

Radical Politics in the Philippines: A Reader

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RADICAL POLITICS IN THE PHILIPPINES

A Reader



**Benjiemen Labastin
Menelito Mansueto
Ruben Balotoi
Dr. Rogelio Bayod
Gerry Arambala**

Radical Politics in the Philippines

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Praise for *Radical Politics in the Philippines*

“The politics in the Philippines, during the latter part of the 20th century, were positive concerning the potential for what has become radical democracy as *rule from the demos, by, of, and for the People*. However, as is argued in the current work, democracy became elitist thereby largely ignoring much of the population. This lack of reach caused turbulence as the 21st century began due to the large distance between the periphery and the center, with the periphery growing in size. With a large periphery, social unrest becomes apparent as people try to work through the democratic system for basic relief, while realizing they are risking political and societal breakdown. The challenges are vast and the risks are increasing for this resource rich country. Into these conditions, a small group of philosophers from the south of the Philippines are considering current deliberation on politics concerning poverty, ecology, technology, and general concerns that give attention to the root causes of the conditions. Their goal is a full democracy both formal and substantive for all. It is wise, considering democracy, that the tension between any areas of society not fall into authoritarianism as many societies, globally, are experiencing varying levels of strains, some resulting in war that could lead to global economic, political, and environmental catastrophe. It is through democracy that a reasonable, humane, ecological, adaptive future would be most likely achieved. As is rightly recognized in the book, deliberation and social movements are a requirement to fill the “chasm between formal democratic institutions and the need to substantiate it” by pressure on, and at times, challenge and confrontation of those who are in power.”

- Dr. Layne Hartsell, Department of Philosophy, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

"The book represents the unheard and neglected voices of young scholars from Southern Philippines in contextualizing democracy. Interested readers might disagree with their views on Philippine politics, but they cannot ignore the urgency of their thinking as they propose an approach to democracy that highlights the role of citizens who are sidelined in the margins. Politics in the Philippines has always been dominated by the feuding elite and ordinary Filipinos become hapless victims of the elite's struggle for state control. This book is a timely contribution to an understanding of Philippine politics from the perspective of young thinkers from the South who are keen to offer fresh accounts of the intertwining of such concepts as radical democracy, justice, environmental integrity, mass media and local politics. This is a must-read book if one wishes to understand the deeper issues hounding Philippine politics."

- Dr. Ryan Urbano, Cebu Technological University

Preface

Radical democracy was unheard of in Philippine academia, at least as far as discussions during conferences, before young scholars from the South took the lead to use it as a vantage point to reflect on the rise to power of President Rodrigo Duterte. This began in 2017 after Dr. Christopher Ryan Maboloc was awarded a research grant by the Ateneo de Davao University to conduct his *Radical Democracy in the Time of Duterte* project. After the research ended, several papers have been published and some three or four conferences, were dedicated to the theme, beginning in the 7th Social Ethics Society Conference at Pearl Farm Resort. One of these events was held in Japan at Nagoya University and hosted by no less than Wataru Kusaka. The SES Journal also devoted a special issue on the subject matter.

The authors in this new volume come from different institutions in the South. Benjiemen Labastin and Gerry Arambala teach at La Salle University in Ozamiz City. Menelito Mansueto teaches at Mindanao State University in Iligan City. Dr. Rogelio Bayod is a development scholar who is teaching at Cor Jesu College in Digos City and last but not the least, Ruben Balotol is a faculty at the Visayas State University in Baybay, Leyte. They are a group of young researchers who have shown maturity and great promise in their work, having been published and cited in peer-reviewed journals. It is hoped that this book will be a living testament to a critical period in Philippine history and serve as the voice of the underrepresented in Philippine society. This is a big accomplishment that many of us in the Visayas and Mindanao region can be truly proud of.

Foreword

The essays in this book, *Radical Politics in the Philippines*, show the work of young and driven scholars in the Visayas and Mindanao region. They bring forth a diverse set of background, from continental philosophy, Zizek studies, development theory, media and environmental ethics. They provide the seminal areas to cover when it comes to the research in radical politics in the Philippines, which is gaining both adherents and critics in the Southern part of the country. The debates are heated, bordering in the satisfaction of pressing on the strengths or pinning the weakness of someone's arguments.

The traditional study of philosophy in the country has been dominated by the Anglo-Saxon and Continental traditions of thought. While the concept of radical politics is rooted in the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the fertile ground with which the authors of the essays in this volume based their deep reflections are the historical and socio-economic context of the Philippines. In this way, they have anchored their studies on the previous investigations done by Carl Lande, Patricio Abinales, John Sidel, Paul Hotchcroft, Karl Gaspar, Randy David, Renato Constantino, and Christopher Ryan Maboloc.

Understanding Philippine politics has been in the hands of scholars in the capital, who, by means of their liberal approach, look at the events in the Philippines from the perspective of a liberal reformist. For this reason, they often brand the presidency and rise to power of Rodrigo Duterte as one that is possessing autocratic tendencies, the president being "radical" in his ways and style of leadership. But as Benjiemen Labastin will explain, Duterte's style can be seen as a way of favoring the substantive rather than the formal approach to democracy.

The purpose of this new volume then is simple. It does not intend to be a final say on anything political. Rather, it tries to overcome the temptation to do that. The idea is to recognize the struggle in Philippine democracy, give voice to the underrepresented and those in the margins in society, and resist the attempt to silence the powerless. Elitism is the cancer that has excluded millions of Filipinos from equitable progress. In the end, democracy is about human freedom and the equal enjoyment of a decent life. The writings of the authors are dedicated to that difficult struggle.

INTRODUCTION

Dismantling Elite Democracy

Christopher Ryan Maboloc, PhD

The dignity of a country resides in the soul of its people. People might fall into the illusion that a charismatic person will soon arrive to give them all the freedom necessary to liberate them from the fetters of poverty and social injustice. But in a modern democracy, the realization of the public good requires strong institutions, just laws and competitive policies. Those are the things that will truly empower citizens. However, such ideals might remain as such if we do not have a catalyst for change or some kind of a revolution, so to speak.

The Philippines has not matured into a genuine democracy because of the inability of the Filipino people to actualize a common vision that unites the country as one. But the reason why this appears to be the case is now clear. The enemy is elitism in Philippine society. It dictates the course of the public lives of Filipinos. In order to respond to what ails the public sphere in the Philippines, a radical leader is viewed as necessary. This radicalism though may be judged as a form of populism. A despot often disguises himself as a messiah in order to manipulate people.

Indeed, institutional reforms cannot be realized unless people observe the rule of law. Democracy only thrives in dialogue and not in that can of language that might poison the public sphere. People must have the liberty to express themselves in terms of dissent and protest. Disruption in the social and public sphere characterizes what is happening in the country right now. The Filipino people, however, are not in an unfamiliar territory. We have never been at peace with ourselves.

Many critics refuse to see is that fact that under ilustrado politics, Philippine society has not attained meaningful progress or inclusive growth. While the lack of-political maturity is often blamed for our problems, the fact of the matter is that enslavement of the Filipino people by the oligarchic nature of its economy is deliberate. Such is meant to perpetuate the old order. In the end, our hard political responsibility remains. We must seek to

dismantle this unjust configuration by disarticulating power away from the center.

Any radical change is an act of defiance that is rooted in that resurgent revolution that ultimately seeks to topple the hegemonic powers that continue to degrade the dignity of the Filipino nation. But while such is the case, radical rule also reveals institutional and democratic deficits in the country. This is something that comes as a result of its colonial experience. The focus on the strong personality of an anti-establishment leader often covers up fundamental problems. Democracy is not about those at the top. Democracy is about the freedom of people and their capacity to use such freedom to create a better life for their children.

However, cunning politicians often possess something that the people can take advantage of – political will. For many decades, the intellectual and economic elites in the capital have defined for the Filipino the meaning of political correctness and dictated the narrative of our history. The ilustrado type of politics controlled the state just to serve the agenda of the powerful. Those in Manila have dominated all the discussions and dictated an unfair political framework that the Bisaya in the South are meant to simply follow.

The biggest enemy of progress are not our political differences but our lack of tolerance. The divisive nature of politics is like a cancer that has not withered away since the colonial times. But the elitist nature of Philippine democracy is now threatened by the fact that people are left with no option but to embrace radicalism. Progressive leadership can result to changes in structures and social practices. However, this is not to condone any violation against the human rights of people. The right reason in electing a radical leader is to highlight the type of defiance so needed to overhaul elitist rule.

Wataru Kusaka (2017) believes that reducing politics as the conflict between the elite class and the masses hides the fact that inequality is rooted not only in unjust systems but also in uneven social structures that reveals a clash of values and the struggles of a people against latent and obvious forms of oppression and social injustice. A systemic analysis of the socio-economic conditions of people will show convoluted reasons for the gross inefficiency and incompetence of the leadership, but it cannot explain the reality of bias and the historical contexts that embolden the resolve of the impoverished masses to fight for their rights and demand change.

The rectification of historical injustices, especially those that had been inflicted on the minority, is a difficult job, history reveals, since it will involve not only institutional changes, but also an improvement of the political culture and cultural norms of the people. While it is true that people are frustrated and that past administrations have not been able to create real opportunities for equal progress and inclusive growth, the sentiments of people are mere symptoms. We have to go into the root cause of our problems if we want to overhaul our system of government.

When it comes to the politics of our time, it is important to realize that we cannot legislate cultural practices nor create a new set of values for the people to follow. Every human society is value-laden and for this reason, it is important to look into local thinking and the sentiments of the community. Take note that when the Americans introduced their brand of democracy into the Philippines, they have envisioned an independent Filipino nation that can stand on its own without foreign help. What happened was, instead of improving the socio-political conditions of the ordinary people, the US model of democracy, according to Kusaka (2017), simply “strengthened the power base of the elites in the country.”

The Americans took over from Spain a nation that was burning with the flames of nationalism but one that suffered from regional divide. Ilustrado politicians like Quezon, *Osmeña*, and Roxas would serve as the standard for the national leadership. The 1896 Philippine Revolution, essentially, was an exclusive affair of the Tagalogs in Luzon. It was the revolt of the middle-class, says Reynaldo Ileto (1978). So, when the Spaniards left the country, prominent families acquired vast plantations that employed poor Filipinos. In turn, the wealthy lorded over the lives of the peasants and influenced the outcomes of elections. This feudal arrangement is the basis of what Benedict Anderson termed as cacique democracy.

Cacique democracy would metamorphose into a new form as our young republic transformed itself from being agriculture-based into a service-oriented economy. During the 70s, the agriculture sector employed 28% of the country’s workforce while 41% were in the service sector. In 2010, only 11% remained in the former whereas employment in the latter grew to 55% of the total workforce. What is more glaring if left unchecked is the incidence of poverty in the country that still stands at 21% in 2015. Vietnam has a poverty rate of 13% while Malaysia only has 0.6%. Muslim Mindanao, on the other hand, has a poverty incidence of 48% (Rasul 2007).

The political structures in the country are elite-driven, whose power has been for the longest time concentrated in the capital. Politicians serve the interests of capitalists since the latter finance their run for office. For Paul Hotchkroft (1998), the power to control and influence the economic life of the population is called “rent-seeking.” Ending inequality will require not only a reform in policy but also the dismantling of unjust power structures and the introduction of an open, transparent, and inclusive model of governance. The perpetuation of the unjust rule of the elite is the root cause of the failures of our democracy.

CHAPTER 1

Two Faces of Dutertismo: Two Visions of Democracy in the Philippines

Benjiemen Labastin
La Salle University - Ozamiz

In this study, I present two prevailing readings of Duterte's politics and leadership style by two of the most active social and political commentators in the Philippines today, Randy David and Christopher Ryan Maboloc. Both are enthralled by the Duterte phenomenon yet read it differently. The former interprets Duterte's politics and leadership style as a form of authoritarianism while Maboloc describes it as a form of radical politics. I call these two readings as the two faces of Dutertismo. Here, Dutertismo refers broadly to Duterte's politics and leadership style. The first part of the paper presents David's and Maboloc's readings of Duterte's politics and leadership style. The second part attempts to locate their readings in the two visions of democracy in the Philippines, the electoral or formal and substantive. David's objection to Dutertismo could be interpreted as a defense of electoral or formal democracy while Maboloc's favorable reading of it could be understood as a proposal for a need of substantive democracy.

Is Dutertismo a Form of Authoritarianism?

In the 2016 presidential runoff, David wrote an article about the then presidential aspirant Rodrigo Duterte. The title of the article was "Dutertismo." While it was only in his later article that he gave Dutertismo a precise definition, David, in the said essay, was toying with the idea that Duterte's persona or the kind of politics he brings with him is not different from Hitler's Nazism and Mussolini's Fascism. David's hostility to Duterte's style is premised on the latter's admission that "[Duterte] has no [political] program of his own to offer," and "he unleashes a torrent of aggressive and resentful impulses not previously seen in our society." But more than this, he bewails Duterte's "transformation of politics into aesthetics," that is, instead of laying concrete political programs; Duterte exploits the sentiments of the

people by capitalizing their desire to “restore order.” Indeed, for David, Duterte’s political campaign, or perhaps his whole brand of politics, banks on pure rhetoric to mobilize a throng of followers rather than a rational program of action. Accordingly, he says that Duterte’s brand of politics is a “pure theater.”¹ For David, Duterte denigrates politics from the territory of reason.

Writing days before the May 2016 presidential election, David’s article can be taken as a last attempt to discredit a person who is out to defeat his preferred candidate—Mar Roxas. After the presidential debate at the University of Pangasinan, David indirectly endorsed Mar Roxas as he unquestioningly passed the criteria for the president of the republic - “communicative rationality,” “wholistic mind,” and “personal integrity.”² Furthermore, his assessment between the two candidates seemingly geared to overshadow Duterte’s public support and to push hard a Roxas presidency. Commenting on the two candidates, he said: “Duterte [who spoke next,] rambling about correcting injustice, cleaning up government and not being afraid to copy the programs and plans of his rivals.”³ While this statement appears to be objective, the following statement reveals David’s bias against Duterte. He opines: “But gone was the reckless rhetoric with which he roused his audiences in the previous debates. This time he sounded almost as if he was determined to try speaking in measured presidential tones.”⁴ While my interpretation may be wrong, phrases like, “reckless rhetoric” and “sounded almost as if he was determined,” suggest that Duterte is trying hard to portray himself as appropriate to the presidency. For David, Duterte is not, in any way, a president material, as he does not possess an iota of character appropriate for a president of a nation. David quips, Duterte’s style is appropriate as a local mayor; appropriating it in the presidency, Duterte becomes a local mayor for “a nation of 100 million.”⁵

On the other hand, compare the following statements with those of the former. David said:

“Roxas’ opening statement was a thoughtful meditation on the kind of society he wished to see at the end of his presidency. With an economy of words, he ticked off quantitative targets in various areas, using well-chosen phrases to round off his vision of ‘a nation that is free to dream.’ One could sense the care with which these ideas were put together to form a coherent whole.”⁶

If these words were not a clear endorsement of Roxas, perhaps the next statement is. "IF THE PRESIDENCY were something that could be won in a town hall debate, it would be fairly easy to pick out the next President based on Sunday's final debate. Mar Roxas would come out on top of my list as the best debater, way ahead of the others."⁷ As someone writing in a newspaper of national circulation David's views on Duterte and Roxas can hardly be interpreted as apolitical. Clearly, if we are to render judgment to David's Dutertismo within the context of his support for Duterte's closest rival, his branding of Duterte's political style as "Dutertismo" is nothing but a pure and simple propaganda to dissuade Filipinos from electing Duterte to the highest office of the land. But of course, to interpret David's Dutertismo that way is to dishonor a person who constantly provides the nation with incisive analysis of the country's important social and political events. David's social and political analyses, if truth be told, are always grounded on sociological and philosophical insights. Hence, to reduce his reading of Duterte as a simple personal disdain to the current president is to commit a grave injustice to his scholarship.

More than a year later, David defines Dutertismo as:

I refer to the Filipino incarnation of a style of governance enabled by the public's faith in the capacity of a tough-talking, willful, and unorthodox leader to carry out drastic actions to solve the nation's persistent problems. Trusting almost exclusively in the instinctive wisdom of the leader to determine what needs to be done, the public is concerned less with the rationality of policy decisions than with the leader's manifest readiness to take full responsibility for all his decisions.⁸

Here, David adds a caveat. More than an assessment of Duterte's political style, he broadens Dutertismo as referring to "an entire political culture, and not just as a label for the person who becomes the repository of the public's expectations."⁹ Furthermore, he says that, "Heads of state like President Duterte are not solitary figures that stumble into the political scene by accident. They are, rather, the contingent products of a culture in which decision-making [are] seen as the duty of the brave and heroic few, rather than as the shared responsibility of active citizens and their elected representatives."¹⁰ Now, Dutertismo is no longer about Duterte. It includes those who supported him and those who believe in the power of strong

leadership to lift the country out of the quagmire of unequal development. The fault is no longer just Duterte and his brand of politics. It lies deeper—in the messianic culture engulfing the Filipino psyche.

Commenting on Duterte's method after two years in the presidency, David had this to say: "It [the method of Duterte] is one based on the methodical use of the coercive power of the state in order to intimidate dissenters, critics, skeptics, deviants, and non-cooperative individuals who, in his perception, are not taking him seriously."¹¹

Duterte has not become a dictator but he has mastered the subtle and explicit art of intimidation; whether he will become a full-pledged dictator still remains to be seen. What is clear is that Duterte had tried to live-up to his rhetoric of being a strong leader as shown by his dealings with the Philippine Airlines (PAL), in silencing his critics such as Rappler and former Chief Justice Sereno. David's reading of Duterte's politics as a short-circuited form of authoritarianism is perhaps an appropriate interpretation.

Dutertismo as a form of authoritarianism has gained a following among scholars.¹² This is perhaps through the influence of most media institutions, civil society, the church, the United Nations, and human rights groups who despise Duterte's method of shaming and naming perceived enemies of the state. Dutertismo, according to these groups, come to mean all that are opposite to the liberal democratic ethos.

Dutertismo as Radical Politics

Christopher Ryan Maboloc posits a different reading of Duterte's politics. Using Chantal Mouffe's idea of radical democracy, Maboloc argues that Duterte's politics and leadership style reflect a kind of "radical politics." Radical democracy [read as politics] is defined as "the abandonment of the concept of a perfect consensus or of a harmonious collective will and the acceptance of the permanence of conflicts and antagonisms."¹³ While this definition brings to mind the contrast of the functionalist and the conflict model of society, it rather presupposes that politics is a site of struggle between competing views, values and interests. Politics in this view highlights the fact that it is power which brings forth social change. Radical politics thrives in the permanence of social division—between "us" and "them"—in this social divide the views, values and interests of some groups

prevail over the others. Indeed, in the political arena, some groups lose while others win.

