catch up with the development of her Asian neighbors in the globalization process. Questions related to nationhood such as “Who is the Filipino?” and “Why is there a lack of patriotism among Filipino people?” remain despite the two historic events—the People Power I and II—showing the spirit of the Filipino. Filipino sociologist Randolph S. David defines nationhood as not a static concept based on territorial boundaries, common language, religion, shared history and cultural heritage but a project, a continuing work of creation that requires a solidarity that is based on national imaginary. This paper attempts to define the role of philosophy in the project of building the Filipino nation. It argues that the project of nationhood needs a philosophy that is recuperative, critical, and projective. The project entails a philosophy of history, a philosophy of education, and an ethics of discourse.

KEYWORDS: Filipino, nationhood, philosophy, critical, recuperative, projective

*The purpose of a fish trap is to catch fish, and when
the fish are caught, the trap is forgotten.*

*The purpose of a rabbit snare is to catch rabbits.
When the rabbits are caught, the snare is forgotten.*

*The purpose of words is to convey ideas.
When the ideas are grasped, the words are forgotten.*

*Where can I find a man who has forgotten words?
He is the one I would like to talk to.*

CHUANG TZU (MERTON 1995, 154)

The above narrative of Chuang Tzu is titled by Thomas Merton “Means and Ends.” In the story, the gatekeeper went through self-deprivation to express his sorrow over his father’s death. But then he became a professional mourner, becoming the model of all other mourners. Mourning has become an end in itself (Sen 2000, 14).

It is true also of culture; culture is also a means to achieve freedom. And these two issues—economic development and cultural identity—are central to most if not all of the countries comprising the Southeast Asian region today. It takes a philosophical perspective to see that economic development and cultural identity are not ends in themselves but means to realize a greater freedom, the individual freedom to choose the lifestyle one has reason to live for and the social freedom to build the nation.

This paper is inspired by the articles of Randolph S. David in his column “Public Lives” in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* now published in a book titled *Nation, self and citizenship: An invitation to Philippine sociology* with introductory essays by Josephine Dionisio, Gerardo Lanuza and Arnold Alamon (David 2004). It attempts to define the role of philosophy in the project of building the Filipino nation. David holds and advocates the view that nationhood is created, and shares Richard Rorty’s view of the pragmatism of philosophy and that its aim should be “to facilitate the conversation of cultures” (David 2007).

This view of philosophy as pragmatic and in dialogue with other cultures is not alien to the traditional philosophies of China, India, and Japan which philosophizing has always been intertwined with their history and religions. This is not the case with the Philippines which cannot boast of an ancient philosophical tradition and whose birth as a nation came as a rebellion against Catholic Spain and interrupted by the American and Japanese occupations. This lack of an ancient long tradition of philosophy and the struggle for nationhood pose both a challenge and responsibility to philosophical inquiry in the Philippines, in the face of a globalizing process that has made the country lag behind its Asian neighbors.

This paper is a modest contribution to this challenge and responsibility.

A Nation in Conflict

The Philippines today is a divided nation, mired by the cultures of poverty and corruption. The two are intertwined: Poverty breeds corruption, and corruption aggravates poverty.

Poverty stares us at the eyes: In the increasing number of children selling sampaguitas and rugs or knocking at car windows, in the low survival rate of children in school (for every 100 children entering Grade 1, only sixty-seven will complete elementary schooling), in the mushrooming of squatter colonies in urban areas, in families living under bridges and overpasses, in children and adults scavenging at garbage dumps, as well as in the recent Social Weather Station (SWS) survey of rising incidence of hunger (one in every five Filipino families suffered “involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months”) (Mercado 2007, A10). It does not help us to see this reality when former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo first reacted by saying that she too missed a meal sometimes because of heavy work, or when our government statistics told us that poverty incidence among Filipino families dropped by about 3 percentage points from 27.5 percent in 2000 to 25.7 percent in 2003 simply because they revised the old poverty threshold of PhP 13,823 per person per year of 2000 to PhP 11,605 in 2003 (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2005, A16). In a recent SWS survey (December 2013), an estimated 11.8 million Filipino families rated themselves as poor, while some 8.8 million families said they were “food-poor.” But David argues (2004, 94):

[P]overty is not defined by hunger alone. Being poor also means being abandoned as children while parents work abroad. It means having to grow up in neighborhoods infested by drug pushers and assorted criminals. It means going to sub-standard public schools run by underpaid and cynical teachers who can offer no hope. It means being formed by an escapist culture of cheap thrills, sexy tabloids and violent movies, with no vision of life of sublimity or beauty.

The country used to be second only to Japan in the postwar period in terms of capacity for economic growth. Today it is “nearly at the bottom of the heap in Southeast Asia,” with almost half of the population living in absolute poverty (David 2004, 99-100). David understands this poverty as

the product of two realities: First, the reality of economic underdevelopment and second, the reality of inequality. The first came as a result of the nation's "special" trade relationship with the United States in return for hosting the American bases. Because of her reliance on American patronage, the country lost the opportunity to modernize, and raise productivity to compete in the world market. The second is that whatever wealth is produced, it is the rich who capture most of it, "while the poor get poorer, or are completely excluded from the mainstream production process itself and from the market. Their dwindling share of the nation's product prevents them from transforming themselves into more productive members of society" (David 2004, 99).

Two cultures exist then in Philippine society today: 1) The culture of the elite and, 2) the culture of the *masa*, the masses, the poor, with the bulk of them living in the countryside. In the cities like Makati, they occupied the squatter colonies that surround tall buildings and mansions. A typical scene of these two cultures is a family fine dining in a restaurant while outside there are children rummaging for leftover food in the garbage drum.

The lack of job opportunities in the country has driven many Filipinos to work in other countries as domestic helpers, entertainers, nurses, drivers, laborers, technicians, and teachers. Although the remittance of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) has kept the economy floating and raised the value of the peso, the diaspora has its negative effects: Brain drain, low agricultural productivity, breakup of families, and children growing up without the guidance of either a mother or father and seeking guidance from their peers. The recent growing demand for Filipino nurses abroad is a case in point. Many colleges and universities offered nursing courses. Doctors were going back to school to get a nursing degree. With this trend, pretty soon hospitals will lack not only nurses but doctors.

The culture of poverty has brought crisis in the country's basic educational system. The poor go to public elementary and high schools where tuition is free, while the rich go to expensive private schools. "What ultimately spells the difference between the costly private schools and the free public schools is access to competent teachers, textbooks, classrooms and other learning resources"

(David 2004, 102). In a recent national examination for elementary school graduates, the average score was 57percent, way below the 75 percent passing score. Also statistics released by the Department of Education (DepEd) show that only six out of ten will complete Grade 6. The reason is again poverty, because while tuition is free the pupils will need money for transportation and school projects, and to feed their hungry stomachs.

For a long time, DepEd was known to be one of the government agencies riddled with corruption in the procurement of educational materials.

On the culture of corruption, the Philippines still remains one of the most corrupt countries in Asia. This is not to say that corruption is limited to the government, but with a corrupt government, people are more susceptible to corruption. In the published *Cross-sectoral study of corruption in the Philippines* by the Committee for the Evangelization of Culture of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus, “the wide range of responses on notions about corruption seemed to reflect both the pervasiveness of the phenomenon in the various sectors of the society as well as a lack of agreement on what constitute it” (2000, viii). According to one of the corruption surveys of the SWS, “one of every five Filipino managers say that ‘almost all’ firms in their line of business give bribes to win government contracts, while three of every five say they were asked for a bribe on at least one transaction last year” (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2007, A1).

But what is corruption? Definitions are grouped into three brackets: 1) The market-centered orientation looks at the corrupt official as behaving like a businessman making use of his office to maximize profit in the process of exchange and the balance between supply and demand; 2) The public-interest centered approach defines corruption as “an act of an office holder which favors one special section of the public that gives the rewards not legally provided for, thus, resulting in damage to the common interest of the general public” (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2007, 11); 3) The public-office centered perspective sees corruption as “an act which violates, or deviates from, the formal rules of a public office because of private-regarding gains” (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2007, 11-12). Corruption is differentiated from graft in that corruption is “the use of public office or the betrayal of public

trust for private gain,” while graft is “the acquisition of gain in a dishonest or questionable manner” (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2007, 12). Corruption can take many forms, such as bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, graft, speed money, pilferage, theft, embezzlement, falsification of records, kickbacks, influence-peddling, and campaign contributions (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2007, 13). We can add vote buying, vote padding (*dagdag-bawas*) and calling an election commissioner (*Hello Garci!*). In all these definitions of corruption, the common or public good is sacrificed in favor of one’s own personal gain, such as the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) indicating a lack of collective conscience.

Why this lack of a collective conscience among Filipinos? David traces it to the failure of the state and religion to forge a social solidarity due to their colonial origins. Unlike traditional societies like Thailand and Korea, where moral consensus first developed under a unifying religion and matured under a despotic ruler, Philippine society did not have any unifying religion or government to serve as moral authority. “Pre-Spanish moral communities were no bigger than clans,” and “progress to nationhood was many times intercepted by colonialism” (David 2004, 281). “Thus, even in contemporary times, we imagine ourselves foremost as brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers of our families instead of as citizens of a nation. We practice a high degree of responsibility for our family members even as we continue to remain indifferent to the social issues that affect one and all” (Alamon 2004, 266). Philippine society is, in the words of the historian Alfred McCoy, “an anarchy of families” (David 2004, 28).

The cultures of poverty and corruption are attributed to poor governance in the history of the Filipino nation. Leadership in the country is characterized by patronage instead of service to the people. Although the country was the first to establish a republic in Asia, democracy has remained in form but not in substance. “People regard their leaders as *patrons* who provide for their needs in exchange for their political loyalty during the elections” (Alamon 2004, 267). The political leader is known in the Filipino lexicon as the *trapo*, literally meaning “a piece of cloth used for cleaning,” but referring to the traditional politician (‘tra’ for ‘traditional’ and ‘po’ for ‘politician’) “who

uses wealth to buy power, exploits the poverty of his constituents through selective patronage, and treats public funds and facilities as if they were his own personal resources” (David 2004, 151).