For Maboloc, while Duterte fully understands the political dynamics of the country, he also knows how traditional politics hides itself in the language of morality.¹⁴ But politics is not about acting on the basis of agreed norms of all possibly affected persons in rational discourses.¹⁵ It is about mustering a substantial support among the populace to push for a platform of actions. The effective “use of public persuasion” is a *conditio sine qua non* to fulfill this end.¹⁶ For Maboloc, Duterte’s politics stands as a complete “other” to a politics that professes consensus and communicative rationality. It banks on the reality of social division and it is founded on a clear grasp of the social animosity concealed by the rhetoric of reform and social development of Philippine politics, which is elite and Manila centered, American subservient, and church timid,¹⁷ all of which have become the object of Duterte’s ire. Indeed, Duterte’s effective articulation of the political tension between the center and the periphery gave him the momentum to win the national election. Moreover, the people’s support for his programs, even the most criticized “war on drugs,” can be attributed to it.

Examining Duterte’s language during his political campaign—like “*sila ra ang magbuot*,” “*bisaya na pod*,” and “*ato ni, bay*”—Maboloc notes that Duterte has successfully manifested “the reality of social divide that is rooted in cultural hegemony and political dominance” and articulated the “sense of solidarity for the Bisaya-speaking Filipinos”¹⁸ to take the helm of politics. But for Maboloc, Duterte’s politics is not simply an expression of regionalism. It is a “revolution from below” as it “represents the struggle of a generation that has remained anxious due to their uncertain future” and “liberates politics from the fetters of formal institutional discourses and linear dialogues.”¹⁹ Maboloc grounds his contention from the fact that Duterte took decisive action to resolve issues and problems in the country. Cases in point are: SSS pension increase, oligarchic plunder of the economy as exemplified by government’s problem with Roberto Ongpin and Lucio Tan. But most importantly, Duterte wants to rectify the historical injustice suffered by the Bangsamoro. Other than the indecisive Noynoy Aquino government, it is only Duterte who has openly accepted the legitimacy of the Bangsamoro rebellion. And it is only him who “manifest[s] the strong will...to finally offer a lasting solution to a decades old regional rebellion in the South.”²⁰ In July 2018, Congress has finally passed into law the Bangsamoro Organic Law

(BOL). Days after, Duterte has signed it into law. The BOL grants greater autonomy to the Bangsamoro.

Maboloc, however, recognizes the limits of Duterte's politics and leadership style.²¹ Yet, it cannot be denied that he gives it a generous reading. As opposed to David, he interpreted Duterte's tirades as "emphasi[zing] the value of emotion in politics."²² While David interpreted it as the aesthetization of politics, Maboloc views it as essential "to show the passion for change." While David charged Duterte's language as symptomatic of Nazism and Fascism, Maboloc claims that "[l]anguage does not seek to denote situations. Rather, it is meant to bring import to what the speaker intends to say."²³

Having acquainted with Maboloc's views on Duterte's politics and leadership style, one cannot but think that he puts forward a strong anti-elite polemic. Incidentally, Maboloc is a scholar from the south—from Davao—where Duterte served as a mayor for more than twenty years. Hence, aside from suspecting his favorable reading of Duterte's politics as anti-David, one cannot also set aside that it is more of a defense of an administration that is attacked from several fronts. Maboloc's reading of Duterte's politics as radical politics can be interpreted as a romantic musing of a staunch Duterte supporter. The fact that he is from Davao is part of an equation that cannot be left unnoticed. But like David, Maboloc is a respected scholar. Like David, his commentaries in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* give us critical analysis and insights of the current political and social conditions of the country. Thus, to simply consider him as an apologist of Duterte is to disregard his scholarly integrity and intellectual prowess.

Two Visions of Democracy in the Philippines

If David's and Maboloc's readings of the same phenomenon cannot be reduced to their personal biases, then how can we do justice to them? A meaningful reading of both requires that we move outside the realm of personalistic interpretation; through it, we do not succumb to *ad hominem*. I propose to understand their readings in the two visions of democracy in the Philippines.

The character and dynamics of Philippine politics, particularly the Philippine brand of democracy, has been an object of study by foreign and Filipino scholars. Recently, Quimpo's "contested democracy" aims to provide

an alternative framework against the dominant lenses such as the “patron-client, factional framework,” “neocolonial or dependency framework,” “elite democracy or patrimonial framework” at looking Philippine politics.²⁴

The patron-client, factional framework was developed by Carl Lande. Lande’s model was grounded on his critical analysis of the two dominant parties—the *nacionalista* and liberal—prior to the imposition of Martial Law. By looking at the nature and character of those parties, Lande asserts that party politics in the country revolves around “personal ties” and “exchange of favors” between wealthy patrons and dependent clients from the national to the provincial and local level, and down to the people. Hence, rather than working for distinct and coherent party programs which reflects the party’s sustained commitment to the electorate, politicians are emboldened by the desire to get elected in the office—a condition which necessitates that they cultivate patronage to get the people’s vote. The Philippines has no genuine political parties. There are only factions between patrons and clients.²⁵

The neocolonial or dependency was articulated mostly by Filipino nationalists associated with the left like Renato Constantino, Alejandro Lichauco, and Amado Guerrero. These theorists contend that the Philippines is a neocolony of the United States. The Philippines, even after independence, is still controlled, albeit indirectly, by the U.S., as they claim. Particularly, this means that the Philippines continues to be a market of U.S. goods, source of raw materials, and a haven for American investment—particularly of its surplus capital. In this view, the Philippine elite works as an intermediate of foreign interests. The dismal economic performance, especially in agriculture and manufacture, is attributed to the export oriented and import dependent economy. The Philippine state which is dominated by the elite, acts as the coercive organ that protects and furthers foreign interests upon the behest of its neocolonial master.²⁶

The elite democracy or patrimonial framework is a staple model for many political and social scientists. Simbulan’s *Modern Principalia*, Anderson’s “*Cacique Democracy*,” and Paredes’s “*Philippine Colonial Democracy*” underscore the continuity of the elite in the origin and development of Philippine democracy from the American colonial period to the pre-martial law years. These studies accentuate the following: the elite’s ascendancy to economic and political power in the Spanish and American colonial periods; the elite’s clandestine and brazen manipulation of state apparatuses to protect and expand their interests; and the elite’s

employment of various strategies to stay in power. Overall, the American colonial policies on the disposition of friar lands, the preferential access of Philippine agricultural products to American market, and the gradual democratization of the country have given the elite's enough leverage over the poor; and hence, cementing their hold in the social hierarchy. When the Philippines was granted full independence, the elite has metamorphosed into a national oligarchy—deliberately appropriating the political and economic resources at their disposal.²⁷ Simbulan's study is instructive: the ruling class, the modern *principalia* as he called it, is comprised of landowners, bankers, and big businessmen—hold[ing] considerable stake in shipping and transportation industries, mass media, universities and colleges.²⁸ Thus, key legislations and policy directions on exportation, importation, manufacturing, and land reform were used not only to further their interests but also as protective gears to enhance their wealth and resources. Often they benefited loans, contracts and licenses offered by the government and its attached agencies.²⁹

Indeed, from the advent of Philippine democracy, to its pre-martial law years, the Marcos years and the post-Edsa regimes, Philippine politics is dominated by the elite; political parties revolve around personalities and “personal ties;” elections are characterized by manipulation, violence, and intimidation; social justice programs are watered-down and tattered by loopholes. The pre-authoritarian politics failed to “enact necessary legislation to solve mounting socioeconomic problems” such as genuine land reform, local autonomy, rational planning on infrastructures and tax reforms.³⁰ In the Marcos years, politics was transformed into a “politics of plunder.”³¹ The return of Philippine democracy through Edsa was also a frustration. The cumulative result of these was the lack of national direction as politics was emboldened by personal aggrandizement rather than about national interest.

Over the years, various studies deepened the elite democracy or patrimonial framework. Paul Hutchcroft's *Booty Capitalism*, John Sidel's *Bossism*, McCoy's *Anarchy of Families* and Jennifer Franco's *Clientelist Electoral Regimes* develop themes on “weak state” and “strong oligarchical families.” In these studies, oligarchical families are pictured as predators siphoning and making use of state resources to enrich and perpetuate themselves in power. Moreover, oligarchical families employ various ways of political control from benign patronage to outright intimidation, coercion, and violence.³²

The dominance of each of these frameworks, according to Quimpo, corresponds to particular moments in Philippine politics, the patron-client, factional framework in pre-martial law years, the neocolonial or dependency framework in authoritarian years, and the elite democracy or patrimonial framework in the post-martial law years. The patron-client, factional framework slowly loses its explanatory powers before the martial law years as it fails to account the role of violence, intimidation, and coercion in the rivalries for power that defines the political atmosphere prior to the imposition of martial law. The neocolonial or dependency framework gained supremacy in the authoritarian years as Marcos increasingly relied for U.S. support to stay in power. It waned after Marcos was deposed and the elite came back to power. With the elite's return after EDSA 1, elite democracy and its patrimonial framework, developed by Simbulan and other scholars, was revived and regarded as an important model to explain the country's political conundrum.

Those frameworks, however, Quimpo avers, privilege a "static, one sided, and top-down view of Philippine politics."³³ The everyday struggles and initiatives of the people which sometimes manifest as political outburst in the forms of protests, strikes, or outright rebellion are muted. The HUK rebellion, the communist insurgency, the Bangsamoro and Indigenous People's struggle for self-determination and other social movements articulate an alternative view of democracy that focuses on substance rather than form. For these groups, freedom is freedom from hunger, domination and from sociopolitical and economic structures that confine some sectors of the society to live in marginal and sub-marginal conditions. Efforts of these groups to challenge the status quo push the logic of formal democracy. Integrating the logic of their struggles in a theoretical model that seeks to explain the character and dynamics of Philippine politics is necessary if Philippine democracy is to move forward.

"Contested democracy" hopes to do justice to the role of social movements in pushing Philippine democracy to its substantive form. Far from being a "patron-client," "neocolonial," or "elite," Philippine democracy is a contested one, Quimpo asserts. Recognizing the contested nature of Philippine democracy is essential to the democratization process as it does not only tell what is wrong with Philippine democracy, it informs the agent, the process, and the immediate goals of democratization. Contested democracy banks on social movements, the necessity of contestations, and redressing the historical injustices ossified by generations of social

inequality. In other words, democratization proceeds through intense social contestations; the primary agents of which are the social movements rather than the traditional political actors. Social movements address the chasm between formal democratic institutions and the need to substantiate it by confronting or directly challenging those who are in power.

As opposed to the three dominant frameworks, contested democracy privileges the role of social movements in the process of democratization. When theoretical models are silent about social movements, the unit of analysis tends to focus on social forces that muddled democracy. For Quimpo, the future of Philippine democracy lies in the social movement's engagement with traditional political actors by challenging their hold on power and by pushing for alternative forms of governance and politics. Indeed, for Quimpo, social movements must confront traditional political actors head on. It is through this, he believes, that the logic of democracy is moved towards the substantive part.

While Quimpo insists on the contested nature of Philippine democracy, he also criticizes the extreme left—the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA), and the organizations allied with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)—as they are undemocratic in their internal operations and engagement with the government. Instead of participating in the democratic processes, such as elections, the extreme left clings to revolution as the privilege path to social change. Quimpo pins his hopes in the emergent left as they have proven that the democratic process is the only viable option towards social transformation. Quimpo wants contestation to take place within the democratic space.

The point is that Quimpo's *Contested Democracy* and the dominant frameworks in the study of Philippine politics have successfully pointed out that there are two visions of democracy in the country. The first is the vision of the ruling elite. In this vision, democracy is no more than electoral and formal. The second is the vision of those who are mostly in the peripheries such as the peasants, wage earners, laborers, fisher folks, women and indigenous peoples. In this vision, democracy is about the equitable distribution of wealth and the people's sovereignty through popular participation. Some segments of the middle and upper classes also share this vision. For the ruling class, the formal democratic institutions and the holding of periodic elections are enough to make the country a democracy.

For the marginalized sectors, democracy means agrarian reform, just wages, roof over one's head, meaningful local autonomy and people's participation in governance.

Electoral or formal democracy and substantive are not necessarily at odds with each other. Formal democracy, if taken and practiced sincerely, will not only realize the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances but will also serve the ideals of justice and fair procedures resulting to social development and equity. As Maboloc opines, "[D]emocracy is about two things: substance and procedure."³⁴ Substance necessitates procedure while procedure implies substance. Barrowing the Kantian jargon, procedure without substance is empty while substance without procedure is blind. In short, the pursuit for personal and economic well-being cannot be justified if it is done at the expense of the people's liberty and freedom. Indeed, the quest for substantive democracy cannot be realized arbitrarily especially at the expense of just and fair procedures. In a fully functioning democracy, there is no distinction between the formal and substantive part.

As it is known, the formal democratic institutions in the country such as political parties, representative government, bicameral congress and a national government with three coequal branches originated from the American colonial era. Ideally, formal democratic institutions are necessary structures which channel people's interests and preferences, in the form of laws, government programs and policies to attain substantive freedom and social development. Periodic elections serve as the nexus of formal democratic institutions as it holds politicians accountable. Through periodic elections, leaders are recruited, platforms are made, and the government of the day is chosen, renewed and legitimated. Furthermore, political parties vying for the people's vote are compelled to initiate policies that reflect people's interests. Yet, in more than a century of formal democratic exercise in the country, majority of the Filipino people have yet to experience the kind of life envisioned by these democratic ideals. Even the most admired Edsa People Power Revolution that toppled the dictatorial rule of President Marcos did not make a dent in the people's lives as Philippine politics returned to its old ways and practices. In many studies, scholars faulted the ruling elite for the country's woes.

Quimpo's contested democracy tries to explain that the future of Philippine democracy lies with the subordinate's confrontation with the ruling powers. For Quimpo, this contestation happens in the democratic space

such as elections. However, history tells that meaningful contestations do not only happen in the democratic space, as Quimpo suggests. The Huk rebellion, the communist insurgency, the Bangsamoro and Indigenous People's struggle for self-determination manifest as an open defiance of an existing regime. The visions of subaltern groups are not fought within formal democratic processes, although sometimes they resort to some democratic exercises like protests and participation in the electoral process like what the Democratic Alliance did, the ruling class often employs subtle and brazen methods to thwart any desire for social reforms. The communist insurgency and Bangsamoro struggle have forced the government to open the negotiating table to resolve "historical injustices."

While the contested nature of Philippine democracy is fundamentally grounded in the opposing visions of those who benefit and lose from the current system, traditional political actors want any move towards substantive democracy to be done through the democratic process, any expressions, more than this, is out rightly branded as undemocratic. But history might reveal that a move toward substantive democracy would necessitate intense contestation even to the point of taking arms.

To confine the act of contestation within the democratic process deliberately throws the social movement's quest for substantive democracy to the wolves, Bello and Gershman brilliantly explain why the ruling powers insist the democratic process,

bourgeois democracy in the Philippines is a complex system of outer fortifications, minefields, barbed wire, and outer trenches that disperse and defuse revolutionary challenges long before they reach the inner trench that hides the repressive core of class rule... elite democracy provides a sophisticated process of screening out fundamental challenges to the social status quo... this screening process is based not only on mass socialization that brands radical proposals as illegitimate and suspect but also on the enormous advantage conferred by wealth and resources in the long, drawn-out and complex process of creating political parties, fielding candidates, waging lengthy political campaigns, dominating in the media, and last, but not least, bribing the electorate.³⁵

Through the democratic process, the hegemonic position of the ruling class is maintained. Importantly, this tells us, the ruling class's vision of democracy is not only about democracy's form. It implicitly suggests that those who aim for social transformation conduct their political activities within the ambit of the ruling power. The ruling class wants those who want to substantiate Philippine democracy to work within the democratic process.

Two Faces of Dutertismo through the Prism of the Two Visions of Democracy

It is easy to attribute David and Maboloc's views of the Duterte phenomenon to their personal taste or to their political inclinations. This does not, however, do justice to their scholarship. Furthermore, the current political atmosphere in the country necessitates caution in labeling certain perspectives. Most often, people quickly label those who have critical stance against Duterte as belonging to the opposition or the *yellowtard* and those who support him as a *Dutertard*. Name calling does not only promote hate, it hinders meaningful discussions which are essential to democracy.

There are two ways to make sense of David's notion of Dutertismo. Firstly, as a prophetic warning against authoritarianism and as an implicit call for those who aim for substantive democracy to stay in the democratic process.

Recent events such as the return of the Marcoses as prominent figures in national politics and the election of Duterte as the country's president have seem to reinforce, if not confirm, the view that the Filipino people are turning to strong leadership. When Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., the son and a namesake of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr., who ruled the country for more than twenty years, came out as a preferred vice-president in pre-election surveys in the 2016 presidential election and Rodrigo Duterte, the former Mayor of the City of Davao, who is known for his authoritarian leadership, and who has been suspected of human rights violations for allegedly being the man behind the Davao Death Squad was elected as the country's president, the defenders of Philippine democracy quickly came out and reminded the people of the horror of the martial law years. The prominence of Marcos Jr. and the election of Duterte are interpreted by some scholars as symptomatic of the people's amnesia of the martial law and a clear flirtation with authoritarian rule. The political pendulum, after more than thirty years of democratic experiment, seems to be swinging back to

authoritarianism. But whether these developments culminate to—what the defenders of democracy fears most—authoritarianism, only time can tell. It is not, however, naïve to think that the atmosphere of authoritarianism seems to be lurking in the corner. Indeed, the possibility of an authoritarian return cannot be simply brushed aside given the present social condition.

David is well aware that any able demagogue can exploit the present situation and bring into fruition the reality of authoritarian rule. In this case, Duterteism could be read as a prophetic warning to remind the people not to be trapped again with the sweet promises of authoritarianism as an easy path to solve the country's woes. David reminds that we've been here before—during the Marcos years. Reminiscing the Martial Law era, he wrote: "Marcos and his henchmen had read Philippine society very well. They knew that its democratic institutions benefited only a small segment of the nation... Marcos projected himself as someone who knew what he was doing."³⁶ Building on the people's dissatisfaction of the post-war democracy, Marcos has successfully exploited the people's sentiment. Like Duterte, he appealed to strong leadership and people believed him, including some brilliant academicians and technocrats. And yet we knew how the Marcos experiment resulted to an unprecedented horror. For David, we are in the same situation now. And, "[T]he will to authoritarianism is alive in all societies that seek an easy way out of the complexities of modern politics in the simplistic rationality of command leadership."³⁷ The Marcos years should have given us a lesson.

David's criticism of Duterte's politics and leadership style suggests that any move towards social equity and development must proceed through the complex process of modern governance and institutional procedures. He suspects that simplistic approaches, such as strong leadership, to redress the country's problems, might bring more harm than good. However, to directly brand the president's politics and leadership style as a form of authoritarianism is likewise laden with problems. Firstly, to simply uphold the democratic process is to be oblivious of the fact how these mechanisms were subverted and bastardized by the ruling powers. In fact, historically, it was the glaring manipulation of these mechanisms which led people to disillusionment and hence opening the void for the possibility of authoritarianism. Secondly, to unquestioningly agree and accept David's position does not only make us complicit, it places us aboveground of the historical origins and development of the nation's democratic experience.

David's reading is possessed by the amnesia of how the ruling elite make use of the democratic processes to perpetuate themselves in power.

Maboloc's favorable reading of the president's politics and leadership style takes cognizance of "undemocratic ways" to deepen and substantiate democracy. We need not go far, Edsa 1 and 2 are living models how extra-constitutional mechanisms changed a corrupt regime and brought back the democratic ideals. In the president's mind, to address criminality, corruption, drug menace, and the Bangsamoro's quest for greater autonomy will gain substantial foothold if done within and outside the democratic ways. While the president threatens to kill criminals, drug lords and users, he did not make any explicit declarations or directives to the Philippine National Police to carry his orders outside the bounds of law. What is certain is that the president is playing his card well. He knows that a little of "authoritarian atmosphere" is necessary to shaken Philippine democracy.

By reading the Duterte phenomenon as a form of radical politics, Maboloc appeals to the long history of struggle by subordinate classes. In this spectrum, the desire for social change is expressed outside the bounds of the democratic process. Politics is radical. It is *Realpolitik*. It is violent and coercive. While David privileges the institutional approach to social change, Maboloc amplifies the vision of subordinate classes as recourse to social transformation.

More than anything, David's and Maboloc's readings reveal the deep-seated division in the country. While it is important to recognize the value of democratic ethos such as rational deliberation, the absence of coercion to get people to do something, following rules and procedures, it is also necessary to be aware that majority of the Filipinos have grown weary, if not totally discontented with the democratic rhetoric. If all of what we have today is the only thing that Philippine democracy is to offer, I think, those in the bottom of the social ladder are willing to bet in strong leadership or in any form of authoritarianism just to attain the kind of life they want. It is risky and people know it. But, I think, people are willing to gamble with that kind of uncertainty rather than pin their hopes to a process that has not yielded results for so long. Rephrasing Marx, "[the subordinate classes] have nothing to lose but their chains." As long as the Philippine society does not address social inequality in political and economic resources, the ghost of "undemocratic ways" as a way to radically resolve the country's lingering sociopolitical and economic problems will always have a place in the hearts

of the people. If the current sociopolitical and economic structures continue, a lot of Dutertes are still to come.

Will Duterte's brand of politics bring the desired social change? It is up for history to tell us. For now, critical and supportive readings of Duterte's politics and leadership style, like that of David and Maboloc, are necessary. Any direction towards authoritarianism must be criticized at all cost. But, any efforts to challenge and shaken the ruling order are all the more important. We hope that this tension will bring the creative spirit of the Filipinos buried by years of colonization, domination and oppression. The rise of Duterte and the politics he is bringing brought to light the longings of the marginalized sectors which have been left in the shadows for so long. Philippine politics can no longer remain "business as usual." Something ought to be done.

Chapter 2

Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model: Duterte and Mass Media

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This essay attempts to show how vulnerable a reputable news agency is to unperceived media deterioration and corruption. In so doing, the authors apply the propaganda model to analyze what seemed to be a breaking point of one of the leading news organizations in the Philippines. The case in point is the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, also known as PCIJ, which for many years has acquired the respect and reputation among many journalists and news readers. The propaganda model, on the other hand, seeks to inquire upon the media structure and performance, rather than on the effects of the media on the public.³⁸ The propaganda model was first conceptualized and popularized by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* published in 1988. It is “an analytical framework that attempts to explain the performance of the U.S. media in terms of the basic institutional structures and relationships within which they operate.”³⁹ The underlying view is that aside from the other functions of media which is to inform and democratize the public, it also “serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them.”⁴⁰

The PCIJ, in contrast to the corporate media, has its own unique structure as it has no recognized owner nor owned by any media conglomerate, though it remained largely a private entity. The authors, nonetheless, insist that PCIJ is not at all different from any corporate agencies since its members, most if not all, are affiliated with other corporate businesses, to which integrity and interests they still are obliged to keep up and have advertisers and clients to protect for having occupied important positions in these companies. For instance, Howie G. Severino is the vice president for professional development of GMA Network, Inc.; Atty. Ma. Pilar Martinez-Caedo is the corporate secretary of Asia United Insurance, Inc. and

at the same time a lawyer at Martinez-Caedo Law Office; Dominic Danao is a businessman and entrepreneur; Shiela S. Coronel is a professor and dean at Columbia University in the City of New York; David Celdran is director for current affairs and television production of the ABS-CBN News Channel; Lisa Gokongwei-Cheng is an heiress of one of the wealthiest patriarchs in the Philippines, a publishing mogul who serves as the president of Summit Media (Cosmopolitan, FHM, Candy, TopGear, etc.) and as director of Robinsons Bank Corporation/Robinsons Savings Bank, and also an avid supporter of Vice President Leni Robredo right from the start of the 2016 election campaign; Atty. Jose Manuel Diokno is dean at DLSU College of Law, executive director of Diokno Law Center, and chair of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), (Diokno is currently in the line-up of senatorial aspirants under the Liberal Party (LP) ticket, the political party that came under fire in the Duterte administration); Malou Mangahas is vice president for research and content development of GMA News and Public Affairs.⁴¹ ABS-CBN and GMA-7 are known for its editorials which are highly critical of President Duterte. Finally, the whole point of this article is to show how Duterte is deliberately being attacked by the aforesaid media as observed in many instances, for example, in the airing of a political campaign advertisement by ABS-CBN⁴² (as well as GMA-7) directly portraying a negative moral character of Duterte with the use of children.⁴³ More so, Duterte claimed that he paid ABS-CBN for a political advertisement which the network never aired. ABS-CBN did not return the money.⁴⁴

The Propaganda Model of Herman and Chomsky

Herman and Chomsky⁴⁵ identified five general types of filters wherein the news is framed in favor of the corporate interests of the media as private businesses and of the interests of its advertisers and patrons. These five general categories of news filters are, namely: (a) size, financial ownership, and its profit orientation, wherein the wealthy elites control major media conglomeration through business capitals, business interests, business partnerships, allies and associates; (b) funding through advertising, wherein the income of the news agency depends upon the advertisers' biases towards consumer culture and wealth idolization; (c) news sourcing, wherein elite institutions and data experts subsidize the news with "objective" information presumed to be accurate; (d) flak and the enforcers, wherein the wealthy elites produce costly flak to discipline news outlets and "left wing" groups; and (e) ideology, wherein a framework is formed that defines what are acceptable ideas and thereby creates "unity" through a common enemy.

These filters are so linked together in which the news media is viewed primarily as a capitalistic entity.⁴⁶ Undeniably, the mass media is mutually interdependent with capitalism as the latter is also able to enhance consumerism through media advertisements. Can there still be a hope for a media that is devoid of capitalistic interest? The kind of media that gains independence from capitalist and political claws to be able to serve better its purpose of press freedom and media responsibility.

In an essay that came out in 2000, Edward S. Herman captured the essence of the propaganda model in a simple but modern description.⁴⁷ To describe financial ownership, Herman writes, “They are profit-seeking businesses, owned by very wealthy people (or other companies).”⁴⁸ To describe funding through advertisements, “they are funded largely by advertisers who are also profit-seeking entities, and who want their advertisements to appear in a supportive selling environment.”⁴⁹ To describe news sourcing, “The media also lean heavily on government and major business firms as information sources and both efficiency and political considerations and, frequently, overlapping interests, cause a certain degree of solidarity to prevail among the government, major media and other corporate businesses.”⁵⁰

To describe flak and the enforcers, “Government and large non-media business firms are also best positioned (and sufficiently wealthy) to be able to pressure the media with threats of withdrawal of advertising or TV licenses, libel suits and other direct and indirect modes of attack.”⁵¹ And finally, he describes the fifth filter which he refers to as ideology, “The media are also constrained by the dominant ideology, which heavily featured anti-communism before and during the Cold War era and was often mobilized to induce the media to support (or refrain from criticizing) US attacks on small states that were labeled communist.”⁵²

Though Herman and Chomsky’s analysis are focused on the US media, they both asserted the theory’s applicability to the media outside of the US soil as media capitalism is a global phenomenon. It is through this model but in a localized version that PCIJ’s recent image will be analyzed and appropriated vis-à-vis the circumstances related to the media portrayal of Duterte’s public image and presidency.

The Given Situation

The search for a trusted, credible, and reputable media in the country is very much desired, especially in this turbulent time when a greater number of the populace began questioning the reputations of the country's major media outlets, attuned in the so-called global era of the fake news. A series and number of events had occurred that caused these unrelenting criticisms of the Philippine media and its journalism practices. It began in the campaign period of the 2016 elections. Then presidential candidate Rodrigo Roa Duterte, or infamously known as "Digong," was perceived as underdog for many reasons. He had claimed the lack of campaign funds due to unprecedented candidacy. He, being the only candidate from down south, had been at an unfair disadvantage for the lack of media mileage, and being only a mayor from the far city of Davao, as compared to opponents from leading political parties, who have acquired a national position in government either as incumbent vice president, as incumbent senator, or as cabinet secretary.⁵³ Despite the fact that Duterte later gained the sympathy of the crowd, and eventually became a crowd favorite at rallies, his supporters suspected of character sabotage as his campaign rallies are rarely the content of daily news, limited only to what can be conceived as a negative propaganda through media's close scrutiny of his unusual cursing in public, his threats to kill crime suspects, his unusual jokes upon rape victims, and his annoyance to the Church and its leaders, mostly on live television interviews and live video feeds at rallies.

As it is often said about 'mischievous destiny,' fate indeed is a joker as Duterte's fate brought him to become the 16th President of the Philippine Republic after winning a landslide victory against rival Mar Roxas, Liberal Party's standard-bearer. Soon after Duterte assumed presidency, the tumult between the president-elect and the media practitioners had grown intense as the president himself uttered in a press conference that the journalists who had been killed were either receiving money for news or involved in extortion activities. Outraged of the president-elect's statement, a group of journalists called for a media boycott for which the president-elect audaciously accepted as a challenge and even dared the protesting journalists to let alone matters about his Presidency and governance, saved only for the government-owned television network.⁵⁴

PCIJ's Reputation

Speaking of media's reputation, the PCIJ has been recognized for years of its unblemished credibility as an internationally awarded news agency. It instigated in 2001 the toppling down of then President Joseph Estrada after its exposé⁵⁵ of his "midnight cabinet" and involvement in the *jueteng* operations.⁵⁶ The PCIJ prides itself in being an independent and nonprofit media agency that specializes in "investigative reporting." It was established in 1989 by nine Filipino journalists who were well-experienced in the field and who had realized the need for an independent media bureau that goes beyond "day-to-day reportage" to a detailed, substantive, and meticulous gathering of data, so-called 'investigative' reportage, claiming that "deadline pressures, extreme competition, budgetary constraints, and safety issues" had restrained many newsmakers from delving into the deeper roots and the wider contexts of news, events, and issues. As a reputable organization, it aimed to "encourage the development of investigative journalism and to create a culture for it within the Philippine press."⁵⁷

The PCIJ has a varied source of funds that come from "revenues from the sales of publications and videos as well as contributions from *PCIJ Patrons* (who donated P3,000 to P10,000 each a year and get *PCIJ products* in return)" [emphasis mine]. The PCIJ is also known for conducting and organizing training seminars for "journalists, journalism teachers, and students in the Philippines" and other Southeast Asian countries, "the Pacific Islands, and the South African subcontinent" from 1990 to 2012. From these, the PCIJ "also makes money by conducting [these] journalism training in the Philippines and other countries." Another source of funds for the PCIJ is the revenue that "comes from the proceeds of an Endowment Fund whose money was donated by the Ford Foundation (the rest was contributed by PCIJ revenues). That donation came with few conditions, only that the money be properly managed and used to fund PCIJ operations." Lastly, PCIJ also received "grants for *special projects*" [emphasis mine, whatever that means] that formed part of the funding budget.⁵⁸

It is ultimately out of these funding structures by which the PCIJ had claimed of its being an independent body due to an apparent absence of media owners and advertisers. In their own words, the PCIJ asserted "we are beholden neither to media owners nor to advertisers nor even to grant-giving organizations (the diversity of our funding base allows us to *choose the projects we want to do* with donors and to set our own terms with them).

We are, however, *accountable to our board* and ultimately, to our readers” [emphasis mine].⁵⁹

To note, the PCIJ does not have its own television network, but instead sells its documentary films to mainstream media such as GMA-7, under a certain business contract, or agreement.⁶⁰ Hence, for obvious reasons, there is no good outlet and medium for the commercial advertisers as they do not have a company-owned media platform, such as, a television network, or a daily broadsheet, but limited only to book and magazine publications, news website, and training seminars. But this does not necessarily mean they cannot obtain sponsors, their news content itself can also be their product aside from their medium, and in fact, is more significant than their medium for having been engaged in what is called “investigative journalism.”

The Challenging Times of President Duterte

The unorthodox leadership of President Duterte has spawned criticisms from the media that ranges from his personal lifestyle, his family life, his public policies and political decisions, and down to his alleged political cronies or allies. His critics also range from the religious sector, human rights advocates, and the rival political party. The thorniest of all these criticisms is his alleged involvement to vigilante killings, known as EJKs, or extra-judicial killings, to which protests had reached the ICC (International Criminal Court) as well as it also brought him into trouble with the UN, EU, and with the former US President Barrack Obama.

On February 28, 2017, the PCIJ published an article⁶¹ through their online website, a story containing some revelations taken from a 70-page diary or journal claimed to be owned and written by SPO3 Arturo Lascañas. Lascañas himself handed a few pages to the PCIJ to which they also reproduced a copy for their news website and inviting attention to all journalists to publish as well. As written in his journals, Lascañas claimed that then Mayor of Davao City, now President Rodrigo Duterte, had ordered the killings done by the Davao Death Squad, and Lascañas recognized himself as the major player in that killing squad. Aside from that, the PCIJ also featured a video interview with SPO3 Lascañas that is also published online through PCIJ’s own website and the news agency’s social media accounts.⁶² If indeed all these allegations are true, this could now be a fatal blow to Duterte’s presidency which could possibly support subsequent plans for impeachment complaint and a criminal case to be filed at the International

Criminal Court (ICC) against the Philippine president which are all aimed at ousting the president out from his position.⁶³

However, on March 3, 2017, Rigoberto D. Tiglao, who claimed to be among the pioneers and one of the nine Filipino journalists who founded the PCIJ in 1989, came up with what can be described as a drastic criticism of the PCIJ's move to publicize Lascañas. Tiglao wrote, in an article published in the opinion page of Manila Times, "the PCIJ should now stop degrading the term 'investigative journalism.' It is so scandalous that a once prestigious institution that helped develop journalistic excellence in this country doesn't seem to realize that because of its journalistic sloppiness, it has spread canards against the President of the Republic."⁶⁴ Tiglao accuses Senator Antonio Trillanes IV of sabotaging the PCIJ to disseminate such "rubbish black propaganda."⁶⁵ According to Tiglao, Sen. Trillanes "managed to put the PCIJ brand on his hoax 'journal' to give it credibility." He adds, "it is neither an investigative piece that is the result of painstaking research, but merely the dissemination of a fake document from a single, biased source. Nor is it even journalism as we know it, as it didn't even subject the "journal" to some textual analysis or even interview Lascañas to test him if he really wrote it, as journalists simply doing their job would."⁶⁶

Part of Tiglao's criticism is that at his very own calculation being a writer as he is, Lascañas could not possibly have written in such a very grandiloquent manner, using words like "Presidential derby," "Divine Trap," "political Waterloo," in which accordingly could only be possible unless Lascañas had "taken a course in European history," or had "read a novel in the English language."⁶⁷ Tiglao opines that Lascañas, as also known to many, is only a "non-commissioned officer" who spoke "not in English but in Filipino" during the Senate interrogation by which time, Lascañas "backed President Duterte."⁶⁸ Tiglao also pointed out that the PCIJ executive director Malou Mangahas, together with "her colleagues at PCIJ helped detonate in 1993 the bombshell that a Supreme Court (SC) justice wasn't really the author of his decision defending the Philippine Long Distance Co. (PLDT) that was adopted by the entire SC tribunal, but the company's lawyer wrote it. (The SC justice resigned in disgrace.)"⁶⁹ Tiglao merely skirmishes how could they (the PCIJ) not at least hesitate for once with regards to the authenticity of Lascañas's "journal," nor perform some textual analysis on the journal entries.⁷⁰ Tiglao accuses Senator Antonio Trillanes IV and Senator Leila de Lima to have masterminded such maneuver.⁷¹ He also drags the name of Atty. Jose Manuel Diokno, one of the PCIJ board members, who

happens to be the lawyer of both Senator Leila de Lima and SPO3 Arturo Lascañas. Tiglao suspected that the journal could have been written “by one of the FLAG lawyers, who were all anti-Marcos activists” for the usage of such term as “Marcos regime,” instead of “Marcos government” or “Marcos administration,” as Lascañas would have most likely used.⁷² Atty. Jose Manuel Diokno is also currently the chair of Free Legal Assistance Group, or FLAG, an organization which Jose Manuel Diokno’s father had formed. Jose Manuel Diokno, who was at the same time a counsel of De Lima, was also part of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) panel that presented the Davao policeman SPO3 Arturo Lascañas before the media at the Senate hearing.

The PCIJ, however, wrote a response on Tiglao’s accusations which was also published on March 3, 2017. The PCIJ categorically denies any involvement of Senator Trillanes, Senator de Lima, and of anyone among the FLAG lawyers. The PCIJ also stood firm in asserting that “neither Atty. Diokno nor any of the FLAG lawyers had anything to do with the writing of the journal of SPO3 Arturo Lascañas or the publication of the PCIJ story.”⁷³ The PCIJ, however, neglected to answer why there was no attempt to probe supposedly committed on the part of the PCIJ with regards the authenticity of the Lascañas’s “journal” prior to any public distribution of such material, an aspect which Tiglao highlighted on his argument. The PCIJ simply assumed the genuineness of the journal (contrary to what it has already and usually done in the past, namely, to critically examine and scrutinize so-called evidence), but rather proceeded immediately on verifying the facts that are mentioned in the journal despite of its questionable authorship. The response article of the PCIJ seemingly appeared only to save face what used to be the agency’s unblemished reputation amidst public criticism, as it does not answer in detail piece by piece every question hurled against it.

The PCIJ Filters

It is thru these localized appropriations of Herman and Chomsky’s “propaganda model” that the authors would like to argue on the probability of a network of influences of the ideologies and interests collectively held by the PCIJ colleagues to influence somehow upon each other, in terms of authoritative power by seniority and affinity, thereby together serving as a selective bias to their views being united as a single media institution that is responsible and committed for providing the whole nation of nothing but the whole truth. The presence of business persons and political figures in the

PCIJ could highly give a suspicion with regards its own business and political interests, a category that can fall under Herman and Chomsky's analysis of the financial ownership of the media organization as a primary filter.