A long history of poor governance has also brought about the Moro secessionist movement in the South, the communist rebellion in the countryside, the marginalization of ethnic minorities such as the Aetas of the Luzon and the *Lumads* of Mindanao, among others, and language rebellion of the Visayans.

The Moro rebellion in Southern Mindanao cannot be attributed simplistically to religious differences between Christians and Muslims, nor to ethnic superiority of Christians over Muslims, for sometimes Filipinos do draw from the richness of Moro culture to define the roots of their pre-colonial being (David 2004, 73). No doubt, land ownership is an essential issue in the conflict as decades ago Filipinos from the North settled in the ‘Land of Promise’ that was Mindanao, tilting and titling lands, displacing their inhabitants that were the Muslims and lumads (non-Muslim natives). “The Moros have not forgotten their struggles against outsiders because they have always resisted being ruled by others. Filipinos on the other hand have generally forgotten that they became Filipinos in the context of colonial subjugation” (David 2004, 73). Post-colonial governments continued the colonial masters’ paradigm of integration and pacification using military force. The Moros for centuries were depicted as pirates, kidnappers, bandits, and untrustworthy people inclined to run amuck when provoked. Even the media today would oftentimes add the word “Muslim” to a robber or criminal when he is one but not the word “Christian” to a Christian lawbreaker. This stereotyping of the Moros grows out of a “system of governance that conforms only to the interests and nuances of the largely lowland Christian population” (Montalvan 2007):

The Moro problem is not a problem of political integration and social assimilation. It is rooted in our failure to recognize difference, and to multiply those opportunities in which we can mutually think of one another as sharing similar intentions in a land that by accident we commonly inhabit. This is a slow painstaking process. We cannot begin to solve the problem by self-

righteously asserting the inviolability of our constitution and proving this by the might of our army. Our constitution has not protected or benefited the Moros; they are right to reject it. And no army can end this problem unless it is prepared to commit genocide (David 2004, 74-75).

The long protracted rebellion of the leftist New People's Army (NPA) can also be blamed on the government for her failure to promote social justice in the country. When Corazon Aquino became president, she granted amnesty to those who would give up their arms and this paved the way for a new constitution that allow leftist parties to become members of Congress. But the continued killings of leftist leaders and of anti-administration media men, particularly during the previous administration, brought the country back to the martial law years of Ferdinand Marcos.

The problem of the Aetas is again due to poor governance. The Aetas were the original settlers of the archipelago, long before the Malay immigrants, who were pushed back to the mountains from their coastline and river dwellings. There was even a time that they were charging the Malays taxes in kind for the use of the land. The American colonial government designated a reservation area for them at the foot of Mt. Pinatubo. But since the 1960s loggers have intruded into their protected area. The Philippine government simply created an understaffed and underfunded office, the Office for Northern Cultural Communities (ONCC), to do away with the problem. When Mt. Pinatubo erupted, the Aetas descended from their dwelling and roamed the streets of Manila, begging. And during the Christmas holiday season, they can be seen again in the streets of Manila. The Aetas "bring up the past. They interrogate our values. And their mute presence comes as a question: (W)ho owns this country?" (David 2004, 68). Are not the Aetas also Filipinos?

Nowhere is the question of Filipino identity more pronounced than in the issue of the national language. The Constitution mandates the establishment of national language commission to develop, propagate, and preserve the Filipino and other languages. The reality is that this has never been done, and the Filipino language continues to be Tagalog-based, eliciting a kind of language rebellion from the people in the South who insist on using their own regional language. Aggravating the problem is the executive order of former

President Macapagal Arroyo mandating the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools to improve the English proficiency of Filipinos, as well as to answer to the demands of globalization, in particular to make them qualified for jobs in call centers.

Regionalism rather than nationalism prevails in the associations of Filipinos abroad: Various Filipino associations abroad are based on regions such as Bicolanos, Cebuanos, Ilongos, etc. A Filipino relates more to his region than to the nation.

This is not to say, however, that Filipinos are bereft of the spirit of patriotism. The two People Power revolutions in 1986 and 2001 were shining moments of the Filipinos' love for country, rising above self, family, region, religion, and ethnicity. The challenge is to make this a reality in the daily lives of the Filipinos. And this involves the notion of nationhood as a creation.

Nation Building as a Project

Following Ernest Gellner's view, David holds that "the nation is neither a destiny nor an end in itself but rather a continuing work of creation for the fulfillment of individual happiness" (Dionisio 2004, 4). Gellner opposes the view that the nationhood is a fundamental aspect of human organization and is as old as human society itself (Dionisio 2004, 21). For him, the concept of nation emerged only in the late 1800s in the transformation of Europe into a modern industrialized society. The industrial economy with its new division of labor required a mobile and continuously changing workforce with new set of skills that can no longer be learned at home or in the parish. Thus a secular educational system was established with standardized curriculum and a common language for instruction. People from different places with diverse cultures became unified under this new system of education and division of labor, their differences suppressed by the state. "Nation building became a euphemism for homogenization. The claim of most modern states that they constitute a unified nation with their common boundaries can, therefore, be seen as a myth that became congenial to solidifying the emerging nation-states in Europe" (Dionisio 2004, 11). A nation therefore is not really

founded on some inherent common characteristic of a group of people but simply “the organization of human groups into a large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units” (Dionisio 2004, 11).

In the case of the colonies like the Philippines, the myth of nationalism served as an inspiration in the struggle for liberation. But after independence was finally won, the differences resurfaced and gave birth to new conflicts. Franz Fanon thus argues against the notion that nationhood is based on factors like common language, shared history or cultural heritage (Dionisio 2004, 12). In the case of the Philippines, the Filipino nation was partly an invention of European-educated Filipino intellectuals who, inspired by the upheavals in Europe in the 1800s, used the native language in print media to disseminate the narrative of a people denied of their right to national identity. In fact, the national hero Dr. Jose Rizal, who could speak several languages, likened the Filipino who can not speak his own native language to a stale fish. But after the revolutionaries won the war against Spain, the Americans took over the islands, followed by the Japanese. Filipino nationalists fought against the Americans, and later allied with them against the Japanese, which victory tied the country to protect American investments in the country and to keep the military bases for a long time. Thus, in the 1970s, nationalism took the form of anti-imperialism and factions soon surfaced in the categories of “leftist,” “rightist,” “moderate,” “left of center,” “right of center,” etc., until then President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972. The manner in which Filipinos surrendered their freedom to the authoritarian rule of Marcos and bearing with it for fourteen years showed a “romanticized view of democracy, forgetting the simple truth that the presumed advantages of democracy may not be obvious to—because they are not objectively felt by—the vast majority of the people. A people besieged by extreme poverty, persistent injustice, and lack of social mobility will always feel it has nothing to lose by betting on a forceful figure who presents himself as a social reformer” (David 2004, 160).

Murtada Mutahhri shares Fanon’s view that a shared history, a common language or cultural heritage are not essential elements of national integration. “At the root of nationalism...is a people’s sense of common suffering combined with a shared dream for an alternative future” (Dionisio 2004, 12). This sense

of common suffering burst into the People Power of 1986, but its euphoria did not last long enough to inspire successive administrations to provide structures to alleviate poverty and curb corruption. And when corruption epitomized itself in the presidency of Joseph Estrada, People Power rose again to unify the people. But after that, nothing has changed; poverty continues to drive increasingly Filipinos away from their home to other countries in search for jobs, and the Muslim conflict in Mindanao remains unresolved. Dionisio (2004, 6) further says “that solidarity based on national identity remains weak in the Philippines is probably best articulated by the state’s failure to provide its citizens with an acceptable reason to remain Filipino.” On the part of the Filipino citizens is the lack of a “shared vision for an alternative future.”

Nationalism or patriotism “need not be grounded on primordial ties based on a shared cultural heritage or ethnic origin. One need not look for a true Filipino identity, it is enough to invent one” (Dionisio, 7). Nationhood is created, a project of a people who dream of an alternative future. Citing Benedict Anderson, Dionisio (2004, 7) insists that “a nation is an imagined community because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community.”

This project of creating a nation is even more imperative in the face of the homogenizing and alienating tendencies of globalization. The state must seize this project by exercising creative and effective governance, “ensuring that the breakneck pace of globalization will not worsen the already pathetic quality of life of most Filipinos” (Dionisio 2004, 8). This will require the concerted efforts of the government, the business sector, and civil society to provide the basic necessities of the people so that the “Filipino” will not be synonymous with “the maid in European or Singaporean homes, a prostitute or a dancer in Japan, and an underpaid seaman in a foreign cargo-boat” (David 2004, 78). In the face of the homogenization of culture of globalization, the project challenges us to refashion nationhood “away from the arrogance of ethnocentrism,” to embrace cultural diversity (Dionisio 2004, 13).

The project of nationhood entails a rereading of the nation’s past with the view of creating the nation’s destiny. “A nation needs to continuously redescribe

its historical milestones as it attempts to use history as a guide to the present” (Dionisio 2004, 7). For example, the historian Ambeth Ocampo shares the different interpretations he went through of the coming of Ferdinand Magellan to the islands in 1521. As a boy, he was taught that “Magellan discovered the Philippines,” and “even thought that the villains in the story were the half-naked savages led by Lapu-Lapu, who killed the first tourist to our shores” (Ocampo 2009, 8). Later, he was corrected by the historian Gregorio Zaide: “Magellan did not discover the Philippines, he merely ‘rediscovered’ it—for how can he discover a place that already had people in it?” (Ocampo 2009, 8). In college, he met another historian Teodoro A. Agoncillo who disagreed with the word “rediscovered”—“Did the Philippines disappear under the sea and come up again for Magellan to re-discover it? How can you re-discover what is not lost?” (Ocampo 2009, 8). Now Ambeth Ocampo, in writing his own version of Philippine history, will simply say that “Magellan arrived in the Philippines in 1521.” Our reading into the nation’s history should therefore be instructive in the making of the nation.