The PCIJ, though not primarily an advertising medium and does not show an apparent line-up of advertisers, is not excluded from the second filter which Herman and Chomsky refers to as "funding through advertisement". In the absence of a company-owned television network, the PCIJ continue to air news documentaries through the mainstream GMA Network, particularly, in the TV show "Investigative Documentaries" hosted by Malou Mangahas herself.⁷⁴ This could mean that the PCIJ staff and board need to consider the interests and biases of GMA-7 and its advertisers, particularly that Mangahas also occupies the top post as vice president for content of the said network. Aside from that, the PCIJ readily acknowledges the support and contribution that they have received from their "patrons," which could be in the likes of Senator Antonio Trillanes and Senator Leila de Lima, as believed by Tiglao,⁷⁵ as well as from corporations and institutions who are behind the PCIJ funds, whose business and political interests PCIJ had to reconsider.

The author said to be behind the so-called journal or diaries in the person of SPO3 Arturo Lascañas is up until now has gone into hiding and has never ever surfaced since then. His last reported appearance was being under the witness's protection program of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV who presented the former as his piece of evidence against Duterte's EJKs. The PCIJ's persistence with regards the authenticity of Lascañas's diaries can be categorized under Herman and Chomsky's analysis of the news sourcing, wherein a false and fabricated data be given legitimacy thru official declaration by agencies and institutions, and by repetitively replicating it so.

With these complicated set-up and financial structure of the PCIJ operation, their writers and researchers are naturally under the clutch and control of its bosses who, based on the Propaganda Model, are the power relationship that worked in framing their subjects. Investigative reporting, in its real essence, is good only when the subject under investigation does not in any sense contradicts or in conflict to the interests of its patrons by which the news agency is bound to protect. It is in this sense that "flak and the enforcers," which Herman and Chomsky considered to be the fourth filter, intervenes in the actual writing and in the selection and preferences of news entries, through the editing process and choice of issues to be tackled, with

certain pressures from within. Altogether as one media organization, the staff, researchers, and the editorial board are united in one common goal, that is, to produce exposés that can discredit the Duterte administration, as evidenced by their strong confidence of the Lascañas journal despite of which authenticity remains questionable. True to their brand of “investigative reporting,” the PCIJ never spared any mercy to the Duterte administration, the same goes with other media and news entities, especially those which Duterte threatened for closure of its operation, such as the controversial Rappler, ABS-CBN, and Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI).⁷⁶

On another hand, the persistent demoralizing and negative portrayal of the president’s character through the media contributes to what Herman and Chomsky referred to as “ideology” or anti-communism, the fifth category which they later relate to fear and terrorism, after the World Trade Center attacks. It is no coincidence that Duterte, since the start of the election campaign, was continuously branded as a dictator, a mass executioner, a womanizer, a blasphemer, a corruptor, a drug lord himself, wherein the Church, the rival political party, and media critics found a common agenda whose stereotyping translates to attacks against the President and anybody they perceived as his allies and followers.

Through these five (5) filters of the Propaganda Model which Herman and Chomsky identifies, the suspicious credibility of the PCIJ is now revealed to the attention of its readers as to whom and to what interests this news agency is protecting for – no other than its elite “patrons”. It then becomes clear that the recent image of the PCIJ to readers are not different from the shameful nature of corporate-owned media agencies – serving not the masses but the self-interests of the elites. Contrary to its website’s banner slogan that reads: “We tell it like it is. No matter who. No matter what,” the PCIJ also has its own covert vested interests, just like any other corporate media conglomerates and news organizations.

Duterte and ABS-CBN

Duterte is predisposed to oppose the renewal of business permit of ABS-CBN alleging that it is unable to pay its duly required taxes. The complicated links that connect the eventual feud between ABS-CBN and Duterte began from a distant past in the Philippines’s dark history. ABS-CBN Corporation⁷⁷ is a giant and powerful media conglomerate, owned by the Lopez family of Iloilo, which was shut down by Marcos during martial law

years. ABS-CBN is just one among the many businesses of the Lopez Group (formerly, Benpres Holdings), of which includes the Meralco (Manila Electric Co.) whose Chairman and CEO is Manuel M. Lopez (named after his godfather Manuel Roxas, the fifth President of the Philippines from Iloilo). Manuel Araneta Roxas II, also known as Mar Roxas, the former President's grandson, is Duterte's rival in the 2016 presidential election. Mar Roxas's mother, Judy Araneta Roxas, co-owns with siblings the Araneta Group of businesses that manages the Araneta Coliseum and nearby establishments in Cubao, and a vast sugar refinery in Bago City, Negros Occidental. Mar Roxas's wife, Korina Sanchez, is a popular TV host and news anchor of ABS-CBN. Eugenio "Geny" Lopez, Jr., who manages ABS-CBN during Marcos's time, became a critic of the latter which became the reason for his imprisonment but managed to escape during the Martial Law era. Duterte is perceived as a crony and ally of the late dictator's son, former Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr.⁷⁸

Duterte, the Aquinos, and the Journalistic Practice in the Philippines

The former President Benigno Simeon "Noy" C. Aquino III of the Liberal Party also comes from a long line of descent from the Philippines' most elite and wealthiest family hierarchy. Aquino's mother, also former President, Corazon C. Aquino descended from the Cojuangco clan of Tarlac, who married the late Senator Benigno Simeon "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr. who is also a scion from a rich political clan of Tarlac. Noy Aquino's youngest sibling, Kris Aquino, works as an influential TV host and actress of ABS-CBN. The Cojuangco family owns the controversial sugar plantation known as Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, where a violent dispersal of protesting farmers resulted to 7 deaths and injured at least 200 others in 2004.⁷⁹

Senatorial aspirant for 2019 midterm election, Atty. Jose Manuel "Chel" Diokno, one of PCIJ's directorial board, is son of former Senator Jose "Pepe" W. Diokno who founded the FLAG (Free Legal Assistance Group) in 1974 after his released from imprisonment. Pepe Diokno was arrested for his involvement in the protest rallies against President Marcos and was detained along with Ninoy Aquino at the Fort Bonifacio. FLAG provides "free legal assistance" to Martial Law victims who suffered injustices by the dictatorial regime. As a matter of fact, among LP's 2019 senatorial line-up is Erin Tañada, the grandson of former Senator Lorenzo Tañada who was also imprisoned, released, and founded the FLAG together with the late former Senator Diokno.⁸⁰

In his essays, Christopher Ryan Maboloc⁸¹ proposed that the “grammar of dissent”⁸² against the failures of the EDSA revolution and the elitist democracy of Aquino that paved the way for the Duterte phenomenon. It is in the growing discontent of the Filipino people towards the inefficient governance of the country led by the elites who are insensitive to the plight of the poor and the marginalized that have catapulted Duterte to power as he exhibited a perfect braggadocio of political will.⁸³ Maboloc says that Duterte has become the voice of the powerless, such as the OFWs and the Moro people of Muslim Mindanao. The “grammar of dissent”⁸⁴ according to Maboloc is “often identified with anti-imperialist agenda” and that “it advances the attitude against cultural hegemony”.⁸⁵ True enough, there is no doubt then that the scions of the Aquinos, the Cojuangcos, the Aranetas, the Lopezes, the Gokongweis, the Dioknos, and the Tañadas remained to be among the business elites and the richest families and political clans in the country and they comprise as members and supporters of the Liberal Party (LP) in the Philippines’ political history up to this very day. Their complicated connection to the media is sealed and inevitable.

Though it remained a reputable job, journalism in the Philippines has never been utterly clean and truly honest ever since. In the Editor’s Note as well as in the opening line of their press release of the book *News for Sale: The Corruption and Commercialization of the Philippine Media* written by Chay Florentino-Hofileña, the PCIJ readily admitted in saying that “No one in journalism will deny that media corruption exists.”⁸⁶ The book *News for Sale* reveals the nasty and cunning practices of journalism that thrives on electioneering practices in the Philippines as the book’s title itself conveys. It cannot be described here in great detail the media corruption that is being hinted above due to a limited space but allow these excerpts from Florentino-Hofileña’s book that was published by PCIJ in 2004 to hopefully give a clear picture of what is happening behind the camera, “Our study of media corruption in the 1998 and 2004 elections clearly shows that corruption among journalists in the Philippines is institutionalized. It is endemic in the media environment. It is not simply a case of individual reporters gone wrong but of a media structure that has condoned corruption and allowed it to continue and proliferate in various forms.”⁸⁷ Florentino-Hofileña continues, “Because political advertising was banned, many candidates diverted funds that would otherwise have gone to advertising to such institutional arrangements and to other forms of corrupting—and buying—journalists.”⁸⁸

The PCIJ, however, being one of the country’s foremost journalism institutions, cannot be exempted from the findings just quoted above. It is an

enigma as to why the *News for Sale* project was discontinued after Noyonoy won the presidency in 2010. Understandably, they are preoccupied finding fault with Digong in 2016.

Weighing the Media Bias

The PCIJ highlighted in their website certain statistics about the number of deaths suspected to be summary executions or extrajudicial killings. Protesters used these data to show the dictatorial tendency of the current administration under President Duterte. Activists readily and conclusively accuses President Duterte to be the one behind the deaths of innocent Lumad leaders, and their volunteer teachers. What is amazing, however, is that when equally bloody incidents occurred but during the administration of the former President Aquino, in time during the APEC Summit in Cebu in 2015, there was an amazingly dead silence in the media about these concerns, except for dismissing the killings as NPA-related.⁸⁹ For instance, on August 31, 2015, a year before the Duterte presidency, the founder and executive director of Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV) with two other fellow tribal leaders were murdered brutally and mercilessly in broad daylight by alleged military-trained paramilitary troops known as “Magahat-Bagani” that also harassed and occupied the indigenous schools and villages of Sitio Han-ayan, Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur. Likewise, a month later, on September 28, 2015, another Lumad leader is ambushed in the person of Lito Abion, an active member of Tagdumahan, which is a collective resistance of local tribes against the mining operations and land-grabbing in the Manobo and Banwaon ancestral lands in Agusan del Sur. The deaths were so alarming that it resulted to the evacuation and permanent displacement of estimated 3,000 Lumad peoples all over Mindanao. At the height of these tragic events, the media, including the PCIJ, were so oblivious to the bloody fate of these Lumad leaders. The news even reached international audience first before it gained attention nationally and locally, through user-generated social media accounts instead from the country’s own major news media outlets. The Lumad tribes had suffered in frustration for the lack of media mileage with regards the difficulty of their conditions, which is obviously contrary to the media’s overwhelming response of similar events in the Duterte era. Duterte is undeniably being demonized in his efforts for the “war on drugs”. A fair and unbiased account is missing. Even headlines are purposely tweaked to give a diabolic and negative impression, with images that are obviously

staged and enhanced, and deliberately selective portraying only the ugly side of president Digong.

Conclusion

With the internal structure of major media outlets in the Philippines, often a part of a conglomerate and profit-oriented, and much more corrupted, they can never be a true voice of democracy as they still serve the interests of the elites and the corporations. On the other hand, the user-generated content which is a feature of the social media has the potential to create the possible hope for the voiceless as they are provided with a platform that truly voices out the sentiment of the people better than the self-serving corporate media. Social media has a cheaper, wider, and efficient mileage. Duterte, however, was strongly accused by the “liberals” of using “trolls” for his campaign and to advance his agenda. Undeniably, the Duterte campaign took advantage of such medium or platform that effectively won him the presidency.

Furthermore, it can now be presumed from the nature of politics in the Philippines that Rodrigo Duterte, being outside of the once dominant political circle reigning in the country, is thereby considered an adversary to the vested interests that these varied elite groups try to protect through the media they control. The PCIJ played a very important role in leading and shaping the direction of news reportage in the country. Being a powerful elite media authority, it invests with all its might to criticize the Duterte regime as it supplied, produced, and been accused of fabricating the sources that served as basis to discredit the legitimate government and influence the public opinion in the discussions of government and political matters under the Duterte administration.

There is a discrepancy, however, with the original intentions of the framers of the propaganda model as Herman and Chomsky were referring to the possible connivance between the US government and the US media conglomerates, particularly in its concept of “flak and the enforcers” in its role in providing the public of relevant information, with relation to the concern for government transparency. Herman and Chomsky conceptualized the propaganda model theory at a period when the US government and the US media conspired or in a friendly atmosphere towards each other against the interests of the public. They first published their book in 1988. The case of the Duterte leadership is totally a different story, in which Duterte is perceived

as a challenge to the traditional elitist politics of the Aquino and the Liberal Party, which has tight connections in the media. In the same manner that Trump is a pain in the neck of CNN and most of the US media, Duterte continues to be the target of major news companies under the blatant influence of the Filipino elites.

Chapter 3

THE PHILIPPINE POLITICAL ECONOMY UNDER PRESIDENT DUTERTE

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Contemporary philosopher Slavoj Žižek claims that violence is not simply something that is done by a clear subject (mob, single criminal, and secret police), the point is you know who did it. Violence also comes in what he termed as objective violence, one that is without a clear agent responsible for the act. Objective violence is caused by the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems. It is a form of violence which goes on but we don't even notice it as violence because what we know about violence is the disturbance of the established order.⁹⁰

Objective violence is considered as the background for the exposition of the subjective violence. A form of violence, one that goes on quite naturally, like capitalist violence, is anonymous and systemic. We are unable to determine who is guilty but we experience it as a pseudo-natural catastrophe, such as thousands of workers getting unemployed or millions of small shareholders losing everything they have. It is a form of violence that just happens but nobody seems responsible.⁹¹

Drawing from Žižek notion of objective violence, this study focuses on the presidency of Duterte and the Philippine political economy. The provocative language of Duterte participates in the hope of those who are excluded. The Filipinos have been tired of hearing that Philippine economy is performing well and that economically the Philippines is no longer perceived as the "sick man of Asia". Thus, this study is deemed to focus on politics and economics. It is evident that progress is as much a consequence of political organization as of the conditions in the economy. It manifests that society's laws could be described in the same economic principles used to explicate society's choice of roads, bridges, hospitals, and schools.⁹²

Furthermore, to elaborate the point of the study, a critical analysis is employed. First, it discusses the Philippine politics and economy from the Spanish to the American period. It highlights the transformation of primitive politics and economy in the Philippines as shaped by colonialism. It is intended to highlight the course of objective violence which at the present becomes systemic. Second, it examines the divided political and economic policy from Estrada to the Aquino III administration. Finally, the paper exposes the place of Duterte's political and economic policies by examining his projects, particularly the War on Drugs, Diplomacy and Dutertenomics.

Philippine Colonial Subjugation

The history of the Philippines has had many misfortunes from different interlopers whose cultural heritage through hobnobbing carved a deep scar. First came the Spaniards who lifted the Filipinos from the mythic *engkantos* and *anitos*. Then, came the Americans whose principal agent of Americanization was the public school system. The Western master stroke in education policy was the adoption of English as the medium of instruction. Then, there came the Japanese who unfettered Filipinos from the American capitalism through propaganda. Finally, the Americans liberated the Filipinos from a form of Japanese fascism.⁹³

The absence of political unity allowed our colonizers to impose and establish a feudal colonial rule. All the protestations of friendship, equality, and brotherhood were empty words which meant nothing in practical terms. The Spanish, American and Japanese rule also caused an interruption and the redirection of technology, economy, religion, politics and society.⁹⁴ However, the political machinery of the colonizers provided politically minded Filipinos a social order that can be used to achieve power, thus emerge a new political class, who poured time and resources learning the new system to work for them. The Filipino elites took advantage of the opportunities opened to them by the concept of private property.⁹⁵

The Spanish, American and Japanese subjugation of the Philippines eventually shaped the lives of the native population. The colonial rule forced the natives to adapt to new ways, to take on the immense labor of producing food for their masters and for themselves, causing to develop a consciousness of national solidarity from a century of common grievances. Then, the educational reforms and the economic progress pave the way for the Filipinos to liberate themselves from the shackles of "Platonic ignorance."

The revolution was nourished by liberal democratic ideas that were imbibed by Filipino reformists, interpreted and propagated by them among their countrymen, through the characters of their novels, poems and in forming organizations.⁹⁶

Philippine Political Economy under Estrada, Arroyo and Aquino

The discussion approaches the examination of politics and economy of the 21st century Philippines by critically reflecting the governance of Estrada, Arroyo and Aquino III. It is deemed relevant to tackle their political and economic agendas sourced from various medium.