The project of building a nation also entails a new dealing with the state. The state should “welcome the possibility that individual citizens may nurture multiple nationalisms,” recognizing “the right of ethnic groups to choose, assert, and enrich their own culture and identity thus enabling them to chart their own development as a people” (Dionisio 2004, 13). Cultural diversity, however, “can thrive more fruitfully in a situation where everyone regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation is able to collect economic and political benefits from the state” (Dionisio 2004, 14). Nationhood requires accountability on the part of the state, that it should “put in place structures that would ensure sustained productive and meaningful employment for an increasing population... A state without a coherent plan and a deliberate attempt to develop a manufacturing and industrial sector, watches passively as its cities become mere service centers for foreign companies, where jobs are limited, temporary, and unstable” (Dionisio 2004, 14).

Building a nation requires a constant reinvention of its institutions. The first institution that needs to be reinvented is the family. The family needs to be reoriented through the retelling of stories that “expands its concept of kin,

and to widen the mantle of its nurturing to include those who are deprived, abandoned, or exploited” (Dionisio 2004, 16).

Next to be reinvented is the educational system of the nation, for education is the nation’s investment into the future. The present basic education system of the Philippines is evidently inadequate to enable the citizens to participate meaningfully in the building of the nation. Basic skills of reading, writing, and doing arithmetic need to be ensured with the cooperation of the business sector and civil society. “Without these skills, an individual is prone to victimization and exploitation” (Dionisio 2004, 16). In the secondary level, the teaching of values education should not be a separate subject but integrated into the different subjects, and the teaching of the nation’s history should not be just informative but formative, inculcating the value of patriotism. In the tertiary level, “universities must be able to assert themselves in this context by cultivating a type of liberal education that would ‘enlarge the horizons and explore utopias,’ as well as inspire self-reflection and hope in every generation... The state needs to invest in the education of young intellectuals to whom it may bequeath the task of nationhood” (Dionisio 2004, 16).

The project of nation building requires the rebuilding of political institutions to make democracy work in the concrete lives of the people. This means democratizing our political institutions (such as the Commission on Elections) so that there can be more meaningful participation in decision-making for the majority of the people. “An elitist electoral system that screens out the participation of the majority in the political arena by focusing on personalities and material capabilities should be replaced by one that focuses on educational campaigns and a debate on issues” (Dionisio 2004, 17).

Together with the rebuilding of political institutions is the overhauling of economic institutions. The country is not lacking in natural resources but it remains poor because they have not been harnessed for the majority but exploited for the private interests of the few. Agricultural development must go hand in hand with industrialization. And private corporations must embark on corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.

The power of the media in nation building cannot be underestimated. “Media is a public trust,” and must be “made conscious of their responsibility towards

the public,” which is “to educate their viewers by providing them with carefully thought-out and sensitive presentations” (Dionisio 2004, 19). They need to be more imaginative, resisting stereotyping and sensationalism in presenting the truth and to contribute to the concept of “human” and “human rights” that is more inclusive. Instead of producing more escapist entertainment “media should refocus their attention to the task of nationhood, and to its mission of rewriting a fitting narrative for the Filipino nation” (Dionisio 2004, 19).

Religious institutions too can contribute to the task of building the nation. The present Philippine Constitution states the inviolability of the separation of church and state, and allows the free exercise of one’s belief and worship. But this culture of pluralism and tolerance is still very much in the process of formation in the country (David 2004, 133). “A Filipino nation that is more respectful of ‘otherness’ should be able to embrace a variety of beliefs” (Dionisio 2004, 19). With respect to religious practices, these must be seen as expressions of one’s spirituality but which “syncretically weave their unique fabric from every available material,” and are therefore necessarily historical, and hence, artifacts of culture. Our religious practices should be made meaningful to the nation, because “with faith comes the responsibility to employ reason in constantly reassessing even our most sacred beliefs and practices. Deepening our faith means ‘to divorce religiosity from habit, (and) to reinvent the Church as a valuable human institution in an evolving society’” (Dionisio 2004, 19).

Dionisio (2004, 12) sums up this project of nationhood in the following words:

Our generation is faced with the challenge to reinvent a narrative of the nation that is conscious of the contingency of its solidarity as a nation, thus creating a nation that is less demanding and more tolerant. The task of nationhood in this sense is to allow the flourishing of individuals who nurture varying affinities and identities, and by accident, are forced to live together in a common space and time. The creative faculties of this generation need to be harnessed toward building a nation where no one is a foreigner, where the link between nation and individual can be mediated by other forms of solidarity, and whose collective hatred would only be directed towards the abhorrence of war. Nationhood should be able to recognize,

tolerate, respect, and protect affinities and identities that may be based on race and ethnicity, gender, and class. Nationhood is not an end in itself. It is a continuing process of broadening the limits of our imagined community.

Philosophy and Building the Filipino Nation

Given this enormous task of building the Filipino nation, what then is the role of philosophy in such a project?

The first task of philosophy, I believe, is *recuperative*. To create a nation is to go back to the nation's past, to reread, reinterpret, and rewrite the narrative(s). Doing history, however, presupposes a philosophy of history. The historian organizes his knowledge of the past not “independently of the framework of his own life-practice [*Lebenspraxis*]” (Habermas 1977, 350). The life-practice of the historian is a horizon of expectations, the goal-settings, “in the light of which every relevant event can in principle be described as completely as possible for the practically effective self-understanding of a social life-world” (Habermas 1977, 350). A philosophy of history is a reflection of the past in the anticipation of the future to understand the present. “Without philosophy of history, no historical event can be completely represented” (Habermas 1977, 349).

This recuperative task of philosophy also applies to tradition, not only to religious practices but more importantly to the traditional values of the nation. Philosophy must reflect on what traditional values of the Filipinos can be tapped for nation building. A good example that comes to mind is the value of *bayanihan*, in the past symbolized in Filipinos carrying the *nipa* house of their neighbor for transfer. Today, the Couples of Christ (CFC) has successfully carried this out in the *Gawad Kalinga 777* Project,² mobilizing Filipinos in the country and overseas and foreigners to build homes for the homeless and to provide livelihood and values education to their families.

David cites Nietzsche's three uses of history that correspond to three kinds of history: *Monumental, antiquarian, and critical* (David 2004, 24-26). History is remembering the past. We remember the greatness of past generation's struggle for independence to inspire us in our present struggles.

But this can be mythified, and this is where antiquarian history is used to counter it. But antiquarian history can also result in mummification, which is why, critical history is important. Critical history “demands the ability to repudiate institutions, an entire way of life inherited from the past, a first nature given to us by tradition—in the interest of a new discipline that allows us to free ourselves from that which shackles us” (David 2004, 25-26).

This brings us to what I believe is the second task of philosophy in nation building—*critical*. Nation building requires a new dealing with the state, that it be responsive to the basic needs of the people. Philosophy acts as a critique to the state’s policies and laws, evaluating them in the light of what is ethical (what is good for the community) and what is moral (what is just for all).³ It criticizes the state’s authoritarian tendencies, reexamining the meaning of democracy in the context of a pluralistic society. In concrete, philosophical reflection is needed on the state’s notion of property, landed or intellectual, in view of what best benefits the poor.

Philosophical reflection is intrinsically self-reflective; it criticizes not only the other but one’s own self, both the personal and the social or institutional. On the personal, philosophical reflection asks of oneself, “What have I done to alleviate poverty or curb corruption?” This brings us to the relevance of the “ethics of the face” or the “responsibility for the Other” of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. What do I do when a street kid knocks on my car window? Knock back? David says, “Since reading Levinas, I have found it impossible to do that and not morally acknowledge the presence of faces peering through the closed windows of cars on the streets of Manila” (David 2004, 338).

On the social level, reinventing our institutions for nation building entails self-critiquing our family values, educational system, political institutions, economic institutions, the media, the church we belong to, and our faith. Self-reflexivity asks the questions: Is my family a closed one, seeking the interest only of the clan, or open, embracing other destitute families? Is my institution responsive to the other? Philosophy examines the virtue of tolerance: Is it simply a passive acceptance of the other’s belief and conviction, or a celebration of difference?

Philosophy in nation building, however, must not contend itself only with recollecting and critiquing; it must also be *projective* of the future. It must offer alternatives ways of living together, of new forms of solidarity, of—in the philosophy of Richard Rorty—“a better society where there is less cruelty, pain and humiliation; where democratic subjects are given as much space to practice their idiosyncratic and sublime practices” (Alamon 2004, 277). Philosophy as projective is a philosophy of hope in the way that Gabriel Marcel (1951) speaks of hope as creative, intersubjective, and transcendent. Hope is creative in the sense that the person will not fall into cynicism, inaction, or despair but will “find a way.” Hope is intersubjective and transcendent because hope expresses itself authentically in “I hope in Thee for us.” Hope cannot be separated from love or compassion or generosity and from a belief in a Transcendent.

These three simultaneous roles of philosophy must find their way in the philosophy of education of our schools, private or public; in the mission-vision statements of business corporations and civil societies, and in religious institutions as well. In the public sphere of Philippine society, they take the form of a discourse ethics of Habermas, where social issues are discussed, argued, validated with the aim of reaching a consensus, using the force of the better argument in place of arms.

In the end, the role of philosophy in nation building is “to ground our national identity in universal values that are shared by the rest of the human community” (David 2004, 79). Values such as honesty, integrity, transparency, courage, selflessness or generosity, and love of country.

With the examples of the martyred nationalist Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino and the icon of the first People Power revolution Corazon “Cory” Aquino, and with the *Daang Matuwid* doctrine of the younger Aquino, President Noynoy or “PNoy,” we refuse to give up hope and commit ourselves to building a nation. Together we can make this nation Filipino, where every citizen is proud to be Filipino.

Notes

- ¹ This paper was presented at the Philosophers' Rally held on 15 February 2014 at the Ateneo de Davao University.
- ² *Gawad Kalinga* means "Giving Care." It aims to build 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in seven years.
- ³ The distinction is that of Jürgen Habermas in his work "On the Pragmatic, the Ethical, and the Moral Employments of Practical Reason," published in *Justification and application, remarks on discourse ethics* (The MIT Press, 1993), 1-17.

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A Historico-Biblical Appraisal of Christian Religion vis-à-vis Violence: The Nigerian Christians' Experience

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ABSTRACT: Some scholars count Christianity as one of the violent religions. Their evaluation is often based on the violent texts in the bible, the Crusades and the Inquisitions of the Medieval Age. Scholars of this opinion do not bother much about the wars some Islamic groups, like Boko Haram in Nigeria, wage on Christians. In Nigeria, many lives and properties have been lost due to these horrendous onslaughts. This article establishes that Christianity is a 'pacific' religion which preaches and practices 'love of enemies.' The Crusades and the Inquisitions were only a stage in the development of the true Christian doctrine on war and violence, which has been long overtaken by the modern teaching. This paper will attempt to give some recommendations that could lead to a better *rapprochement* between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and worldwide.

KEYWORDS: Violence-war, Christians, Muslims, Boko Haram, dialogue

Introduction

Some scholars and thinkers regard Christianity as one of the religions that support violence, judging from the Crusades and the Inquisitions of the Medieval Age, some violent biblical texts and some Christian acts of self-defense. With the increasing violence in the world today, perpetrated mainly by some Islamic fundamentalists, with Nigeria as a case study, some have strongly argued that Christians should take up arms and fight the terrorists. For them, the panacea to this unending unprovoked violence is the waging of a

full-scale war by the Christians against these extremists. In retrospect, they find justification for this proposal in the Crusades and the Inquisitions.

This paper argues that Christianity is primordially and essentially a nonviolent religion. Various acts of violence seen in Christianity both in the past and the present time are aberrations influenced by sociocultural and political factors, but not a constitutive part of Christianity. There is always a development in, and reinterpretation of, the faith and moral doctrines of the church, for the spirit is always present to lead her to the complete truth. The Crusades and Inquisitions could be regarded as the church's previous understanding of self-defense, carried out with goodwill at that time. They should be seen as 'a child of necessity,' not a model for the Christian faith. Given the baleful terrestrial limitations that hinder Christianity from blossoming to its fullness that is substantively and essentially 'pacific,' tinges of violence could still be seen in Christianity. But Christian theology universally considers these as distortions, and abhors them.

As regard the present Islamic fundamentalists' terrorism against the Christians in Nigeria, this paper argues further that the Christians' declaring war on Muslims, or on any of its sects, may not be apt for checking the present aggressions and is also not an authentic expression of the Christian faith to the world. Resorting to violence will instead create more difficult and deeper problems. This paper rather suggests some nonviolent solutions that could promote peace. However, this paper does not rule out the legitimacy of self-defense.

Pre-Constantine Christian Pacifism: A Manifestation of Faith

Robert Brown (1987, 18) describes the Christian attitude toward violence in the Early Age as 'pacific.' The early Christians were indeed known for their pacifism, following the example of Christ, who suffered voluntarily for the sake of the salvation of humankind (1 Pet 4:13). One gains merit, not when one suffers violence for one's wrongdoing, but when one is punished for doing one's duty. Christ did nothing wrong, but suffered violence, leaving an example for his followers (1 Pet 2:20-22). In fact, Jesus' act that finally resulted in his death was the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (John

11:45:54). By suffering violence patiently, Jesus manifested total faith and trust in, and total obedience to, ‘the Father who sent him’ (John 12:49). With this disposition, the disciples were able to endure all kinds of violence against them. Peter and John were warned several times and banned from preaching; and they suffered violence in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:19; 5:29). So did Paul and his companions on various occasions (Acts 16:19-24; 18:12-13; 21:30-31). The disciples, likewise, suffered at the hand of Herod (Acts 12:1-4).

In the early centuries, Christians never participated in battles. In fact, some soldier-converts, like Marcellus of Tangier (ca. 250-298) and Maximilian of Tebessa (now Algeria, 274-295) were martyred because, as Christians, they renounced military service on the ground that the military oath of loyalty to Caesar was a form of idolatry and that the shedding of blood was unchristian (Fahlbusch 2005; cf. Alston 1995, 149). The fathers of the church continued in the pacifism of the early Christians. Osborn explains: “Tertullian rejects all violence, even killing by soldiers or by courts of law, any form of abortion, and even attendance at the amphitheatre” (Osborn 2003, 230). In the same vein, Nicholson notes that though some third century Christians took part in wars, Tertullian did not approve of it because God’s command to ‘shed no blood’ takes priority over Paul’s instruction to obey legitimate civil authorities; and moreover, Christ told Peter to sheath the sword (Nicholson 2004, 24). Tertullian affirmed that the blood of the martyrs was, indeed, the seed of the church. For Origen, Christians should not desire to eliminate their enemies. Clement of Alexandria instructed Christians not to correct the delinquencies of sins with violence. With this, Christian pacifism lasted until the era of Constantine.

A Paradigm Shift Due to Sociopolitical Influence

When the Roman Emperor Constantine I converted to Christianity in 313, there was a paradigm shift in the attitude of Christianity toward violence. Although he was baptised only when he was dying, Constantine changed the fortunes of the church. He narrated that, before the battle that

earned him the throne, he saw Christ in a vision, instructing him to imprint his soldiers' shields with the *Chi-Rho* symbol of Christ. Eusebius narrated that Constantine and his soldiers actually saw a luminous cross and heard a voice saying: "In this sign you shall conquer" (Bokenkotter 1990, 38). This was a convincing sign that it was Christ who caused his victory. This conviction changed the whole dynamics of the Christian-emperor or church-state relationship. Constantine stopped the persecution of Christians, promoted Christian ideals and aspirations, suppressed paganism and made Christianity the state religion. Thus, a new era of Christianity in Europe began. Inasmuch as this development had its positive effects in the life of the church, its negative consequences are equally glaring. A marriage of convenience occurred between the church and the state, which was sometimes detrimental to the church's values in that the emperor began to interfere in the affairs of the church. In which case, Christians seemed to have two masters: Christ and the emperor. Consequently, the emperor exploited the church for political purposes (Bokenkotter 1990, 39).

Christians officially began to serve in the state army. As a result, the rationalization, institutionalization and endorsement of violence came into play. The pacifism of Christendom ended. Rene Girard (1989, 204) opines that Christians began to persecute non-Christians at this period as they were once persecuted (cf. Gill 2006, 194). Theologians like Augustine (354-430) leaned on the Aristotelian and Ciceronian philosophical ideas of war to propound a *just war* theology. Though war is partly evil, Aristotle praised the professional soldiers who exhibited bravery in defence of their country; and those who fall, fall for the act of peace (Aristotle 1925).

Augustine provided the basic Christian teaching on just war. He argued that John the Baptist would have enjoined the soldiers who sought advice from him (Luke 3:14) to give up soldiering, if war was *in toto* bad. Thomas Aquinas later referred to this argument (cf. Augustine 2002 and Aquinas 1981; Diamond 2008, 74). Confronted by the biblical texts that prohibit resistance or order the turning of the other cheek (for example, Matt 5:39-41), Augustine referred to the internal disposition of how one ought to be

meek even while apportioning punishment. According to Jordan (2006, 40), there are also cases where Jesus himself, and later his disciples, interacted with soldiers without condemning their profession, but portrayed them as righteous (cf. Matt 8:5-13; Acts 10:1-33). As for Augustine, he believes that *non prohibet militia, sed malitia* (war is not prohibited but evil). So he justified the Old Testament violence as an endeavour to establish peace and order by punishing offenders. There is always the need for vindication when justice is violated. Justice due to God and human beings are based on natural law and divine positive laws. Hence, the denial of the freedom of worship can trigger a just war.

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), a protagonist of the second Crusade, fortified Augustine's argument, stating that when there is no other way to forestall the heathens' persecution and harassment of Christians, it is better to annihilate them, lest the rod of sinners squashes the lot of the just (Bernard 2000). At the Council of Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II termed certain wars not only *bellum iustum* (just war) but *bellum sacrum* (holy war). According to Claster (2009, xvii-xviii) and Caner and Caner (2004), this was a "remarkable transformation in the ideology of war," for there is a shift from seeking justification for war to elevating war to something spiritually and intrinsically beneficial. However, it should be remembered that it is the term 'holy war' that is new, not the idea. The idea of *bellum sacrum* predates Christianity (cf. 1&2 Samuel and Kings). So, with the term 'holy war,' Christian attitudes with respect to violence changed drastically. Instead of a knight obtaining remission for his sins by abandoning his arms, he was then called to obtain forgiveness of his sins by wielding his sword vigorously for the faith in battlefields (Patrick 1978, 602-603).

Building on the foundation of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) stipulated the conditions for a just war: It must be declared by a legitimate authority (Rom. 13:4); it must be for a just cause; and it must be fought with a good intention (cf. Aquinas 1981 and Augustine 2003). The Crusades and the Inquisitions should be seen in this backdrop.