Joseph Ejercito Estrada (1998-2001)

In 1998, the actor-turned-politician Joseph Ejercito Estrada was elected as the thirteenth President of the Republic of the Philippine. Estrada recognized the influence of television in the ideological formation of Filipinos in matters of politics and morality. He then fused his movies and political persona to gain advantage during the 1998 presidential election, making the slogan, “Erap para sa mahirap,” which eventually become a successful rhetoric.⁹⁷ To promote economic growth and political stability, with the approval of the Congress, Estrada sought to destroy the Moro National Liberation Front camps. American military expertise and the reestablishment of their bases was considered necessary in the campaign.⁹⁸ The political commitment of the Estrada administration ushered a positive growth in the Philippine economy, particularly in the export and import industry. The agricultural sector also provided a growth that was higher compared to the historical trend. The electronic sector (electrical machinery) had the most contribution due to the rapid expansion made by some local firms. In addition, the service sector registered growth, fueled by the transport, communication and storage sectors. The surge in the purchase of cellular phones and the completion of Metro Rail Transit also contributed vibrantly to the economy.⁹⁹

But the above was short-lived. Estrada’s proposal for the next series of reforms needed to sustain economic recovery was refused by both houses of Congress. Moreover, many issues arose: the government’s costly war in Mindanao; the involvement of Estrada in illegal gambling, the resignation of his cabinet members, including Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who called for Estrada’s resignation, and the withdrawal of alliance by some

political personalities led to Estrada's downfall.¹⁰⁰ The collapse of the Estrada administration gained momentum in October of 2000 when politician turned protagonist Luis Chavit Singson, upon learning that Estrada planned to set up a bingo network to rival his *jueteng* (illegal lottery), publicly reported that Estrada received an amount of 414 million pesos as bribes from illegal gambling. Rival politicians deemed such a ground for impeachment. Before the end of October 2000, the Catholic Church called for Estrada's resignation.¹⁰¹

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010)

Arroyo replaced Estrada. She faced major political and economic issues. First, she had to assure the people who rallied behind the ouster of Estrada that her governance is for the promotion of Filipino's welfare. Second, the handling of Estrada's case also reflected on the sentiments of the poor who were pro-Estrada. Third, many of Estrada's loyal political allies were elected as officials of Congress who are now a threat to Arroyo's legislative agenda. Fourth, economic recovery was all the more important since the country faced fuel price hikes and the depreciation of peso.¹⁰² Yet, Arroyo's governance was littered with corruption and political scandals. She faced serious challenges including destabilization and impeachment attempts which she survived. "People Power 3" was the first struggle of President Arroyo after Estrada's arrest in 2001. For two days supporters of Estrada attempted to replicate People Power 1 and 2. Marked by riots and vandalism, People Power 3 ended unsuccessfully.¹⁰³

But the most severe scandal was "Hello Garci" which had implicated Arroyo into electoral fraud. An audio recording leaked in which Arroyo was on the phone talking to then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. The scandal led to a withdrawal of support from former President Corazon Aquino, members of her Cabinet and her Liberal Party allies in Congress. The scandal led the opposition to pursue legal channels to remove her from the office. From 2005 until 2008, impeachment complaints were filed at the House of Representatives.¹⁰⁴ While these things were happening, the country showed a significant rise in the economy due to the following reasons: increase in remittance from Filipinos working abroad, the enactment of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act which helped improve the finances of the National Power Corporation, a government-owned corporation engaged in power generation, generating a net income of close to 90 billion pesos from 2005 to 2006.¹⁰⁵

The Arroyo administration also adopted revenue enhancing reforms: first, government procurement was streamlined, which resulted a substantial savings; second, revenue administration at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs was strengthened; and third, the reform in the value added tax law resulted in the increase of tax revenues. But although the economic activity was booming, poverty and hunger incidence were on the rise since economic growth as not inclusive.¹⁰⁶ The poverty rate had gone up to about 26 per cent, and social indicators such as education, health, and domestic unemployment and underemployment remained troubling, the inability to curb social problems was due to debt servicing which consumed more than 25 per cent of national budget in 2002.¹⁰⁷

Benigno Simeon Aquino III (2010-2016)

President Aquino was criticized as a man pushed by fate and media gimmickry to the presidency. From 2010 until 2016, his presidency faced many controversies. In August 2010, eight Hong Kong tourists were held as hostage by a former police officer Rolando Mendoza at the Luneta. The failed rescue attempt resulted to the death of eight persons.¹⁰⁸ The relatives and the victims considered the President as someone who lacked empathy. The hostage crisis enraged the Hong Kong government and urged its citizens to leave the country. It then issued a travel ban. Moreover, it was also reported that Filipinos working in Hong Kong were racially attacked by their employers and some citizens.¹⁰⁹

In November 2013, Super Typhoon Yolanda caused massive damage across the central Philippines. The typhoon killed 6,300 people. The cost of damage was put at 14 billion dollars. Some 2.5 million people needed urgent of humanitarian relief. A day before the landfall of the typhoon, Aquino III assured the nation that they are prepared and relief goods were positioned in the areas expected to be hit. But the promise of relief services never materialized due to logistical problems since the local government personnel were also affected. Hunger forced people to loot for food.¹¹⁰ The extent of devastation and the harrowing stories of survival and loss were captured by local and international media. The victims poured their outrage on the poor leadership of Aquino III. This somehow made manifest the sentiment that the politics of Aquino III has been a disaster itself. Thus, his association to his father's nationalistic ideology is nothing but a media gimmick.¹¹¹ This was magnified by the Roxas and Romualdez incident. Roxas reportedly refused

to grant additional police personnel to keep the peace in Tacloban or to send trucks to help in the recovery of the bodies and debris clearance. Roxas told Romualdez to write a letter signifying that he could no longer perform his duties as mayor, so the DILG could takeover. Third. Roxas told Romualdez that he could not be given help because he was a Romualdez, and the President is an Aquino. Romualdez proved his allegations by providing a video-recorded conversation between him and Roxas.¹¹²

Finally, the most terrible part of the Aquino presidency was the death of 44 Philippine National Police Special Action Force (SAF) and five civilians during an anti-terrorism operation in the town of Mamasapano in Maguindanao. Aquino was primarily blamed for letting suspended police chief Alan Purisima participate the mission despite his suspension over graft charges. As a aftermath of this leadership mess, Aquino is facing charges of graft and usurpation of authority while then PNP-SAF commander Gen. Getulio Napeñas and Purisima are facing charges of usurpation of public functions and graft before the Sandiganbayan.¹¹³

The macro-economic performance of Aquino III recorded real progress between 2010 and 2015. Economic growth has been fastest in the secondary and tertiary sectors, especially in construction, real estate, manufacturing, transportation and communication, and trade. However, agriculture registered a disappointing performance.¹¹⁴ But the growth in domestic demand has been fuelled by overseas remittances as well as the expansion of the information technology and business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) industries. Remittances from abroad amounted to almost 25 billion US dollars in 2015. The IT-BPO industry served an important source of employment and foreign exchange revenues. These industries include call centers, medical transcription, software development, and animation leading to the rise of revenue and employment.¹¹⁵

Philippine Political Economy under President Rodrigo Duterte

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte became the 16th President of the Republic of the Philippines after a landslide victory with 16.6 million votes. He is the first from Mindanao, and the first local chief executive to get elected straight to the Office of the President. Rodrigo Duterte's rise from being a mayor of Davao City to running the entire country is a feat not only to himself but to the manner of how Filipinos chose their leaders. Such has been a radical change. Duterte strategically put himself in the mindset of Filipinos.

Davao City was projected as an example of success - a smoking ban, fireworks ban, and more importantly, an effective peace and order campaign that restored normalcy in the city.¹¹⁶

Duterte's unusual political style earned him high satisfaction and trust ratings despite his tirades against Barack Obama and Pope Francis. As an effect, varying views emerged in social media conversations resulting to labels such as "Dutertards" and "*dilawan*". In the analysis of Professor Christopher Ryan Maboloc, he emphasized that although some sectors in the society have vilified Duterte maverick style, the president remains popular among Filipinos because he is seen as a leader who possesses a strong will.¹¹⁷ The problem of illegal drugs brought distress to family relations, to security and safety, and to bureaucracy. It is in this context and Duterte's loathe of the menace of illegal drug trade that gave the president the momentum to win during the 2016 elections. Duterte found resonance with the public which recognized the threat from illegal drugs.

Duterte's War on Drugs

But while the above is the case, the War on Drugs is also the most controversial. It gained much attention locally and from the international community. Some reports say that some 12,000 persons involved have been allegedly killed in summary executions. The figure from the police placed it at around 5,000. Filipinos are divided on the issue. Some are in favor of the strict and deadly campaign while others are banking on the notion that due process must be observed. The International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations Human Rights Council launched an investigation of alleged violation against human rights. The reproach on Duterte's infamous war on drugs came after a glaring increase of persons killed in what the Philippine National Police (PNP) describes as lawful anti-drug operations, alleging the suspects fought back during raids (*nanlaban*). Aside from PNP, there are also reports of unidentified assailants killing drug related personalities. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in the Philippines implicated Duterte for the war on drugs. For Duterte, drug users and sellers are beyond redemption and rehabilitation is no longer a viable option.¹¹⁸ But Duterte's stance on the scourge of drugs comes from the idea that as a leader it is his duty to protect the public.¹¹⁹ Whether it is perceived moral or immoral it is no longer Duterte's concern. The bloody war on drugs may consternate advocates of human rights, rule of law, and due process but to Duterte it is

the only solution to purge society from the latent yet publicized social cancer that could destroy the country.

Duterte's Diplomacy

Another issue in the Duterte's presidency is his foreign policy. The tendency to isolate the Philippines from Western influence, particularly America. Duterte's pivot to China and friendly relations with Russia as economic and political allies were economic in motive. Relations with the US and the EU soured. This move is seen as risky which might make the Philippines fall into a debt trap, particularly to China.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, Duterte has said many things that earned the ire of critics outside the Philippines, especially human rights groups. There was Duterte's comment on the rape and murder of an Australian missionary.¹²¹ Other instances included involved shooting female guerillas in their genitals.¹²² The purported machismo of Duterte drew fury from rape victims and women rights activists describing it as an irresponsible chauvinism and misogyny, rather a form of freedom of expression as Duterte claimed.

To explain the above philosophically, it is interesting to note how and why there is always two sides to a story. For instance, Immanuel Kant developed the notion of antimony of pure reason which suggests that individuals are capable of constructing arguments for both sides. Thus, the rape jokes/comments of Duterte come from the argument that male are helpless when faced by sexual temptation and that in a patriarchal society, the female is an object of sexual desires. In contrast to this presumption is the argument that men are capable of sexual restraint, that male is not blind slave of their sexual drives. Kant would further claim that if this conflict of reason is not resolved skepticism would dominate.¹²³

President Duterte called U.S. President Barack Obama a 'son of a whore'. Obama cancelled their supposed meeting during the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit. Duterte admitted making the comment after knowing that some U.S. officials attacked his notorious war on drugs.¹²⁴ Duterte retaliated by cancelling the joint military exercises with the U.S. and reoriented the Philippines' foreign policy, upending Asian geopolitics. Recently President Duterte had drawn favorable attention from U.S. President Donald Trump. Trump expressed concern over the unfair treatment of the UN Commission for Human Rights of Philippine President

Rodrigo Duterte. The action being taken by the UN, Trump is often quoted as saying, is a bullying tactic.

Duterte's constant pronouncement of his anti-U.S. policy can be drawn from his leftist orientation in which he points out that the Philippines, from a historical end, had been treated unfairly by the U.S. In general, his approach to foreign diplomacy is not geared towards nepotism with the U.S. as previously held most past presidents and politicians.¹²⁵ Duterte's has continued an effort to justify his alliance with China and Russia. For him, partnership with Russia will augment the modernization of the Philippine military. Buying arms from Russia is more favorable than the U.S. because there are no political conditions. He further claimed that the move to build stronger ties with China and Russia was necessary.¹²⁶ In his visit to China, he made a statement that his governance is chartering a new course, one that is at the expense of traditional alliances.

Duterte's anti-U.S. sentiment and the reorientation of Philippine foreign policy are not simply rhetorical. There is a basis in the president's personal experience. One is the Michael Meiring incident, who during his term as mayor, the treasure hunter accidentally triggered an explosive device. Despite being held for investigation, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped escape Meiring to America, an incident that still annoys Duterte. Another is Duterte's contempt with the American immigration where he was denied visa to visit United States and his claim that he was mistreated by immigration authorities at Los Angeles International Airport.¹²⁷ The outbursts of Duterte are not simply because of misguided moral principles but it is simply a product of objective violence.

Dutertenomics

It is important to note that economic growth depends on various factors and one key factor that is a necessity for the Philippines to thrive is infrastructure development. President Duterte said that through infrastructure and social development he can provide the Filipinos a decent and dignified future.¹²⁸ On handling the economic growth, Duterte gave key indicators that would boost economic activity one of which is the implementation of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, believing that improving the income tax system would be fairer and more efficient over all, while also raising the needed resources to boost infrastructure and to promote the welfare of the poor and middle class.

As a result, the government revenue improved by increasing levies on sugary drinks and oil products. The downside of this economic policy has been the rise of inflation which has exceeded the government's target, causing anxiety to consumers particularly those with less spending power. It is a big challenge to "Dutertenomics" since it is built around the promise of inclusive growth. Moreover, Duterte's economic managers have responded to the issue by pointing that it is true that the TRAIN Law has been a big factor to high inflation, although the jump of oil prices in the world market, a weak peso, and rice hoarding by some traders are the main culprits. Dutertenomics emphasizes choice, giving taxpayer greater control over how their hard-earned money is saved or spent.¹²⁹

The "Build, Build, Build" program of Duterte is expected to generate millions of jobs by the end of his six-year term with almost 5000 projects that are involved. President Duterte deemed that the only way to keep at par with modernization is to improve infrastructure which will yield economic growth, create jobs and improve the lives of Filipinos. According to the Philippine Information Agency, the 8.4 trillion-peso infrastructure modernization program will serve as a catalyst in sustaining the economy's high growth trajectory and in transforming it to a high-middle income economy by 2022, lowering the poverty incidence to 14 percent by that time. Moreover, the program to develop infrastructure in the country is meant to provide access and distribution of wealth to the countryside. According to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, it will also help most urban communities enjoy lower prices of basic goods because of the reduced costs of transport and distribution.¹³⁰

Therefore, as a whole the prospects of economic growth of Duterte is centered on the 'Build, Build, Build' program. As a result, it is seen to give the country an infrastructure boom by embarking on an ambitious transformation. This infrastructure growth is meant to reduce the cost of production, encourage countryside investments, and to increase mobility of goods and people as a result in improving airports, railways, bus transits, road and bridges, and seaports. In order to protect and improve resiliency among vulnerable communities, Duterte wants to construct energy facilities, water resource projects and flood control projects.¹³¹ Unlike his predecessors, Gloria Arroyo and Aquino III, who anchored economic growth through reform of economic policies, Duterte has provided another key factor

in boosting the economy. Investing in infrastructure would make the country competitive and would cement Duterte's legend in governance.

Conclusion

The configuration of Philippine politics and economy participates in the terminology of Žižek emphatic communication, which is devoid of any moral compass. The distress of political anxiety and impossibility are taking its toll, waiting to erupt into an extensive unrest. Modern global discussions fail to understand Duterte's avowed hatred of drug dealers and corruption. Duterte's unyielding commitment to fight narcotics is clear not only in his government policy, but also in his language as well. President Rodrigo Duterte is a product of history in which he inherited the misfortunes of the Philippine political economy. It is clear that Duterte is not only fighting Western ideology but also at the same time, he struggles to fight objective violence that is inherent culturally. The language of Duterte participates in the frustration of the ordinary citizens, which are excluded from the political and social spaces. The idea of concretely uplifting the lives of the Filipino and at the same time the economic policies that are in place are a situation in which the Filipino plunges into what Kierkegaard described as the depth of the unknown abyss in which anxiety and hope are indistinguishable. Hegel was correct that the path to enlightenment is through the movement of two opposing ideals. Duterte may seem to be the answer to Filipino struggle and poverty, although Žižek would point to the fact that change need not to be bloody.

Chapter 4

The Future of the Environment and Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines

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It is an accepted fact that man cannot live without the environment and its bio-diversity. In fact, man is so dependent to land and water and cannot survive without these elements. Water and air are elements that can be found in what is collectively called as land or environment. Without environment, there is no life. If the Bible is indeed true in its being “an inspired Word of God”, this might be the reason why in the book of Genesis, God created first the environment with all its contents including the animals before He created human beings so that when they come, they will have all that they need. When the first human beings were born, they have lived in paradise and they have everything that they needed. But accordingly, God commanded them to take control of the rest of the creation. But human beings became greedy, got wild and wanted to possess and own the earth. Thus, problems have occurred since then and until today. In fact, the world’s biological diversity and mineral resources are imperiled (Dudgeon et al, 2006; Clements, Sodhi, Schiltuizen, & Ng, 2006). When the environment and biodiversity are destroyed, this will result to more complex problems such as food and other environmental threats (Pimentel, 2006).

This kind of problem is more evident in third world countries all over the world. In Asia, the close link between human well-being and healthy ecosystems has been demonstrated over the last decades or so by the devastating natural calamities which resulted to plenty of diseases (Sodhi & Brook 2006). In fact, the Philippines has been a witness of many climate-change related disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes, flashfloods and landslides which resulted human deaths and accidents as well agricultural and property devastations for the last ten years (Yumul, Jr., Cruz, Servando, & Dimalanta, 2010). The most vulnerable groups in the Philippines that are always adversely affected during disasters and calamities are the poor and the indigenous peoples. While many livelihood-assistance from the outside

entities have enabled indigenous peoples to adapt and survive to changing circumstances, erosion of the rich natural resources found in their territories and penetration of multi-national corporations in partnership with national and local officials with vested interests of their rich biodiversity and resources have been the great price of all these development assistance and projects. As a result, the indigenous peoples remain poor and their communities were further devastated.

Biodiversity and Climate Change Challenges and the Indigenous Peoples

Most areas with exceptionally rich but imperiled biodiversity and mineral resources are present in the mountains usually inhabited by the indigenous peoples. But the apparent conflict between protection and management of biodiversity and development of rural communities has fueled long-standing debates between conservation advocates who are most likely *ecocentrics* and the social scientists and development workers who are mostly *anthropocentrics*. While the protagonists and the antagonists of biodiversity conservation as well as rural development continue to look for better argument to compel those at the other camps or while these two groups try to look for a common ground and have a “win-win” solution, ‘long-standing pressures from logging, mining, and advancing agricultural frontiers have intensified the exploration of the rural communities and mountains’ (IFAD, 2009; Gaspar, 2000; Gaspar, 2011).

To be able to entice the indigenous peoples to give up their lands, the companies in partnership with the government have created their slogan, “there is life in mining”. This slogan was used by the companies and their cohorts to tell and convince the public that they want to promote life and they value the environment and the community through responsible mining. For indigenous peoples, however, who belong to the most marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society, mining often leads to the loss of their lands and thus poses a serious threat to their livelihoods and their lives (Wetzlmaier, 2012). The environmental apathy of many corporations and businessmen has resulted not only to the destruction of the environment as an immediate and tangible effect but also to climate change as a secondary and not so visible effect. The dramatic impact of climate change, to which indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable yet can also offer viable alternatives in addressing its adverse impacts is also another challenge faced by indigenous peoples and communities (IFAD, 2009; IISD, 1992; Tauli-Corpuz

et al, 2009). These indigenous knowledge and practices of the IPs in combating climate change has not yet been properly utilized by agencies and institutions working on climate change mitigation because they are still banking on with the scientific way of doing it as espoused by the West and their researchers. It has to be reiterated that indigenous peoples have contributed the least to climate change because this is mainly caused by actions taken by those who benefit from the dominant development model characterized by unsustainable production and consumption, extreme individualism, increasing concentration of wealth and power in the privileged few (Tauli-Corpuz et. al, 2009: 11). To be more detailed and comprehensive about the impacts of climate change to indigenous peoples living in different ecosystems throughout the world, Tauli-Corpuz et. al, (2009, p. 12) provided a list of the impacts of climate change to indigenous peoples as follows:

1. Massive floods, strong hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons and storm surges lead to the destruction of houses, infrastructure (bridges, roads, electrical lines, etc), forests, agricultural lands, crops, livestock, marine and coastal resources; massive landslides; loss of freshwater supplies, increase pathogenic micro-organisms and vectors which carriers, loss of electricity, among others further lead to human impacts such as physical isolation, hunger, sickness and even deaths;
2. More frequent and prolonged droughts and floods cause the disappearance of plant and animal species that have sustained indigenous peoples as subsistence food sources or as essential to their ceremonial life;
3. Extreme and unprecedented cold spells and prolonged wet environment results to health problems, such as hypothermia, bronchitis and pneumonia, especially among old people and young children;
4. A drop on water levels, drought, desertification and saltwater intrusion leads to more hunger and impoverishment;
5. Traditional livelihoods ranging from rotational agriculture, hunting and gathering, pastoralism, high montane livestock and agricultural production, coastal and marine fishing, trapping, agro-forestry livelihoods, among others, are undermined;

6. Adverse impacts on traditional livelihoods and their ecosystem will also mean loss of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices associated with these livelihoods and ecosystems;
7. Loss of revenue, economic opportunities and the practice of traditional culture are expected to increase the social and cultural pressures on indigenous peoples. The outmigration of indigenous youth to seek economic opportunities elsewhere because climate change has limited further their opportunities in their own communities, could lead to erosion of indigenous economies and culture;
8. Increase in a number of indigenous persons who end up as environmental refugees or who out-migrate because their lands have gone under water or have eroded due to landslides;
9. Capacities of indigenous women to perform their roles as seed-keepers, water bearers, transmitters of culture and language, among others are undermined; and
10. The loss or migration of culturally important species will make it more difficult for elders to practice their traditional ecological knowledge to the next generation.