The Era of Crusades and Inquisitions

Jerusalem fell to the Muslims in 638, but Christian pilgrimages continued unhindered until the eleventh century when the Seljuk Turks controlled Jerusalem and killed over 3,000 Christians, prompting Pope Urban II to declare a holy war on the infidels at the Council of Clermont in France on the 27th November 1095 (Walker et. al 1985, 284). This military campaign against the enemies was known as ‘Crusade’ (from the Latin *crux*, cross). The Pope’s declaration sounded like the present day Islamic *Fatwa*, the end phrase of which (“God wills it”) became the battlecry of the Crusaders, and a red cross their emblem. The Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099. The description of this first Crusade is horrendous and gruesome for, according to Williston Walker’s (1985, 290) account, “...[I]n the temple and portico of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.” Between 1095 and 1291, there were seven major Crusades, the effect of which Walker (1985, 290) describes as follows:

Viewed in the light of their original purpose, the Crusades were failures. They made no permanent conquests of the Holy Land. They did not retard the advance of Islam. Far from aiding the Eastern Empire, they hastened its disintegration. They also revealed the continuing inability of Latin Christians to understand Greek Christians, and they hardened the schism between them. They fostered a harsh intolerance between Muslims and Christians, where before there had been a measure of mutual respect. They were marked, and marred, by a recrudescence of anti-Semitism.

The Crusaders and the Inquisitors were contemporaries. The medieval Inquisitions were initiated in 1184 with a papal bull, *Ad Abolendam* (for the purpose of doing away), which mandated local bishops to use force to eliminate ideas apostate, inimical and heretical to Christianity. This was violence against the heretics. This episcopal Inquisition lasted up to the 1230s, when it was substituted with a papal Inquisition since the former was not very effective. War was waged at different periods against different heretical sects. A Dominican Inquisitor, Robert le Bougre, surnamed “the Hammer of Heretics,” was famous for his violence and cruelty. Bernard Gui

and Nicolas Eymeric executed many victims in France. Many heretics were persecuted, their properties confiscated and some burnt at the stakes. Other punishments included imprisonment, fines, physical torture, banishment and public recantation. The young Joan of Arc (1412-1431) was a typical example of the victims (Mausolf and Mausolf 1994, 181-182).¹

Pope Paul III (1534-1549) made the Inquisition the job of a commission at the Vatican *curia*, which became the supreme judge in matters pertaining to heresies. In 1588, Pope Sixtus V named this commission the Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition or the Holy Office, the duty of which was to guard the doctrine of the faith and morals of the Universal Church. In 1908, it became the Congregation of the Holy Office and in 1965 it was renamed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the mandate to further and teach the right doctrine. Just as the office of the Inquisition was completely reformed, so also was the idea of war and violence.

Modern Catholic Teaching on War and Violence

Scholars like Francisco de Vitoria (1485-1546) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1617) added the principle of proportionality as the *modus operandi* of a just war: There must be a balance between the good in view, the evil to be fought against, and the means to be applied; and that war should be the last resort. With the excruciating and devastating aftermath of the Crusades and the Inquisitions, and coupled with the grossly destructive and inhuman deployment of chemical, atomic and nuclear weapons, especially during the two World Wars, theologians began to rethink the concept of a just/holy war and to adopt a new attitude. Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) alluded to Benedict XV (1914-1922): “The calamity of a world war, with the economic and social ruin and the moral excesses and dissolution that accompany it, must not on any account be permitted to engulf the human race for a third time.” For him, “Nothing is lost by peace; everything may be lost by war” (Pius XII 1939). Paul VI identified the stockpiling of arms as a possible cause of conflagration, and consequently advised nation-states to embark on the

urgent task of disarmament (Paul VI 1963, 109-113). The Vatican Council II, in *Gaudium et Spes*, devotes a whole section to 'Avoidance of War.' So the emphasis is no longer on seeking justification for war but on the quest for its possibly total eradication. Relying on the teachings of the modern popes, the council condemns total war (cf. Pius XII 1954, 589).²

The catechism of the church reiterates the teachings of the modern popes and Vatican II; and it refers to the divine prohibition of murder as the basis for the avoidance of war. The catechism makes stricter the conditions for legitimate defense by a military force when all other efforts have failed: a) The damage inflicted by the aggressor must be lasting, grave and certain; b) all other means for peace must have been impractical or ineffective; c) there must be serious prospect of success; and, d) the use of arms must not produce evils and disorder graver than the evil to be eliminated.³ Pius XII once commented that the strong arm of force at times may be needed to forestall law and order, for some enemies of justice only heed the language of force; and arms should be used only for defense purposes (Pius XII 1947).⁴

In line with the above presentation of the recent modern Catholic doctrine on war and violence, Jonathan R. Smith (2009) has this to say:

The consensus among Christians on the use of violence has changed radically since the Crusades were fought. The just war theory prevailing for most of the last two centuries — that violence is an evil which can in certain situations be condoned as the lesser of evils — is relatively young. Although it has inherited some elements (the criteria of legitimate authority, just cause, right intention) from the older war theory that first evolved around 400 AD, it has rejected two premises that underpinned all medieval just wars, including Crusades: [F]irst, that violence could be employed on behalf of Christ's intentions for mankind and could even be directly authorized by him; and second, that it was a morally neutral force which drew whatever ethical coloring it had from the intentions of the perpetrators.⁵

But what has the bible to say on issues relating to war and violence?

War and Violence in the Bible

Robert Salaam (2007), pointing on some violent biblical texts especially in the Old Testament (OT), argues that Christianity is a violent religion if Islam is termed so. There is no gainsaying that the OT is full of gruesome and barbarous wars (e.g., Deut 20:10-17; Josh 6:21-23; 1 Samuel 17:46; 2 Sam 20:21; 2 Kings 10:7); but when it comes to evaluating Christian teachings, the OT is not normally the yardstick. God was dealing with the people of the OT at their level of understanding and primitive morality. Jesus came and perfected the Old Law with his new teachings (cf. Matt 5:17). In a part of his famous Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:21-48), Jesus demonstrates that the new standard of morality is quite higher than the old. Here, Jesus, *inter alia*, makes more rigid the prohibition of murder, abolishes the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation) and commands love for enemies. This is a question of development of law and morality, from which the church has equally learnt to develop her faith and morals, guided by the Holy Spirit. But there are still some ambiguous texts that seem to support violence in the New Testament (NT).

In Matthew 10:34-35, Jesus says that he has not come to bring *eirēnē* (peace) but *machaira* (sword), and that he has come to set members of a family against one another. This is a metaphorical or figurative oration, which refers to the possible violence to which Jesus' followers could be subjected to by their opponents because of their faith and challenging model of life. So, Christians are not the gladiators but their opponents.

Jesus ends his parable of pounds in Luke 19:11-27 thus, "But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me" (v. 27). Here, he uses a historical fact for a parable: When Archelaus went to Rome to be appointed the Ethnarch of Judea, which Herod willed to him, some Jewish opponents went ahead of him to Caesar in protest; but their action boomeranged. When Archelaus eventually got the crown and came back, he ordered the murder of all those opponents. The text does not in any way encourage Christians to kill their opponents.

When Paul says in Romans 1:20-32 that those who worship idols and give in to all sorts of immorality are worthy of *thanatos* (death, v. 32), he is

not talking about physical death, but spiritual death. It is not a call to wage war on sinners, but a warning to sinners of the eternally spiritual death that awaits them if they do not repent. Although texts like 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, Acts 2:23 and 3:13-15 seem to be anti-Semitic, they are only stating the fact that the Jews killed Jesus. The texts do not suggest that the Jews should be oppressed for killing Jesus.

Jesus' reiteration of *ouai de humin* (meaning, woe to you) in Matthew 23:13-39 is only meant to warn the Jewish defaulters sternly in order to effect their conversion of heart. The author of 1 Timothy says that he has delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme (1:20). Hymenaeus is described in 2 Timothy 2:17 as one of the vicious and heretic Christians whose words eat their way like gangrene; and in 2 Timothy 4:14, Alexander is portrayed as a disaster to the gospel (Wild 1990, 891-902). The 1 Corinthians 5:5 makes it even more pungent. Talking about those who are involved in abominable sexual immorality, Paul instructs that they should be handed over *tō satana eis olethron tēs sarkos* (that is, to Satan for the destruction of the flesh) so that their spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. These could have been the leading texts for the Inquisitors. The handing over to Satan here is to be interpreted as excommunication, which is a form of punishment (Lambrecht 1998, 1601-1632). Being in the fold, one is presumably protected from the forces of the evil one; but excommunication, it was thought, would give a defaulter the opportunity to long again for God's grace that comes through the instrumentality of the church.

So the bible does not encourage Christians to take up arms against their enemies and eliminate them. It rather encourages love of enemies: "But I say to you that hear, love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27-28).

Islamic Violence against Christians in Northern Nigeria

The Christians in Nigeria have suffered much violence at the hands of Islamic fundamentalists. But in view of the recent security breakdown in the

country, Christians are in dilemma with regard to how to continue to hold on to and express their faith that abhors violence.

It is a fact known worldwide that Christians in Northern Nigeria suffer persecution at the hands of their Islamic counterparts. Nigeria, with a population of about 170 million—Muslims (50 percent), Christians (45 percent) and traditionalists (5 percent), all approximately—has witnessed innumerable incidents of religious violence since its founding in 1914.⁶ The current challenge is the menace of *Boko Haram* (BH) on the nation, especially on the Christians.

***Boko Haram* in Northern Nigeria**

The BH is a fledging Nigerian expression of political Islam, which was born in 2001, and could be likened to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Hamas in Palestine, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the international Al Qaeda (Aina 2012, 134; Ibanga and Bassey 2014, 142). Unlike progressive Muslims who embrace western education and modernity as useful tools for human development and progress, Muslim extremists regard western education as a threat to their monolithic religious culture and tradition. For them, the *Qur'an* could not be subjected to modern literary criticisms and interpretations (Ibanga and Bassey 2014, 130), since Allah purely revealed it, with no tinge of contextual, epochal or sociocultural limitations. Consequently, any institution that has any affiliation with western education and civilization (Mohammed and Haruna 2010, 50), like churches, schools and governments, are objects of attack, since they are considered as collaborators in the 'plot' to divest Islam of its monolithic culture and tradition coded in the *Qur'an*. Since 2009, when the government attacked BH nest (Obiezu 2013, 2), killing one of its first leaders, Mohammed Yusuf, BH has resorted to total violence, with the ultimate aim of establishing Islamic *Sharia'ah* rule in the concerned territories (Mohammed and Haruna, 43-44).

In Nigeria, as in elsewhere, extremely ambitious Islamic politicians have aggravated the distorted religious ideology of fundamentalists by hijacking them for promoting their political ambitions. With the insecurity caused

by BH, Islamic politicians have created an aura of incompetency around a Christian president. Partly due to penury, self-worthlessness and ignorance, the aftermath of perennial negligence of western education, and partly out of pure desire to fight for Allah, even to the point of martyrdom through suicide-bombing, some Muslims have become very fanatical to the extent of killing innocent Christians. For want of space, we just mention below a few of the aggressions which Christians have suffered at the hands of BH since a Christian president emerged in 2009.⁷

TABLE 1. Some Boko Haram Attacks on Christians from 26 July 2009 – 14 April 2014

No.	Date	State(s)	Description	Comment
1	July 26-30, 2009	Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Yobe	BH sect unleashed mayhem on Christians	About 700 people killed and 3,500 displaced, 1,264 children orphaned, over 392 women widowed. Properties destroyed.
2	Dec. 29, 2009	Bauchi	<i>Kala-Kato</i> sect unleashed violence on Christians.	About 38 persons killed, about 1,000 displaced.
3	Mar. 07, 2010	Plateau	Muslims attacked some Christian-dominated villages in Jos.	About 500 people were killed.
4	Nov. 5, 2011	Potiskum, Damaturu, Maiduguri	BH attacked churches and police stations.	More than 90 people were killed, and several churches burnt.
5	Dec. 25, 2011	Niger	At Madalla, BH bombed a church after worship.	More than 45 were killed, 80 injured.
6	Jan. 5-6, 2012	Gombe	BH shot Christians during worship in Gombe.	About 6 were killed and many injured.
7	Jan. 5-6, 2012	Adamawa	BH opened fire at an Igbo Christian gathering in Mubi.	22 were killed and many injured.
8	Nov. 2012	Kaduna	BH bombed a church in the military Cantonment, Jaji.	About 17 people were killed and 27 injured.

9	Dec. 2, 2012	Borno	BH attacked Christians in Maiduguri on Sunday, set 3 churches on fire.	Casualties not ascertained.
10	Dec. 24, 2012	Yobe	BH attacked ECWA church.	Killed a pastor and 5 worshippers.
11	Jan. 27, 2013	Borno	BH attacked some Christians in Gajiganna.	8 were killed and their throats slit.
12	Sept. 26, 2013	Yobe	BH attacked and killed a pastor and his two children. Church set on fire.	Set also neighbouring houses on fire.
13	April 14, 2014	Borno	BH abducted 276 schoolgirls (predominantly Christians) at Chibok.	Set the compound on fire. At present, only about 50 girls have escaped.

Nigerian Security Tracker (NST), a project of the Council on Foreign Relations, reported that October 2012 was the deadliest month in Nigeria since June 2011. A total of 600 people were killed, and at least thirty-seven attacks were inflicted on churches (Campbell 2012). According to the recent report of the World Watch Monitor (WWM), Nigeria is “the most violent place in the world for Christians...and over 800 Nigerian Christians were killed during the reporting period from November 2011 to November 2012.”⁸ Patrick Goodenough (2012) reported that BH’s violent *jihad* against Christians has earned Nigeria the seventh position in the latest Global Terrorism Index (GTI), coming behind only after Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Yemen and Somalia. Only in 2011, there were 168 attacks, with 437 killed and 614 injured. The question Goodenough is asking is: How many more Christians need to be killed before serious action is taken? Moreover, BH is asking the Christian president to convert to Islam or resign. WWM reports the lament of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Plateau State Chapter, over the woes of the Christians in the state: “[T]here seems to be no serious attempt to properly handle the situation, either in forestalling future occurrences or purposefully prosecuting the perpetrators in order to serve as a deterrent to others.”⁹

The Christian doctrine with regard to violence since the Reformation has basically changed and does not at any time officially endorse retaliation, though individuals and groups have sometimes acted otherwise. If the government has failed to protect Christians, as it has done so on several occasions, what should be the next line of action for Christians in Nigeria and in other nations suffering similar precarious situation?

In Search of Solutions to Islamic Fundamentalists' Aggressions

These proposals are for ameliorating Christian-Islamic relationship in Nigeria. These recommendations could go a long way in dousing the tension, creating a genuinely peaceful atmosphere.

Change of Mentality through Holistic Education

Among the panaceas to the violence that Muslim fundamentalists cause worldwide is holistic education that cultivates a pluralistic mode of reasoning which appreciates and tolerates non-Islamic narratives. The greatest handicap is the extremists' thinking-in-a-box. The BH leaders and financiers got parochial western education. They communicate with the world, using modern languages and communication gadgets. They fight their wars, using modern technologies, but yet they condemn modernity. There is an urgent need for a change in their mentality. An authentic ideological metamorphosis in any institution is effected easily from within through holistic education. Outside forces could equally influence this transformation. Consequently, Christian theologians should partner with progressive Muslim scholars, who reason realistically, in charting a new course. Even though such Muslims endanger their lives for being different, the outside support they get could spur them to posit more positive actions among their people. Through the holistic education of the fundamentalists, the monolithic Islamic traditions and myths could be de-traditionalized and demythologized and their weird political ideologies deconstructed.

Interreligious Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

Christians should continue dialoguing with Muslims. One of the ways of getting the confidence of the other party in dialogue is accepting one's shortcomings and limitations. Christians should not simply condemn Muslims but should accept that they too, sometime in the past, had acted violently. It should be admitted that there are violent texts in the bible. An exposition of how the church gradually came to a reformed understanding on these issues should be made. Muslims should be encouraged to be open to divine inspiration and modern literary criticisms for interpretation. God can never prompt any reasonable human being to attack and kill the innocent and the defenseless. Some Christian theologians who are also experts in Islamic studies should serve as resource persons in this dialogue. John Cardinal Onaiyekan has taken such an initiative in the archdiocese of Abuja. He brought together some Christian and Islamic scholars for the purpose of constant dialoguing.

A Call for Christian Fortitude

Christians should empathize and sympathize with, and pray for, the Islamic people, for a change in attitude, remembering that the Christians purportedly used 'violence' in the Medieval Age. Through God's inspiration, many Christians have come to understand the endorsement of violence in the OT for what it is, and interpret properly the seemingly violent texts of the NT, and consequently abandon the primitive theology of the Crusades and Inquisitions. These are what have made Christianity rediscover her root and model, the meekness and forgiveness of Christ. It took Christians about 1500 years to get back officially to a position of nonviolence. Christians then should not give up on their Islamic brethren. These fundamentalists may require many more years to arrive at a reformed and divinely inspired interpretation of the violent texts in the Qur'an. Until this happens, a fortuitous attitude is expected on the part of the Christians.

Mutual Cooperation and Solidarity between Muslims and Christians

The BH or any other violent Islamic ideology or sect does not represent Islam. These sects are often constituted by fanatics that have queer and questionable characters and chequered histories. Christians should not condemn the whole Islamic world and attack innocent people just because of the nefarious actions of these sects. In some parts of Kano (Nigeria), it was reported that some Muslims guarded some churches on Sundays while the Christians worshipped; and Christians did likewise for Muslims in the cities of Lagos and Minna (Kaigama 2013, 17). Some Muslims alert Christians when they learn of nefarious plots among their people. So reprisal attacks will always be counterproductive for one does not really know whom to attack. In many reprisal attacks, the innocent are normally those killed, for the culprits go into hiding immediately after their criminal acts, knowing full well that danger looms.

A Call for Government Commitment to Ensuring Security

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan once lamented that BH members, sympathizers and financiers have infiltrated his government at all levels. But is it impossible to fish out these individuals? Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume of Borno was arraigned and quizzed in 2013 for aiding this sect. Kabiru Sokoto, who masterminded the arson in Madalla Church, was arrested while in Borno governor's lodge in Abuja. It has also been reported that high-level sabotage in favour of BH is a reoccurring decimal in the army. The government should be more committed to punishing acts of criminalities and violence. The recent government order to release BH suspects remanded in custody for acts of violence without proper trial caused the raising of eyebrows in many quarters for it made a caricature of the war against terrorism.

If the present government at all levels wants to be fully committed to fighting BH, it must regard any second-term ambition as completely secondary. I think that the government at all levels is dilly-dallying in this fight so as not to step on toes that could scuffle political ambitions in 2015 elections. For the Christians in the government, this is a betrayal of their

faith! Government officials should act according to the ethical injunction of the Kantian categorical imperative: One should always act in such a way that one wishes that his or her action becomes a universal law, valid for the humanitarian society, based on reason and freewill. The common good comes first, not individual ambitions.

Commitment to this fight could be manifested in a mass-weeding in the government and the army. Prominent personages, who had made inflammatory and treasonable comments, could be arrested. Complete state of emergency and war should be declared on BH zones as soon as it is safe to do so, for government and the army have the moral obligation to protect citizens with every available force.

Christian Option of Self-Defense

As a last resort, Christians must not forget the theological legitimacy of self-defense. Self-defense should be applied directly only on aggressors, as far as its criteria are met. If Christians, whom government security has failed for the umpteenth time, have the foreknowledge that some hoodlums would attack and kill them during worship, they should be prepared with weapons to defend themselves. The CAN and more specially the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) should be more proactive in this area. For these institutions, being the Christians' think tanks, have the onus of evaluating the facts on the ground and declaring when the criteria for defense is met. Self-defense could sometimes seem like violence, but it is the intention that preserves its sacrosanct definition.