There is an inseparable relationship between the indigenous peoples and their ecosystems where they have thrived for thousands of years. Since they depend on their diverse ecosystems for their nutritional, economic, social and spiritual existence, they have developed practices to be able to protect and preserve their environment and also to cope with and adapt to the effects of climate change. These practices, though not scientificll as compared to those coming from the Western experts, cannot be underestimated because these practices have allowed them to survive as distinct peoples over millennia (Tauli-Corpuz et. al, 2009). Government and institutions working on measures on how to adapt and manage the impacts of climate change must learn from the traditional practices of the indigenous peoples. They should be invited during discussion and discourses about climate change so that their voices will be heard.

Environmental Protection and Human Rights Violation

The inseparable attachment of indigenous peoples to the environment and to the species they share the landscape with has been relatively well documented over the past century. Somewhat less well documented, but recognized in various literatures, is the fact that this connection does not stop industries and corporations, with the support of colonizing governments, from damaging or destroying a land base in the exploitation of non-renewable and more recently renewable natural resources (Booth and Muir, 2011; Gaspar, 2011).

The Philippines is said to host one of the world's biggest deposits of undiscovered minerals, especially of gold and copper (Herrera, 2012). Mineral reserves are estimated at about 7.1 billion tons of 13 known metallic and 51 billion tons of 29 nonmetallic minerals, many of which are located in areas of rich biodiversity and within ancestral domains of indigenous peoples (Alyansa Tigil Mina, 2011). With the enactment of the Mining Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7942), the Philippines liberalized its mining policy and opened both public and private lands, including protected areas, to foreign investments (Alyansa Tigil Mina, 2011).

Moreover, past governments have promoted mining as a priority industry in the country (Brawner Baguilat, 2011), and marked a policy shift from tolerance to aggressive promotion of large-scale mining. As a result, between 2004 and 2011, 32 mining projects were pipelined and more than 2,000 applications for mining contracts and exploration permits were filed (Alyansa Tigil Mina, 2011). However, it is important to note and remember that despite this aggressive promotion of the mining industry, investments stayed below the government's initial target and the mining industry only accounted for about one percent of the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Alyansa Tgil Mina, 2011). In June 2012, President Benigno Aquino III signed a long-awaited executive order (E.O. 79) which has defined the future direction of the Philippine mining policy. The E.O. 79 aimed at increasing revenues from mining to at least 5 percent while it also defined in paper no-go zones for mining in prime agricultural lands, eco-tourism sites, and other protected areas (Cheng, 2012). It supposedly sought to strike a balance for different stakeholders, but it's important to remember again that not all expectations were met.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines welcomed the order with their optimism that it would provide a consistent and stable business environment attractive for investors (Olchondra, 2012). However, environmental groups complained that they were not consulted and they said that E.O. 79 would serve business interests of the investors and some politicians but not the indigenous and local people living in the area (Cheng, 2012). Amidst criticisms from other sectors, the past governments of the republic have given their full support for these industries by constructing massive dams and other foreign-funded infrastructure projects that have continually diminished the extent of indigenous peoples' ancestral domains (Gaspar, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2008; Gaspar, 2011).

As a result of this environmental apathy of the government, environmental activists have consolidated their efforts to raise consciousness among the public and help the indigenous peoples resist the coming of companies to their territories without clear and transparent process of getting free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). But the military as the arm wing of the funding agencies and the government has also participated in this onslaught against indigenous communities which forcibly relocated thousands of indigenous peoples, comprising entire indigenous communities, in an attempt to counteract the growing resistance of the indigenous peoples in the upland areas as a result of extractive development being implanted in their territories (The Coordinating Committee of the National Workshop of Indigenous Peoples on Human Rights, 2004).

From year 2000 until 2015, I was active in many environment and peace movements and gathering especially involving the indigenous peoples. In 2014, I participated in a huge peace and development rally initiated by many tribal chieftains in Agusan del Sur and other parts of the Caraga Region. I found out peace and human rights violations issues are still connected with the issues of extractive industries operating in ancestral domains of the indigenous peoples. I am only mentioning here Agusan del Sur and Caraga but there had been many studies and also reports in the local and national newspapers as regards to massive human rights violations committed to indigenous peoples and their communities all over the Philippines as a result of exploitation of their ancestral lands by the government and its military forces in collaboration with foreign and local funding agencies (Olea, 2011; Velez, 2013; Garcia, 2013).

It is also good to refresh our memory that in December 2002, the United Nations Special Rapporteur and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights, Professor Rodolfo Stavenhagen, was invited by the Philippine government because it was requested by the indigenous peoples. After holding series of consultations meetings with key stakeholders and doing community visits, the special report on the situations of the indigenous peoples in the Philippines in relation to human rights violations came out. The report was welcomed and appreciated by the indigenous peoples as it has validated most of their claims on the continuing violation of their human rights by the members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. However, the Philippine government during that time has not taken any substantial action to adopt and implement the recommendations of that special report. On the contrary, the situation of the indigenous peoples in relation to violations of their basic fundamental human rights had worsened despite several appeals by the indigenous peoples' organizations, non-government organizations and Church organizations to government authorities (The Coordinating Committee of the National Workshop of Indigenous Peoples on Human Rights, 2004).

It is very clear that all these attacks and violations against indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination have a direct connection to their ancestral lands and territories which are rich in natural and mineral deposits. We have to remember that depriving indigenous peoples the right to self-determination of their ancestral lands will mean the complete loss of their identity as distinct peoples. Thus, the very issue of survival is at stake for the indigenous peoples in the Philippines (Tauli-Corpuz, 2008; Gaspar, 2011). There is a general consensus that the distinct characteristics of the indigenous peoples are: (1) *the conservation of indigenous skills, knowledge and practices*; (2) *self-identification as distinct societies*; (3) *subsistence-oriented economies*; and (4) *a special relationship with their ancestral lands*. The last two characteristics are crucial because they define the struggle of the indigenous peoples for self-determination (Molintas, 2004).

For the indigenous peoples, "land is life" which means more than a mere source of livelihood. The term land is strongly associated with home that refers to a traditional territorial claim and an identity as a community with socio-cultural values that are closely linked to the environment (Binodngan Ancestral Domains, 2011). Land is a central issue to indigenous peoples because it defines their very existence and their identity. Since time immemorial, the indigenous peoples' ancestors believed in a cosmology

where the Creator (known by various names such as *Bathala*, *Kabunian*, *Magbabaya*, *Apo Sandawa*) was linked with other deities and spirits. For the indigenous peoples in the Philippines, the land and everything connected to it were created by this deity. Because land was of divine origin, it was sacred. Being sacred, it was not subject to ownership, sale, purchase, or lease (Gaspar 2011; Gaspar, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2008).

Indigenous Knowledge and Resource Management

Indigenous peoples are repositories of age-old knowledge which offers alternative solutions to environmental problems that conventional methods have failed to solve (Indigenous Perspectives, 2002). As regards resources management and preservation, the concept of resources management, environmental protection and sustainable development is not new to the indigenous peoples in the Philippines. It is a principle that their ancestors inculcated in them. The presence of mineral and water resources as well as the biodiversity in their territories in spite of the plunder done by mining companies, the timber industry, and urbanization testifies to the indigenous peoples' strong commitment to sustainable development (Molintas, 2004). They practice resource management systems that have sustained and kept a fragile ecosystem intact (Indigenous Perspectives, 2002). This could be the reason that the International Institute for Sustainable Development recognized the vital contribution of the indigenous peoples in the area of environmental protection, management of biological diversity, adopting and mitigating the impact of climate change, as well as indigenous practices for sustainable development (IISD, 1992). Indigenous knowledge is traditional scientific knowledge. This acknowledgement was made at the Earth Summit in 1990 when governments all over the world signed Agenda 21, which set forth the implementation of plans for sustainable development for the last ten years.

During the summit, indigenous peoples gained recognition all over the world as important actors in environmental preservation and development. This vital role which is rooted in their traditional knowledge and practices, has been reaffirmed in the Johannesburg Declaration approved at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (Indigenous Perspectives, 2002). However, the indigenous practices of environmental protection did not produce significant impact and have been threatened for extinction in the face of many voracious and extractive business industries mostly multinational companies operating in the indigenous territories under the

blessings of the past government. In fact, shortly after the summit President Arroyo immediately ordered the DENR to put a stop of mining activities in the different rich biodiversity mountains in the Philippines. After the implementation of this stealthy memorandum, the forests around the Sierra Madre mountains bordering Quezon and Aurora provinces cascaded burying towns and human lives in mud, boulders and logs. However, in just about one year or less after that tragedy, large scale corporate logging and mining industries once again had resumed their operation as if they have amnesia of what had happened to the Philippines and the Filipino people because of the tragedy. What's more maddening is the fact that after all those disasters, the President of the Republic of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reinstated cancelled logging and mining permits and lifted not only a face-saving logging ban in the country but also logging moratorium in place for the past decades in protected biodiversity-rich forestlands throughout the country (Manalansan, 2005).

The mining revitalization policy of the then Arroyo administration has resulted to revitalization of injustices to the indigenous territories and ancestral domains. Since as aggressively as the government pursued mining investors around the globe, multi-national mining companies with strings of environmental crimes to the Filipino people, especially to the poor and the indigenous folks greedily eyed the Philippines to be the venue where they profit from all their business transactions at the expense of the indigenous peoples (Manalansan, 2005; Tauli-Corpuz, et. al, 2009; Wetzlmaier, 2012).

As a result of this environmental plunder done by big corporations and companies operating in the indigenous territories, the forests are almost wiped out. Wastelands evolved out of mining areas. Agricultural lands were laced with poisonous chemicals and so there was food shortage. Corporate overexploitation of aquatic resources has been snuffing the life out of coastal populations and the country's rich coastal and marine biodiversity. Water is commodified and privatized beyond social requirements for human survival. A vicious cycle of the problems of air and water pollution, garbage, congestion, housing, unemployment, and a dearth of health and other social services manifest deeper problems to many Filipinos, especially the indigenous peoples (Manalansan, 2005; Wetzlmaier, 2012). Why has this been happening in the Philippines? Why has this happening in Mindanao? This happened because leaders lacked not only expertise as well as political will, they also lacked leadership and management skills to engage the people

especially those who are at the margins to participate in the discourse on environmental issues. They failed to engage the local people because the leaders as well as the institutions suffers from what Professor Christopher Ryan Maboloc calls 'democratic and moral deficits' (Maboloc, 2016).

It is very clear that environmental problems cannot be separated from the socio-political and economic problems of the Philippines. Therefore, to resolve this problem, there is a need to approach the environmental issues in its social dimensions and this can only be done through political actions that emancipate the people from unjust structures in society as well as learning from the indigenous peoples' traditional skills and knowledge in taking care and protecting their ancestral domains (Indigenous Perspectives, 2002; Manalansan, 2005).

Environmental challenges of the Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao

Mindanao as the southernmost islands of the Philippines has 18 non-Islamized indigenous tribes that break up into smaller sub-groupings depending on where the tribe is, usually in relation to geographic location. Most of these non-Islamized tribes are natives of mountain regions and mostly forest-dwellers who have long embraced the realization that the survival of their people depends on the health of the ecosystem of their communities (Etremera, 2011; Horfilla, et. al, 1996; Gaspar, 2011). There is also a general consensus that indigenous peoples in Mindanao will be called *lumads*. It is the *Binisaya* word for indigenous which excludes the Visayan settlers who have already called themselves Mindanawons, or people from Mindanao. (KALUMBAY, 2010).

The *Manobos*, a large major ethno-linguistic group in Mindanao, are present in Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon. The *Matigsalug* and *Umayamnon* communities in Bukidnon and the *Tigwahanon* in Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon are sometimes considered to be sub-groups of the Manobo identified according to their location. The *Matigsalug* refers to the people along the River Salug, the *Tigwahanon* along the River Tigwa and Tigwa-salug valley, and the *Umayamnon* along the watershed of the Umayam River (KALUMBAY, 2010; Gatmaytan, 1998). The community of the *Banwaons* has a small population and their Ancestral Domain is located in the municipality of San Luis in Agusan del Sur. They can trace back their roots to the larger *Higaonon* group. According to their elders, their community was formed when under Apo Anggowaning, in the early 1800s. The

Talaandig community along the Pantaron Range is said to have come from the *Banwaons*. They separated during the time of Apo Kanangaan when boundaries were set and they delineated their territory from the *Banwaons* and *Manobos*. They also instituted their own laws and policies. Many of their leaders were known *baganis* (warriors) as their territory was constantly threatened by outsiders and foreign colonizers. They were called, “*Talaandig*” because they live on the slopes of the mountains (KALUMBAY, 2010). The indigenous peoples in Mindanao continue to practice their indigenous knowledge and belief systems.

Over the years, however, the cultural heritage of these groups along with their ancestral domains has slowly eroded due to several government policies that claim to be for the advancement of national interests. Most of them also rely on subsistence farming as their source of food. They used forest products for their household needs like barks of trees as walls of their houses and plants for medicine and spices. Their daily needs are very dependent on their environment (KALUMBAY, 2010). What is ironic is that the Philippine government especially the past governments’ conservation programs, however, more often if not always, entailed wresting control of forests from indigenous peoples whose life and survival are intertwined with the environment and the forests since time immemorial. Conservation models of the past governments had restricted habitation and activities in these forest homes and disregarded forest resource management practices that have ensured sustainability of both forestland and the indigenous peoples (Indigenous Perspectives, 2002; Molintas, 2004; Manalansan, 2005). The conflict between the programs and projects by the past governments and the indigenous communities was made more complicated and filled with tension with the constant intrusion of mining and logging, both legal and illegal, thus, marginalizing an already marginalized IPs (Molintas, 2004; Gaspar, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2008; Gaspar, 2011).

Most often, if not always, these impoverished and discriminated peace-loving indigenous people would rather avoid conflict than assert their ways and therefore, would choose to go farther into the upland areas, away from destruction and in turn, become more marginalized (Estremera, 2011; Gaspar, 2011). Due to pressures and influences from the outside, some indigenous peoples grew abaca, falcate, rubber, palm oil and banana and also gathered rattan to be sold. Some of them also engaged in small-scale logging ventures especially in the province of Agusan del Sur (KALUMBAY 2010).

There are, however, some indigenous groups who are upholding their practices, including their time-tested conservation models. They are up against the fixed ways and lack of understanding by mainstream society, particularly by government and other development program implementers who only see their slash and burn farming methods and not the totality of their practices that ensure the survival of both forest and forest-dwellers. Among the indigenous peoples who are asserting their indigenous ways are the *Manobos* of Bukidnon, many of whom dwell within the Mount Kitanglad Natural Park. I visited their communities many times and I am always amazed with how they lived their lives amidst the pressures of modernity. When you visit them, you will experience all their sacred rituals. Their battle for assertion continues since historical neglect and discrimination are still prevalent, and the law declaring their ancestral home, Mount Kitanglad, still denies them access and utilization of its resources, even though conservation is deeply ingrained into their way of life (Estremera, 2011).

Environmental Advocacy of the Duterte Administration

In this paper, I argue that the Duterte administration is doing a better job in terms of protecting the Philippine environment compared to the previous administrations especially those of Benigno Aquino III and Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo. It was said that when Duterte assumed his office as the 16th president of the Philippine Republic, many environmental activists and advocates got excited for the promised change of leadership. When he chose Gina Lopez as environment secretary, many people believed that for the first time, we had a top environmental official who saw her mandate as the protector of nature and people first and did not bother to compromise other considerations unlike the past officials in the DENR who saw their role as forging a balance between environment and economic development and thus weighing always the needs and interests of the business community as the priority (La Viña, 2017).

Indeed, our belief and hope about Gina Lopez was true. Upon her short stint as the DENR secretary, Gina Lopez was able to order the cessation of operations to many mining companies that did not promote responsible mining activities (Mayuga, 2017). She visited different mining sites and indigenous communities throughout the country to really gather their thoughts and sentiments. Her rather strong and not-so-calculated moves made some businessmen and owners of the mining companies (including some cabinet members of Duterte) angry toward her. She also declared the

need to create more space for the participation of civil society, vowing to put in place mechanisms that will guarantee the meaningful engagement of the Church, environment, non-governmental organizations, the youth, farmers and fishermen. Under her watch, Lopez vowed that the main thrusts of the DENR are institutional reform and environmental governance, community empowerment, rational minerals management, stronger biodiversity protection, proper ecological solid waste management and efficient interagency collaboration toward clean air, clean water and transformative climate-change policies (Mayuga, 2017).

The first attempt of environmental protection and preservation of the Duterte administration has encountered major obstacles when the Commission on Appointment (CA) did not confirm the appointment of Gina Lopez as the DENR secretary. Again, many people (including myself) were frustrated and disappointed for losing such opportunity to really restore the ailing environment. Many of us would have wanted Duterte to intervene through the decision of the CA and let them change their decision or ignore the decision of the CA and through his strong political will, insist to put Gina Lopez as the DENR secretary. Many of us are not really familiar with the political landscape of the country, thus our naïve sentiments and suggestions.

However, Duterte played his political game very well. He respected the decision of the CA for not confirming the appointment not only Gina Lopez but his other appointees especially those associated with the left leaning ideologies. To replace Gina Lopez, Duterte appointed, former Armed Forces chief Roy Cimatu to take over the department. This soft-spoken top brass in the military has proven to be not only technically competent to do his tasks but also socially and politically advanced in terms of negotiation. No wonder that under the stint of Secretary Cimatu, the order of closure of operation of Boracay Beach Resorts was implemented. It is true, that there had been complaints already as to the abuses of the hotel and other business establishment owners in the Boracay but it is only President Duterte who has the political will to really order the temporary closure of its operation for complete rehabilitation of the beautiful tourist destination of the country. Of course, in the closure as well as in the rehabilitation, secretary Cimatu has done enormous job. If the president of the Philippines is not Duterte, the issue of Boracay would have died its natural death. But not when you have a Duterte president as he said “not during my watch”. He has inherited these grave environmental problems from past administrations, indeed from many

decades of neglect and wrong decisions. But President Duterte owns the problem now and leads us away from ecological apocalypse by being bold and visionary (La Viña, 2017). In addition, rehabilitation of Manila bay only happened during the time of Duterte. The situation of Manila Bay before Duterte can be considered as an example of government neglect and apathy to environmental issues. While there is a law on Solid Waste Management, it is only good on paper during the previous administrations but not during the Duterte administration. His inner conviction to provide comfortable lives to the Filipinos pushed him to be more radical in implementing programs of reform and in implementing many laws as legal backbone to all his reform agenda.