Conclusion

This article has shown that Christianity is essentially a nonviolent religion, even though the bellicose texts in the bible, the Crusades and the Inquisitions of the Medieval Age, and some Christian acts of self-defense suggest otherwise. The modern Catholic teaching on 'pacifism' reformed the inclination to violence of the Medieval Age. Christians should manifest

love for their enemies through mutual respect. It is a pity that Islam as an institution, especially in Nigeria, has not been able to attain the type of theological and spiritual reformation that Christianity has institutionally attained. In reciprocal and conjoint solidarity, Christians ought to help in providing holistic education for Muslims through dialogue. As these endeavors are on course, law enforcement agents should then insure security of lives and property, even if it entails a declaration of war on BH. Only in dire cases should Christians apply self-defense as a recourse.

Notes

- ¹ A. J. M. Mausolfé and J. K. Mausolfé, *Saint companions for each day* (Bombay: St. Pauls, 1994), 181-182. Owing to Joan's giftedness in visions, which often gave the French king an edge over the English king, the English captured and accused her of witchery. Subjected to the Inquisition trial, she was condemned and burnt at the stake on 30 May 1431. Her innocence was later established and she was canonized in 1920.
- ² Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965), no. 80; cf. Pius XII, Allocution of 30 September 1954: AAS 46 (1954), 589; Pius XII, Radio Message of December 24, 1954: AAS 47 (1955), 15ff.; Paul VI, Allocution to the United Nations, 4 October 1965.
- ³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Dublin: Veritas, 1994), p. 496, no. 2309.
- ⁴ Pius XII, *Allocution to the Military Committee of the American Congress*, 8 October 1947 referred to in Luiz Sérgio Solimeo, "Just War According to Catholic Teaching" (April 09, 2003), available online <http://www.tfp.org/tfp-home/catholic-perspective/just-war-according-to-catholic-teaching.html>.
- ⁵ Smith, Jonathan R, *Rethinking the Crusades* (Catholic Education Resource Center), available online on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_and_violence.
- ⁶ See Index Mundi, "Nigeria demographics profile 2012," available online http://www.indexmundi.com/nigeria/demographics_profile.html.
- ⁷ Isaac Terwase Sampson has earlier made this type of studies. He started his own investigation from 1999, when the military gave back power to the civilians. He is concerned with religious violence in general, not only with BH attack on Christians, Cf. Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religious violence in Nigeria: Causal diagnoses and strategic recommendations to the state and religious communities," available online, www.ajol.info/index.php/ajcr/article/download/78703/69042.
- ⁸ Ibru Ecumenical Centre, "Christian leaders seek global attention on violence in Nigeria" available online http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=110946:christian-leaders-seek-global-attention-on-violence-in-nigeria-&catid=102:ibru-ecumenical-centre&Itemid=596.
- ⁹ World Watch Monitor, available online <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/english/country/nigeria/32545/>.

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Serious Problems with the K-12 Senior High School Curriculum

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During the Mindanao Summit of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), organized by CEAP's National Basic Education Commission (NBEC) and co-hosted by Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU) on 17-18 February 2014, the intention was to appreciate progress attained in the implementation of the K-12 educational reform and to understand the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act [RA] 10627) for the Mindanao schools.

The presentation on the content of the Anti-Bullying Act was straightforward. Atty. Joseph Estrada combined competence with humor — *overcoming an irksome cough!*—to describe the content of the law and clarify its requirements for the schools.

But the presentations on the K-12 were more problematic. Bro. Armin Luistro, FSC, DepEd Secretary, who had come to the Mindanao Summit despite an injury sustained in a basketball match among Cabinet members, spearheaded the presentations with an update on where K-12 is at present. He reminded all of a prior commitment: Basic education was not merely to be reformed, but transformed. It was to be genuinely “learner-centered.” He pointed to a nearly-completed K-12 curriculum that would allow for creativity, innovation and, as for the case in Mindanao, allow for a

“Mindanao perspective.” Therefore, such features as the mother-tongue based education, and an assessment system based on the conviction that *No child is a failure!* were to be appreciated. He encouraged Catholic schools in Mindanao to return to their original religious charisms to understand how each might contribute uniquely to the success of the educational reform. In Mindanao, the special challenges that Catholic schools might address would be the educational needs of the indigenous peoples (IPs), of the out-of-school youth (OSY), and even of the street children.

Over-Congested Curriculum

No problem with that. When Mr. Elvin Ivan Y. Uy, DepEd’s K-12 Program Coordinator, presented the status of the Senior High School curriculum, problems began to emerge. He echoed Bro. Armin’s summary of the reform as “learner-centered” education. But from the PowerPoint Presentation entitled “The K-12 Curriculum: CEAP-NBEC Summit,” he spoke of “31 total subjects” required for senior high school (SHS), fifteen of which were “core subjects” and sixteen of which were “track subjects,” the latter broken down into seven “contextualized” subjects and nine “specialization” subjects. From the same slide came the “non-negotiable” announcement: “Each subject will have eighty hours per semester.”

The latter came as a shocker to curriculum planners from within the assembly like Dr. Gina L. Montalan, Dean of the School of Education (SoE) at ADDU, who was quick to point out that this would mean 6.5 hours of contact hours daily in the SHS for the DepEd’s required courses. If this were to be reckoned in today’s college units, this would be the equivalent to a whopping 32.5 units where college students—who need time to read and study outside of class—should be taking no more than about 20 units. The heavy daily 6.5 hours of required DepEd courses allowed little room for “mission-driven” schools—*as all CEAP schools are!*—to add courses required by their educational mission. These include subjects such as religious education or theology, philosophy, and special formational courses such as in leadership training.

From the floor, Dr. Montalan suggested that the 80 hour per semester per course requirement be tempered into 80 hours for some courses, and less for others. She even suggested that if the 80 hours per course be truly required then classes be allowed on Saturday in order for the mission schools to be able to accommodate their subjects. Bro. Armin, sensitive to the learner, was not too enthusiastic about the latter, and suggested that some of the mission courses might be the content of the required DepEd courses. How that might sit, however, with zealous guardians of disciplines or DepEd officials more sensitive to the letter of rules than their spirit, is a serious concern.

It was because of this that the CEAP-DepEd Mindanao Summit unanimously passed a resolution that the DepEd, in consultation with Mindanao educators on the ground, revisit the 80 hours per subject requirement.

Tec-Voc Track Won't Prepare Students for Work as Industry Requires

A similarly serious problem came with the presentation of Fr. Onofre G. Inocencio, Jr., SDB, superintendent of Don Bosco Schools and TVET Centers, on “Implementing the SHS—Tech-Voc Track.” All know that the Don Bosco schools are long-time recognized experts in technical vocation educational training. Basically, Fr. Inocencio explained that the SHS “core curriculum” requirement is so heavy that there would be no time to develop the hands-on skills in the students such as the manufacturing industry requires. There is certainly adequate time to train manicurists and pedicurists, but will these provide the skills necessary for the industrial development of the nation? Within the time-constraints of the SHS, Fr. Inocencio’s thesis is that it is *not* possible to truly develop the multi-skilled students needed for the industry. He confirmed his thesis in recent dialogues with the industry: What is important is not that the student has gone through a required number of hours in vocational training, but that the student actually has the skills required by the industry. His solution:

For the Don Bosco schools, they will focus on teaching the skills as required by the industry, using skilled teachers and the industrial machinery and equipment required to impart them, and insure thereby that the student be employed. To do so, they will set aside the DepEd requirement of the core curriculum. Once employed—*without having graduated from SHS!*—the student will be given the opportunity to come back to school and finish the academic requirements that might also qualify him for college.

For the K-12 program, however, this position is disastrous. The K-12 program was precisely supposed to *either* prepare students for gainful work after basic education *or* prepare students for college. The *either/or* has become a *both/and*. It intends *both* to equip the students with the skills necessary for gainful employment *and* to prepare them for college within the same time constraint. And because the designers are all college graduates with PhDs from the best of higher educational intentions, but without the experience of training students in handling a lathe or a welding machine, we now have a policy which has effectively shut out meaningful skills development in favor of pre-college preparation. The K-12 program has been reduced thereby to pre-college preparation whose “core curriculum,” according to Mr. Elvin Uy, will prepare the student for college according to the College Readiness Standards (CRS) of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Originally, there was supposed to be a pre-work track and a pre-college track. Pre-work would equip students with industry-required skills. The pre-college track (*not the core curriculum common to all!*) would prepare students for college according to CHED’s standards of college readiness.

Despite the fact that the K-12 reform was inspired by the conviction that not all need to go to college, it is designed so that all can go to college. This either disrespects the requirements for work, or disrespects the requirements for college. DepEd has chosen to disrespect the requirements for work. For Fr. Inocencio to continue respecting the requirements for work, he must sacrifice the DepEd requirements for SHS.

In fact, in the presentations given by Dr. Tina Padolina on the Science, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) strand and by Dr. Maria Luz Vilches on the Humanities in SHS, many of the subjects like Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research “sounded very HEI”—like belonging more to college or even graduate school education rather than to basic education. I squirmed to find out that future nurses shall be categorized under STEM and so be required to take even modified calculus. *Is this really necessary?*

So again, the participants of the CEAP-DepEd Summit in Mindanao unanimously resolved that the DepEd revisit the requirements for the Tech-Voc Track.

Flexibility Required: Less May Be More

Of course, putting together curricular requirements for the K-12 reform is one thing. Teaching them is quite another. A curriculum is like a wish list, but all the components of curricula need real teachers. Here is, I think, where reality will demolish the conceptual castles some may be taking satisfaction in, in the formulation of these curricula. For K-12 to succeed in being truly “learner-centered,” it must be realistically teacher and region sensitive.

In the implementation of the K-12 reform, it must be clearly set in policy that these curricular “requirements” for a long time cannot be decreed “FYI”—for your information” (as was asserted by one speaker at the Mindanao Summit), but shall have to be “tentative” and subject to the educational, pedagogical and industrial realities of the country’s many different regions—including the actual skills sets of our available teachers. The outputs of a relatively high concentration of highly-qualified educators in the Metro Manila areas cannot be expected in provincial areas. Tec-Voc training in industrial areas will have to be different from that in rural areas. Policy must be set so that there is ability to put the SHS together and operate with the limited resources of particular regions.