In fact, in his third State of the Nation Address, President Rodrigo Duterte declared the protection of the environment as a top priority, calling out the mining industry for damaging the environment. “Do not destroy the environment or compromise our resources. Repair what you have mismanaged. Try to change management radically because this time, you will have restrictive policies—a prohibition of open-pit mining is one” and he urged the Senate to immediately pass the National Land Use Act (Philippine Start. Com, 2018). Just recently, in an article by Kabling (2018) published at Manila Bulletin last October 4, 2018, Duterte is contemplating the imposition of a total ban on mining in the country after the 2019 election and he is asking the support of the new members of the congress (hopefully his allies) to abrogate Republic Act 7942 which is an “Act Instituting a New System of Mineral Resources Exploration, Development, Utilization and Conservation”. For Duterte this law is the culprit of some of the environmental maladies that the country is experiencing. He further said in that article of Kabling (2018) that even if the government is earning 70 billion pesos a year in revenues from the mining industry, the amount is not enough to reverse the affected community. The President even lamented that open-pit mining operations have left huge holes in Mindanao and weakened the soil that leads to landslides.

From all these different pronouncements by President Duterte one can really see glimpse of hope for the protection and preservation of the Philippine environment and the people living within those communities with rich biodiversity, and they are mostly the indigenous peoples. What distinguishes Duterte from his predecessors notably Benigno Aquino III and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is his political will and genuine care for the environment and the indigenous peoples living in those communities with

rich natural resources. Unlike his predecessors who issued executive orders for the exploration and eventual operations of mining companies, Duterte made an order of total ban or closure of some erring mining companies. In fact, in Marinduque, a mining company received a court order to pay for the damages it has caused to the environment and to the people for its operation years back. While the previous administrations have been using delay tactics for the rehabilitation of Boracay, Duterte issued a closure of Boracay for rehabilitation. Boracay is now back to its original operation as a tourist destination of the country but with more stringent environmental laws being in place and functional. Manila Bay, after it was rehabilitated is also back to welcome guests to take pictures and get amazed by the fact that the once garbage-stricken and maybe God-forsaken place in the capital has now become a place of solace and family gathering. Who would have thought that Manila Bay can become what it is like now? This is precisely because Duterte has political will and is radical in his approach to solve the lingering problem of the environment. In an article written by Maboloc (2017) entitled "Situating the Mindanao Agenda in the Radical Politics of President Duterte," Maboloc started his article by asking some questions like what makes Duterte a radical leader? Is he the paradigmatic persona who emerges at an important time in history to become a catalyst for genuine change or is he just another pragmatic politician? Then he said that Duterte's radical leadership can be seen immediately after a year in office when he has created several firestorms in the political scene. Maboloc (2018) further said that 'building a society requires dismantling old habits' and more importantly, it is 'rectifying unjust systems and structures.' Duterte's strong policies and pronouncements against those who destroyed the environment can be seen as his way of dismantling old habits which is necessary to create a totally democratic society.

Aldo Leopold' Land Ethic and Indigenous Spirituality

I also argue that while Duterte's strong political will is needed for the immediate solution of some environmental problems, it is still lacking in substance and grounding for it to be sustained and for the people in the ground to really embrace his advocacies wholeheartedly and not only because of fear of his wrath or punishment. President Duterte is really a strategist – something that those who are against him, especially those associated with the left cannot and choose not to understand the man. He may have some conflicting pronouncements and decisions as regards to mining operations in the country, but because he is well understood by those

working with him and for him, his inner conviction to put environmental protection as a top priority over income generation from mining operations is also well understood by mining companies during his administration. The Duterte environment advocacy, however, must be grounded with solid ethical basis. His administration should learn much from the environmental philosophy and deep ecology of Aldo Leopold and also the indigenous knowledge and belief system or sometimes called as “indigenous spirituality”.

Any environmental advocacy of the present government must take into account the inseparable relationship that the indigenous peoples have with their environment. Talking about the inseparable relationship between the indigenous peoples and their environment, Aldo Leopold, a person who pioneered the land ethic even said that there is an inseparable relationship between the people (not only the indigenous peoples) and the land as well as all the elements (both the living and non-living) of the land because for him the land is a community and ‘when we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect’ (Leopold, 1949). However, we abuse land because we regard it as a commodity that we own and possess. Aldo Leopold said that this kind of attitude is influenced by an Abrahamic concept of land (ibid). What is this Abrahamic concept of land? It is a kind of mindset that we own the land and therefore we can exploit it in whatever ways that satisfy us. Catholic tradition that puts man as the center, the apex of creation and in fact, as the “co-creator” of God, can also be blamed for the misfortune of our environment. Because of this, man started to think that he owns the land and he can do whatever he wants for the land. This kind of attitude is being exacerbated during the modern period because man now thinks that he is God and that he wants to force nature to reveal its secrets through his advancement in science and technology.

The environment and the indigenous peoples have suffered much because of too much anthropocentrism that penetrated not only the mindset of the economists and politicians but also the development workers, social scientists and other environmental advocates. I am not saying that we need to abandon our anthropocentric thinking because we also need to really factor in the needs of the people in any development projects and even advocacies. I even argue that any advocacy without anthropocentric grounding will not also prosper because people will not participate in such advocacy if they cannot also benefit from it. However, too much focus on anthropocentrism is also detrimental to the sustainability of the environment

and in the long run, to the people since there is that inseparable relationship that exists between the people and their environment. When the environmental resources will be depleted because they are too much used and abused to satisfy the insatiable needs of human beings, in the end, it is not only the environment that suffers but also the people who are inseparably living in the environment.

In his "*A Sand County Almanac*", Aldo Leopold set forth his "land ethic," which is a moral responsibility of humans to the natural world, to the biotic and non-biotic community. Aldo Leopold's land ethic idea is extremely relevant in today's society. Thus, the environmental advocacy of Duterte's administration must be grounded with the land ethic of Aldo Leopold. Ethics deal with what's right and wrong. Right and wrong can be seen and experienced mostly in the different relationships and transactions that we have in our fellow human being. Thus, Aldo Leopold cites the Ten Commandments as an example of a set of moral standards that help define rights and wrongs in the context of a relationship between individuals (Leopold, 1949). Leopold also talks about ethics between people and their communities, citing the examples of the Golden Rule (do unto others as you would do unto yourself) and the concept of democracy as foundations that inform our societal code of conduct (ibid). But human beings have also their relationship with nature. However, prior to Leopold, there had never been any clear ethical paradigm guiding the relationship of human being to his or her environment. While there were movements about deep ecology and to survey the intricate relationship between and nature, there were just movements and not clear ethical paradigm (Sessions, 1987). The land ethic of Leopold is the missing piece to complete the puzzle of the SONG that human beings have to sing to have healthy and productive lives. This SONG is about man's relationship with his Self, Others, Nature and God. In this four-fold relationship, man's relationship with nature is often neglected. Psychology and other human sciences have taught man how to relate with his self and others. Theology, spirituality and even Religion also taught man to nurture his relationship with God. But nothing about man's relationship with nature except when you study the life of St. Francis of Assisi and how he treated the rest of the creation as his brothers and sisters. But even then, this deep ecology that has started to sprout during those times was thwarted by the Church strong influence to focus our attention on the creation story and how man is put by God as the apex of creation. Aldo Leopold's land ethic tried to break through the barriers of apathy and neglect and it is

producing a kind of sound that resonates with the indigenous spirituality. Indigenous peoples consider the environment as their market, their pharmacy, their school and even their Church. Thus, they showed so much reverence to the environment to the point that even when they cut trees for their housing needs, they have to ask the approval of “*Magbabaya*”, “*Apo Sandawa*”, “*Manama*” the so-called names of their Gods through a series of ritual before they cut the trees. They even surveyed the signs and signals of God’s approval as reported to them by the sound of the bird “*Alimokon*” and other visible signs communicated to them by nature. They might sound weird and uncivilized in their approach but they have thrived for thousands of years and hardly (if there is any), you can see any kind of danger brought to them by these practices. They only experienced harm and danger when the lowlanders, armed with the Western concept of development imposed their knowledge and practices to the indigenous communities. Why can’t we learn from these so-called uncivilized people in our land? Why can’t we allow them to also teach to us?

I think this is what Aldo Leopold also speaks in his Land Ethic. For Leopold, conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land and so we abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us but when we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect (Leopold, 1949). This kind of ethic is more relevant in today’s environment advocacy of the Duterte administration. After his strong political will, what should be the next thing that he must do is advance a very strong land ethic so that the people will really see the need to take care of the environment of which they are inseparably connected. Duterte, who has proven to have special love for the indigenous peoples when he is still the mayor of Davao City should also utilize the spirituality and way of life of these indigenous peoples as his model for his environmental advocacy. In this way he can also rectify some of his wrong moves this time by relocating the IPs from their ancestral domains and put them in evacuation sites because of his anti-insurgency campaign. I think his strong political will is also needed to really convince these rebels to be his side if they can see sincerely that he is genuine in his environmental advocacy and he is anchoring his advocacy to the indigenous knowledge and belief systems. In fact, there have been many rebels who now return to the government because of the many pro-poor and pro-environment programs of the Duterte administration. Most of these rebels are really protecting the environment

against the entry of voracious mining companies. They are also protecting the IPs against the entry of these businessmen that clearly destroys the life world of the IPs. If these rebels, IP leaders, environmental activists see that Duterte has this strong ethical paradigm in his environmental advocacy and is brave (as he has been portrayed) and genuine enough for this change, then his environmental advocacy will sustain.

Conclusion

There are plenty of studies that showed us how removing control of forest management from indigenous people and how reforestation without learning from living traditions of indigenous peoples who are forest dwellers can pose a threat to biodiversity and forest sustainability. They also stressed the importance of the indigenous knowledge of forest-dwellers and why their traditions should not be brushed off as irrelevant, primitive and uncivilized because they are not properly educated into the mainstream educational system (Indigenous Perspectives, 2002). What the government needs to do is utilize these rich traditions and practices of the IPs that has been proven to have sustained them for thousands of years. Strong ethical paradigm is really necessary to sustain an action or advocacy. But without strong political will of government leaders, our environmental ethics will also be defeated by the enormous forces to disregard environmental protection and focus on chasing wealth at the expense of the environment. While it is true that people need to understand why we need to do this, while it is important that they have to be properly educated why they need to take good care of the environment, it also very important to have radical leaders to put environmental laws into practice.

CHAPTER 5

The Return of the Political: Radical Democracy, Chantal Mouffe, and Ozamiz Politics

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This essay intends to examine the nature of politics in Ozamiz city, seen through the lenses of Chantal Mouffe's "Agonistic Democracy". For decades the city was under the predatory rule of power predators who preyed on the district's weak and incoherent bureaucracy; they enriched themselves by milking on the city's resources while taking the city and the people of Ozamiz under hostage by means of political violence and intimidation. The Parojinogs, whose power-rule rests primarily from their immediate affiliation to the local mafia and their popular background, was able to flourish in their monopolistic rule by taking advantage of the country's predatory system of democracy.

For centuries the Philippines is suffering from democratic deficit caused primarily by the proliferation of national power-brokers and local warlords, who manipulate the country's politics and immure the people with fraudulence and political violence. They loot the country of its resources and divide among themselves the spoils, thereby enriching themselves while leaving the people in dire poverty and absolute misery. Elite-patrimonial democracy flourished in the Philippines due to its rootedness in the country's political narrative; such a system was designed, primarily to plunder the country of its rich resources while eliminating all forms of contestations and political antagonisms against the prevailing power of the time. During the post-colonial period of Philippine politics, the Americans succeeded in proliferating their rule over the country with the introduction of their semi-feudal system of governance; a system of democracy that is designed to cater the local elites' hold of power over their districts. Such democratic arrangement paved the way for the proliferation of elite democracy in Philippine politics. Democracy, in this regard, is empty of its original sense of popular sovereignty. The ruling elites succeeded in reformulating, and to some extent eliminating, the fundamental democratic principle of popular

sovereignty and replacing it with their own imposed rationality, that they were able to flourish without contestations from the people.

Deliberative democracy, for this matter, is exhibiting its fundamental limitation with its insistence of a universal rationality and consensus whereupon antagonism is cancelled out being a threat to the entire enterprise of liberal democracy. Chantal Mouffe argues that to insist for a universal consensus in a democracy is to eliminate the legitimacy of political antagonisms and contestations. Democracy must not aim for a universal consensus, rather it must allow for a conflictual consensus to transpire. This is for the reason that modern democratic societies are pluralistic in value, that is, it presupposes differences in the ethico-political bearings of each individual member that a presumed universal consensus cannot ignore. The country's democratic deficit is brought about by such limiting idea of deliberative democracy by its faulty representative system and by the its predatory design of democratic governance. What is necessitated then is to reinstitute the political in the Philippine politics by radicalizing democracy in the country. A radicalization that does not presupposes a new revolution from the outside, but rather from within; a revolution that puts into practice the fundamental principles of liberal democracy: equality and liberty.

Background

The Philippines, it is often said, has a predatory system of democratic state and institutional arrangements. So that most of the prominent political theorists in the contemporary period, who venture into the study of Philippine democracy, argue that: "Philippine democracy is, indeed, in a state of crisis."¹³² This is despite of the fact that there is no other country in Asia that has more experience in running a democratic state other than the Philippines. Walden Bello emphatically asserts that in the entire history of East Asia, the Philippines was the first nation to wage war for national liberation which eventually led to the establishment of the first republic in the region in 1898. The Philippines is likewise the first in the region to have embraced modern parliamentary democracy as its system of governance.¹³³ Paul Hutchcroft and Joel Rocamora echoed the same sentiment saying that the Philippines is the only country in Asia which has more experience with democratic institutions. That over a century -from the Malolos republic to the political midwifery of the US colonial rule, from the cacique democracy to the restorative democracy in the post EDSA uprising of 1986- the Filipinos know what modern liberal democracy is, its benefits and shortcomings.¹³⁴

However, though the country has been democratic for over a century, the structure it embraces is undemocratic. Hutchcroft further asserts that the crisis in Philippine democracy is manifested, “in a deepening frustration over the inability of democratic institutions to deliver the goods, specifically goods of a public character.”¹³⁵ This is because the country’s democratic institutions are under the control and the manipulative schemes of self-serving politicians and landlords who loot the land of its resources and divide among themselves the spoils; thereby enriching themselves while leaving the people in dire state of existence. That is, while the country’s democratic system is having problems of providing goods that are public in character; those in the favorable position - the elected public officials and the oligarchs - take advantage of the country’s incoherent and often immature bureaucracy and milk the system for their own private welfare. Moreover, with the prevalent existence of power predators in Philippine democratic system, Paul Hutchcroft refers to the country’s state of democracy as patrimonial/elite democracy. It is a weak state preyed by political power predators who act as bosses and warlords; who impose absolute political power and longevity over their subordinates; and who loot the country of its resources, while leaving the people in abject poverty.

Gilbert Nathan Quimpo further explains that for Hutchcroft the main problematic of the country’s developmental bog lies primarily in the Philippines’ weakness in its political development. This is because the prevalent political system in the Philippines is patrimonial. That is, the “Philippine state is itself patrimonial, specifically a patrimonial oligarchic state. It is a weak state preyed upon by a powerful oligarch that has an economic base largely independent of the state but depends upon access to the state machinery as the major means to accumulate wealth.”¹³⁶ The Oligarchs, in order to remain in power, took advantage of the immature and hastened proliferation of provincial and local electoral offices during the American reformulation of Philippine politics, which thus paved the way for, what Quimpo referred as, “palm days” of Philippine political dynasties.¹³⁷ The rise of political dynasties and monopolistic agents in political power-rule in Philippine politics have entrenched power predators and warlords who utilized political violence and intimidations in order to remain in power. Hutchcroft stresses that there was “nothing inevitable about this economic elite being transformed into powerful political-economic elite; rather, this change came about through the very deliberate creation of new political institutions by the American colonial leadership.”¹³⁸

John Sidel in furthering the claims of Hutchcroft, contrasted the kind of semi-feudalistic system that was introduced by the Americans in the early 20th century to that of the Spanish principalia. He asserted that while the Spanish colonial regime delegated persons -caciques- to rule certain municipalities under the close supervision of a Spanish priest in the locality; the Americans in marrying and extending the 'primitive accumulation' "expanded the structure of private control over the local coercive and extractive agencies of the state upwards through the subordination of a national state apparatus to provincial and national level elected officials."¹³⁹ For Sidel the subordination of local coercive and extractive agencies to state apparatus combined with the primitive capital accumulation during the American colonial regime paved the way for the emergence and entrenchment of local elites and warlords in Philippine democratic system.¹⁴⁰ This is where he departs from the common description of Philippine democratic institution as being a weak state preyed upon by oligarchs. He argues that it is rather precisely of its strong state constitution from the American colonial regime muddled with elitist and predatory ideologies that the country's democratic deficit is rooted upon.

The prevalent nature of Philippine democracy: patrimonial/elite democracy, Bossism, Oligarchic politics, Patron-client factional politics, necessarily paved the way for the proliferation of local bosses and political predators. Political dynasty is a necessary by product of the aforementioned nature of Philippine politics. Most of the country's political offices, from the local to national offices, are occupied by elite politicians coming from different factions of political clans. It is in fact the case that a certain municipality is ruled by one political family who subjugates the people by oppressive and subtle enforcement of policies that serve the purpose of securing for them their hold of power over such district. Mindanao is not immune from the presence of political power predators; majority of the archipelago's cities and municipalities are occupied by political families whose immediate members occupy municipal and local offices. These political clans amass huge amount of resources during their being in office. They loot their district of its resources to enrich themselves from the money they get from budget allocations coming from the national government, while leaving their people in absolute misery and poverty. These bosses proliferate fraudulent election practices: vote buying coupled with violence and intimidation every election. All for the reason of maintaining their power hold of their district. That is, for decades these local political elites remain in power by winning local elections with the use of political harassments and killings; they bribe the electorates;

they intimidate prospect political competitors by their private armies. So that in most of the provinces where political dynasts rule and are engaged with active political disputes against another dynasty, election times are often identified with harassments and violence.