At this point, DepEd needs to take more of a dialogical rather than a prescriptive stance; it must be encouraging and empowering, not over-demanding and discouraging. It must capitalize on the goodwill of people who want this reform to work.

In this sense, less may truly be more.

Book Reviews

Denhardt, Janet V. and Denhardt, Robert B. 2011. *The new public service: Serving, not steering*. 3rd ed. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 242 pages.

This new book on public administration reintroduces concepts for which Public Administration as a discipline was founded in the first place. It is the name given to the set of principles that focuses on democratic governance, civic engagement and public service. This is the new paradigm of public administration.

It begins with the history of Public Administration. The first principle learned and used in running the government is what we call at present, the Classics or Old or Traditional Public Administration. It later on explains the birth of new theories and personalities that have enriched what we know now as the New Public Management. The historical side of the book ends with the introduction of the New Public Service—the new and latest paradigm in public administration. The new concept is thereafter compared to the Classics or Old or Traditional Public Administration and to the New Public Management.

It shows the perspective of the classic version of the Old Public Administration, the New Public Management and the New Public Service. In the discussion of the different perspectives, it presents three questions that should be answered by each viewpoint. These are: 1) What are the public administrators responsible for? 2) To whom are they accountable? 3) By what means should accountability and responsibility be achieved?

In the Old Public Administration, it is believed that the administrators are not to be held responsible since they do not act with discretion. Their work is limited to only following the laws and regulations that were given by their superiors who could be the elected official or by the court. And since they only follow directives, they are not accountable to the people. The means of making the administrators accountable and responsible is by checking whether or not they followed the mechanism to ensure formal accountability established within the branches of government.

The New Public Management tells that public administrators are responsible for ensuring that the needs of the public are met by being business-like. This means that they stick to the idea of the superiority of the business and market in providing service to the public. Hence, they are accountable to the people who are “customers.” Their accountability is measured by whether or not they were able to satisfy the needs of the people at the least-cost possible.

The New Public Service, on the other hand, focuses on the ideals of citizenship and public interest. It discards all the assumptions of accountability espoused by New Public management which are: 1) The focus is on treating people as customers; 2) Public law and democratic practices are not emphasized; 3) Public administrators should be entrepreneur-like. Rather, it gives emphasis on the role of the people in the affairs of the government. It contemplates that public administrators are public servants that should take their role seriously and with due consideration on what the people have to say. It encourages the participation of the public, not as customers, but as citizens and members of a democratic community. Empowerment of the citizens is of primary importance in the New Public service.

One good point in this book is that the introduction of the New Public Service does not totally reject the things introduced by the traditional Public Administration of the New Public Management. It merely reintroduces concepts that might help in how things are done. It proposes the use of concepts like democratic governance, citizenship and public interest by the public servants in carrying out their functions and roles. It believes that by so doing, a long-term solution to the leaders applying such concepts, will later on be able to influence the people into practicing the same concepts thus making them more participative in the government.

The authors believed that New Public Service can be taken as a vehicle for a change in the culture or paradigm of the people in the government, as a result of the values in the business world brought by the New Public Management. Values in the New Public Management like “efficiency at a lower cost,” “aggregation of individual interest” and “maneuvering people and funds as if they are the owners” should be replaced by values centered on democratic citizenship, civil engagement and public interest.

It is actually reminding public servants not to forget the very values for which Public Administration existed in the first place. However positive and bright the new perspective is, I find the book very idealistic. Although the last part of the book showcases success stories on the manifestation of the three values espoused by the New Public Service, I cannot help but think that perhaps these values can be observed more in rich countries rather than in developing countries. Economics would seem to be the priority of the people in developing countries, not the affairs in their government.

BOOK REVIEWS

The applicability of the three values of the New Public Service is another thing to be considered. If the general rule is to practice the three values at all times in doing the responsibilities of public servants, will there be instances when these are not carried out? What will be the consequences if there is such? Are the three values the basis of the legitimacy of the actions of a public servant?

In today's turmoil that is making government work difficult, the new paradigm of New Public Service might be of help. It is actually a call, not only to those in the government but also for individuals or groups of individuals who want to make a difference. The book is a good source of inspiration especially to the young public servants who want to effect changes in the society to make this a better world for everybody.

It is a guide on how to be the leaders of the present and the years to come. It does not offer an easy journey obviously but it shows that things can happen. It emphasizes the strength of democracy to solve problems and chart the course to be taken to achieve long-term if not lasting solutions to the things that destroy societies. It may be idealistic at first but they are practical values that public servants at present should possess. The complex nature of today's society needs leaders who value democracy, civic engagement and public interest—the values that were lost due to the values inherent to the New Public Management.

Today is the time to make a change! The New Public Service is the battlecry!

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Cimafranca, Dominique Gerald M. 2011. *Unusual treatment*. Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts. 110 pages.

Speculative fiction, a term first used by Robert Heinlein, draws life from the question “what if?” in its revelry in the world of possibilities and impossibilities. In this still borderless, undefined and evolving genre, it covers science fiction that may have a logical basis and can happen in reality, as well as horror and fantasy genres which harness apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic stories, reworking of a myth, reinvention of heroes and reconstruction of their quests, alternative histories, mysteries of all sorts, utopias and dystopias which may not happen in factual life. However, some literary critics and enthusiasts point out that these stories are still foregrounded in reality where the characters are deeply human and more often than not, give insights to human and societal conditions, and act as a philosophical and cultural critics. Dominique Gerald Cimafranca’s collection of ten stories celebrates the world of speculative fiction yet retains the grime and dirt of realism.

From the title *Unusual treatment*, the plot, characters and events are bizarrely reverberating with perepeteia. A grotesque becomes carnivalesque, the deep-seated fears of the supernatural and the powerful do not bring any sense of danger—dragons fart, *manananggals* are the marrying type, the once cunning is now a weakling, an academic frets and falls short of knowledge, and the classic characters such as the three magis are vulnerable subjects of fate and destiny. The characterization in the grand narratives is deconstructed.

On the other hand, the characters in “Facester,” “Leg Men,” “Grenadier,” “Turnabout” and “A Little Knowledge” are *torpe*, underdogs, proud but have limited view of themselves, and who either grapple the onset of manhood or the tiredness of adulthood. The authorial voice is condescending and the use of dark humor is at the expense of the characters. But this same conversational, tongue-in-cheek and lighthearted tone redeems the characters in the end where their wishes are fulfilled. These boys are in the process of initiation from adolescence to manhood in search of glory, gold, love and magic, which in real life, may be hilariously difficult.

The story “Facester” is about a nondescript girl whose face has become the bestselling prototype in Dr. Joey Mendres’ Cara Nueva business. Has reconstructive surgery gone too far? In this story, it has. The tone pokes fun at a beauty craze culture in a country where people breathe the words “fake” and “illegal. Identity is something one can buy, steal, lose and reduplicated into several hundred copies. Face is a commodity that others can afford and bid for. With this setting, a boy begins his adventure in saving the girl of her dreams to get her identity back. If the story is told in the girl’s point of view rather than her suitor’s, it is also a good venue for speculation.

If not saved by the awful spin of fortune cast by the writer, the characters redeem themselves for better or for worse. Innocuous characters are capable of violence and destruction in the name of survival in the stories “Turnabout” and “Grenadier.” Blood is purged by the people least expected. Suspense and mystery build up through the use of careful plotting and structuring of events, approximating the twisted minds of the psychopathic characters. The approach is journalistic and manages to dramatize kidnapping and police and security mess with objective narration.

The dramatic arc of the collection heightens when the story “Matrice” becomes clearly dystopic. Filipino women, in care of robot nurses, sell their services as surrogate mothers. It is a new kind of slavery that women are prescribed into. As the events are juxtaposed with the scene of Matrice in a foreign land and her biological mother praying for her in the Philippines, human connection and disconnection heighten the emotional restraint of the characters. Technology as loneliness is poignant.

A *tiyanak*, fed with biscuit crackers, decides to impregnate a very confident boy. This funny story with a sinister yet vulnerable creature opens up to more complex interpretation on relationship in terms of gender and writing about human body and sexuality.

Relying on the voice in the dark with hints and suggestions, the story “In a Dark Place” conjures the story of a suffering and silenced animal and its connection to a certain family. There is more deconstruction at work when the much publicized People’s Champ, powerfully handled in the second person point of view, is humanized, dehumanized and in the name of glory, demonized.

The *Unusual treatment* is speculative fiction and realism at work. It uses traditional plot structure and storytelling, reinvents world and worldlings, has keen eye for details and portrays verisimilitude of local flavor. Too dark at times, the language yet remains to be as a friend talking to someone over coffee. The prose is witty, unpretentious, both forgiving and unforgiving, all in the illusion of light reading. What is important here is the writer is enjoying his craft, in the joy of work and creation. It is exciting to know where more of his stories will evolve into. This book appeals to our inner nerds and makes us remember the time when we were reading at the back of the classroom, lost in the world on the page.

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2. Manuscripts should be in MS Word file and double-spaced. For house style, please refer to previous issues of the journal, or alternatively, follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
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TAMBARA

When the *balatik* appears in the sky, it is time for the yearly sacrifice. All who are to prepare new fields or are to assist others in such work gather to take part in the ceremonies honoring the spirits. For three days, the men abstain from work. No music and dancing are allowed.

With the ending of the period of taboo, the workers go to the fields and in the center of each, they place a *tambara*, a white dish containing betel nut. This is an offering to Eugpamolak Manobo, besought to drive away evil spirits, keep the workers in good health, allow an abundant crop, and make the owners rich and happy.

Fay Cooper Cole

This journal has borrowed the Bagobo word *tambara* to emphasize the commitment of the Ateneo de Davao University to serve the Ateneo Community and the larger Mindanao region as a Filipino, Catholic and Jesuit University.