Furthermore, the persistent existence of political dynasties and local warlords in Mindanao is one of the reasons why most of the people in the region are poor. "Poverty is not a contingent phenomenon caused primarily by the environmental and social atmosphere of the place; rather it is willed and designed by these political predators for power preservation."¹⁴¹ Poverty, in this regard, is a developmental deficit that is caused primarily by the proliferation of systemic deprivations designed by the ruling dynasty for power preservation. This explains why most districts run by political dynasties are often poor, especially in most rural areas. They allow the people surrounding them to remain poor and ignorant, for in the poverty of the people the entrenchment of these political families is secured. Political dynasty breeds poverty, for such systematic capability deficit is the best alternative for controlling the people and of maintaining political power. The poor are seen as expendables, mercilessly exploited and used until they are exhausted, while these predators live in extravagance and prosperity.

Ozamis City and the Rise of a Political Dynasty

Among the many provinces and cities that are ruled by political elite families in Mindanao is Ozamis city. Historically Ozamis was not its original name; accordingly, it was named after a Subanen word *Kuyamis* which refers to a variety of coconut named after its original settlers who were the Subanen people. Then it was later on changed into *Misamis* during the Spanish colonization period. Moreover, before the coming of the Spanish colonizers, the town was constantly ravaged by the "Marauding pirates" who caused the Subanen settlers to flee to the neighboring provinces of Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga Del Norte, there to create their own communities even up to the present. *Misamis* was not conquered by arm but by religion, shortly after the coming of Jesuit missionaries the place was made as the "principal anchorage in Mindanao by the Spanish conquistadors in 1757 with the building of the stone fort –*Cotta*–."¹⁴² Moreover, its foundation as a city was on July 16, 1948 roughly three years after the World War II. And by virtue of House Bill No. 1656, the name Misamis was changed into Ozamis in honor of the late senator Jose Ozamis. "Ozamis has gone a long way from an Old Spanish settlement to its present enviable economic position in the region. It

is now emerging as one of the fastest growing cities in Northwestern Mindanao.”¹⁴³

Unlike other towns and municipalities in the province that are ruled by political dynasties who came from wealthy and landed families in the past; Ozamis city’s ruling elite did not come from such background. Their rising into power was not due to their wealth and control over the local coercive and material resources, but rather from their popular root thanks to their patriarch who gave to them such political advantage. The Parojinogs’ eventual rise to power was linked to their patriarch’s sympathetic character towards the poor people of Ozamiz. Octavio “Ongkoy” Parojinog was imagined to be a kind-hearted man, whose sympathy is always towards helping the poor in “Lawis”. He often gives money to the poor in his place and whenever somebody from his neighborhood asked for help, he was always ready to give a hand; this persisted even to the present day, it is true that when individuals ask for help (provided that such request will serve their interests) the family, especially the late mayor Aldong, is easy to approach and is always willing to help. It is for this reason that the family’s power-rule is paradoxical. They present themselves to be for the poor people in the city, but at the same time they are looting and depriving these same people from the life that is proper for them. In fact, most of the employees in public offices who were active during their time, never received monetary incentives during special holidays like Christmas and the like; It was only after they were dethroned by Espenido, that local public employees started to receive their due incentives.

Furthermore, their fame and power started in 1986, when army Maj. Franco Calanog organized the *Kuratong Baleleng Group* which was at that time a counter-insurgency organization intended to battle against the growing threat from the communist guerillas in Misamis Occidental, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur.¹⁴⁴ By the time the threats from the communist guerillas descalated in 1988, the *Kuratong Baleleng* were disassembled and were left to function on their own without military and government supervision. After the group’s disorganization, Torres writes that: “Without military supervision, the group rapidly metamorphosed into an organized criminal syndicate. A lot of kidnapping, robberies, smuggling, murders, and extortion were attributed to the group.”¹⁴⁵ With the growing influence and notoriety of the *Kuratong*, a Mindanao organized syndicate group was realized; a Mindanao mafia was born. Ongkoy, allegedly engaged himself and the gang members to illegal activities; from bank robberies to

illegal drug trades in the entire country. Moreover, what distinguishes the Parojinog patriarch from a typical bandit leader was his magnanimous character towards the poor people of "Lawis". It is said that the patriarch would distribute a portion of the money they get from their illegal activities to the people of Lawis, thereby earning the name the "Robin Hood of Lawis".

The influence and the impression made by the late Octavio parojinog to the people of Ozamis was partly the reason why the late mayor Aldong Parojinog won the 2001 mayoral election by a landslide. The Kuratong Baleleng gained respect and trust from the residents of Lawis and from some people of Ozamis with their "charitable acts" of dividing the produce of their loot to the poor. This, the Parojinog used as their political machinery to completely place the entire city under their power over the past decades. In effect, the rise of the Parojinog clan to power was actualized by their immediate affiliation to the *Kuratong Baleleng* syndicate and their populist ideology of putting the people's welfare at the core of their political projects. The use of political violence, intimidations and harassments is prevalent in Ozamis city every election period, so that nobody would dare go against them every election; they were able to preserve their power without contestations and they managed to put in office their own immediate relatives.

Despite of the Parojinogs' latent inefficiency in running a democratic government and their political machinery's apparent notoriety they remained to be popular among the people and maintained their power-rule in Ozamis city for decades. For over 30 years the family ruled the city almost without contestations. They ruled the place with their political machinery and they were able to cast a long shadow of control over the state's bureaucracy. They were the local power brokers who milked in the incoherent bureaucracy of the land and enriched themselves in the process. What transpired during their rule, was a government marked by oppression and neglect of public welfare. Democracy during their time was a sheer abstraction characterized by systemic political and economic deprivation. Popular sovereignty was a sheer idea in the minds of those people who wanted to liberate themselves from the oppressive control of the ruling elite of the Ozamiz. It is enough to reflect upon the lavishness and the prodigality the family's lifestyle portrays to understand how they have amassed huge amount of wealth by plundering the city and the people.

Political Bosses of Ozamiz City

During their rule, democracy in the place was an abstraction. The people were alienated from the state, for reasons that they were simply made to abide with the imposed bureaucracy designed by the family; not for bettering the lives of the people but rather for them to flourish and develop. Democracy was no longer intended to serve the people; it was made to serve the interest of one family whose intentions in running a democratic state is only to enrich themselves and to hold absolute control over the city, while leaving the people and the state in dire poverty and political decadence. They were the bosses of the land whom Sidel refers as the “local brokers who enjoy an enduring monopolistic position over coercive and economic resources within their respective bailiwicks.”¹⁴⁶ As mentioned above, the family was able to preserve power for decades because of their affiliation to the notorious *Kuratong Baleleng* syndicate and their popular propaganda of putting the people’s welfare in priority, so that the idea that they were loved by the people due to their supposed good charisma cannot explain their uncontested rule over the place and the fear they have made in the impression of the people of Ozamiz. Sidel asserts that such idea of people supporting warlords because of their presumed ethico-political charisma is utterly ridiculous; especially when we are confronted by boss violence.¹⁴⁷ It is enough to ask the people of Ozamiz how violent the ruling family is towards their perceived political enemy. For them, democracy is to serve only their interests so that anyone who tries to contest their legitimacy as the ruling elite will incur for herself the wrath of the family’s anger. It is for this reason that for the past decades no one would dare to go against the family during elections. So that for roughly more than 30 years they hold power uninterruptedly.

Furthermore, their success in monopolizing power in Ozamis did not come from the lone support they get from the people, for as I argued such an idea is ridiculous; their success is derived from the support that they get from, what Sidel calls, “superordinate power brokers, whose backing has underpinned their emergence, entrenchment, and survival and whose hostility has spelled their downfall or death.”¹⁴⁸ This is materialized by the alleged link of the former President Joseph Estrada and senator Panfilo Lacson. Jose Torres Jr. in his article “The Making of a Mindanao Mafia” asserts (quoting a certain Danny Devnani, who during the senate hearing claimed that the former mayor of Ozamis was in frequent communication with the then President Joseph Estrada and Panfilo Lacson who was then

National Police Chief and PAOCTF head,¹⁴⁹) for the political link and patronage of the then president Estrada to the Parojinog family. Moreover, as the news of President Rodrigo Duterte identifying the family as narco-politicians surfaced; known personalities from the national government offices and high-ranking officials from the country's law enforcement agencies were identified as protectors and as having immediate linkages to the family's allegedly illegal trade.

It is of general knowledge that the center of illegal trade in the city of Ozamis is in barangay Lawis. For the locals of the place it is referred as "the cave", rightly so, for upon arriving in the vicinity in order for one to enter she must pass through closely connected and aligned makeshift houses like walls of a cave. Illegal drug trade and illegal gambling are rampant in the vicinity to the extent that many of the households are directly engaged in the aforementioned illegalities. Most of the houses cater drug trades and illegal "Karera" gambling, so that each of the houses – engage in the illegal trades – have small rooms where the transactions happen and where users consume their "shabu". The place was so well known with drugs that as accorded by my source, "from morning to late night the place is filled with people coming from different places of the region." The person further adds that, "Shabu was so rampant that even before you get to arrive at house of your frequent seller, you will be offered along the way, some from their small window like ventilation of their makeshift house." The place is actually strategic for protecting the local's illegal drug trades. Accordingly, everyone who are engaged in the illegal trades are obligated to give what the local calls "SOP" of their proceeds to some of the family's close constituents whom they refer as the dragons. Furthermore, robberies are so well structured and planned in the city, that if one is robbed in any specific place and time, one can ask for the object taken from the exact person by presenting herself in Lawis. Robbed objects are bought back by the owners without any sort of legal intervention from the local police. Accordingly, robberies are so well structured that each of the city's strategic blocks are occupied by members of the bandits whose main objective is only to steal regardless of the time. Illegal activities flourish in the place being under the protection of the heads of the Kuratong.

John Sidel's description, of how some local warlords persist in power over their local district, fits precisely to that of the Parojinog's dynasty. He explains that "many of the entrenched politicians and magnates in the country have derived their power and wealth not from private landownership

but from state resources and commercial capital, and many of those entrenched politicians and landed elites who have accumulated large landholdings did so after -rather than before-assuming elected office.”¹⁵⁰ Such is truly the case for the Parojinogs. As I have stated above, the Parojinogs did not start as a wealthy political clan of high stature in life; rather they were simply coming from an ordinary family of relatively meager stature being vigilantes in the beginning. Their rise to power was partly caused by their Father’s charismatic character towards the people of Lawis, and their affiliation to the notorious syndicate, the *Kuratong Baleleng*. With their political machinery and their use of political violence and intimidations, they were able to control the local government and manipulated the state’s bureaucracy to serve for their interests. Businesses are mandated to give their monthly “SOP’s” to the family’s close constituents for them to continue their business transactions in the city. Each establishment has their own lord to pay every month otherwise one’s business will be forced to close due to frequent harassment and looting accentuated by the members of the syndicate.

Radical Democracy and the Return of the Political

Joshua Cohen’s “Radical Democracy” argues for a positive outlook the accumulation of radical principles may bring to the present discourse of democracy. Cohen explicates that any discussion about radical democracy posit an ideological bearing to the contemporary debates on democracy. Its relevance rests in its critique to the conventional deliberative democratic schemes that -according to proponents of radical democracy- are insufficient to represent the people’s ideals of the best alternative life that each one has reasons to value. Radical democracy is skeptical to the liberal’s project of consensual agreement, which unifies and represents the pluralistic nature of the good life and disregard the relevance of ordinary citizens freely engaging in public reasoning and debates about public and political problems.¹⁵¹ He further explicates that radical democracy is identified with the merging of two democratic principles of participation and deliberation. The former, on the one hand, posits the active participation of the people in public decision making. The citizens in this respect are given “greater direct roles in public choices or at least engage more deeply with substantive political issues and be assured that officials will be responsive to their concerns and judgments.”¹⁵² The later, on the other hand, posits that rather than concentrate on power and interests, democratic arrangements should be deliberative. That is a deliberative democracy “in which citizens address

public problems by reasoning together about how best to solve them, in which no force is at work ... except that of the better arguments.”¹⁵³ The liberal insistence of an inclusive rational consensus, is what makes deliberative democracy inefficient to answer the prevailing struggles presupposed in modern democracy. Such hope of an inclusive rational consensus rejects the prevalent existence of pluralism of values in the polity. It denies all forms of legitimate contestations, and hence, any legitimate assertion of one’s own project of the good life. What transpires instead is that with the presupposition of a sound rational judgment, given that the consensus is determined by rational representatives, what will be agreed upon will be the general will of everyone. This is a problem, especially in most underdeveloped democracies in the world, because it prioritizes the majority’s goals over the minority’s projects. What happens therefore is that most of the marginalized sector’s project of the good life is set aside in view of the supposed greater good the majority is proposing in the actual deliberation process. This explains why most of the indigenous people in the country are banished from their ancestral lands, and whose cry for justice and equality are silenced.

It is for this reason that Chantal Mouffe strongly criticizes deliberative democracy’s main goal of “securing a strong link between democracy and liberalism,” while, “refuting all those critics who -from the right as well as from the left- have proclaimed the contradictory nature of liberal democracy.”¹⁵⁴ This is so because the liberals see popular contestations and antagonism as posing a threat to the values of liberal democracy. The main goal, therefore, of deliberative democracy is to limit if not eliminate all sorts of contestations, by reformulating the democratic principle of popular sovereignty.¹⁵⁵ The reformulation has led to the demise of power in the public sphere while being replaced by an inclusive rational consensus between two pre-constituted identities. Mouffe sees this to be problematic, precisely because it fails to consider the social dimension of power; that power is vital for social relation. Moreover, the necessary constitution of power in the social sphere rests in the very nature of the polity, modern democratic societies are pluralistic in value. That is, modern political society posits differences of rationalities relative to the socio-ethico principles embraced by many of its members. It is for this reason Mouffe asserts that power must not be seen as “external relation taking place between two pre-constituted identities, but rather as constituting the identities themselves.”¹⁵⁶ That is, since any social relation is a manifestation of hegemony -of power relation- democracy for this matter should not direct its goal to eliminating antagonism, but rather to see to it that

such contestations are given due legitimacy. “Democracy requires, therefore, that the purely constructed nature of social relations finds its complement in the purely pragmatic grounds of the claims of power legitimacy.”¹⁵⁷ The legitimation of power in the public sphere entails that, democracy should not aim for a universal consensus among socially constructed identities, rather it should allow for the possibility of counter-hegemonic moves and contestations. That is, “agonistic democracy should provide the possibility of contestation between different and conflicting interpretations of the shared ethico-political principles.”¹⁵⁸ Agonistic democracy presupposes the idea of power legitimacy among socially and politically diversified identities. An antagonism that does not see the opposing party as an enemy to be destroyed and silenced, rather, it sees the other’s claim for development to be equally legitimate. Radical democracy insists on the idea of struggle that is immanent in liberal democratic institutions; a struggle from within liberal democracy that attempts to radically put into practice the liberal principles of equality and liberty.

Agonistic Pluralism

Mouffe, in “The Return of the Political” argues that the main problematic of deliberative democracy rests in its reductionism of the nature of the political to sheer politics. Liberal democracy in its insistence of an inclusive rationality portrays a society that is empty of contestations and antagonism. The reductionism of the political to that of politics means that political antagonism is determined by norms and laws set by an inclusivist rational consensus in the public sphere. Legitimacy of protestations, in this regard, is limited to legislative regulations. Antagonism and contestations, for that matter, are seen to posit an immediate threat to liberal democratic institutions. So that the main goal of deliberative democracy is to limit, if not eliminate, all forms of contestations. The elimination of contestations is realized in the creation of the public sphere whereupon adequate procedures of deliberations, ruled by a rational consensus, take the place of legitimate power relation. Following Mouffe, such elimination of power in the political is itself the very limitation of liberal democracy; for it fails to give a substantive account of the pluralism of values prevalent in modern democratic societies. She asserts thus: “Radical democracy demands that we acknowledge differences- the particular, the multiple, the heterogenous -in effect, everything that has been included by the concept of man in the abstract. Universalism is not rejected but particularized; what is needed is a new kind of articulation between the universal and the particular.”¹⁵⁹ That radicalization

of democracy is realized in the acknowledgement of differences in rationality and judgments among men whose nature of social relation is determined by hegemonic power relations. It is in the acknowledge of the necessity of antagonism that democracy will flourish. She further writes that: "Pluralism lies at the very core of modern democracy; if we want a more democratic society, we need to increase that pluralism and make room for a multiplicity of democratically managed forms of associations and communities."¹⁶⁰ Democracy for this matter should abandon all hopes of a perfectly reconciled society under a universal and rational consensus. That is, democracy should not aim for a unified consensus; rather, it should create a space for conflictual consensus among diversified individuals to flourish. Agonistic pluralism, according to Mouffe, embraces the idea that antagonism is vital for a truly democratic institution to flourish. So that "the aim of democratic politics is to construct the "them" in such a way that it is no longer perceived as an enemy to be destroyed, but an "adversary", i.e., somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into question."¹⁶¹ The legitimacy of antagonism in agonistic democracy lies in the very idea that agonistic confrontations and contestations are the very foundations of a functioning democracy. "A well-functioning democracy", Mouffe argues, "calls for a vibrant clash of democratic political positions."¹⁶² It is for this reason that agonistic democracy denies all possibilities of rational consensus to flourish, for such inclusive rationality rejects the legitimacy of antagonistic confrontations in the polity by eliminating all forms of political antagonism in the public sphere and replacing them with a general consensus. However, such elimination of power in the public sphere, realized by a rational consensus and the insistence of legitimacy that is utterly individualistic, for Mouffe, is an illusion that posits an essential danger to pluralistic democracy. "This is why", she writes, "a project of radical and plural democracy recognizes the impossibility of the complete realization of democracy and the final achievement of the political community."¹⁶³

The Return of the Political in Ozamiz Politics

For over 30 years the Parojinog clan had thrived in Ozamiz city and was successful in establishing a political dynasty almost without contestations. They made themselves the local bosses who control all aspects of the city's bureaucracy and economy; they loot the city of its political and economic resources for their own gains and satisfactions. Though it is undeniable that the family, especially the late mayor, had helped in establishing the city's institutions and political structures as a democratic

polity, it is likewise equally undeniable that they were the reasons why the city's economy is bogged down and the people's development is neglected. Furthermore, they succeeded in continuing their hold of power in the city not because they were loved by the people of Ozamiz – though it is true that some of the citizens, especially those who are close constituents of the family, loved them – rather because of their most effective political machinery characterized with violence and intimidation. Their affiliation with the *Kuratong Baleleng* group has secured for them a seemingly endless hold of power and control over the people of Ozamiz; to the extent that the locals call them the “Dragons” whose names are mentioned in whispers and fear. Despite the rampant irregularities and illegal activities (illegal drug trade in Lawis, illegal gambling, robberies and the like) that some of the family's constituents are doing, the people choose to be silent over the aforementioned irregularities in the city, for they fear about what the dragons might do to them.

For many years the family held in hostage the city and the people of Ozamiz. They were enjoying a totally monopolistic rule over the city's political and economic resources, while most of the people remained poor and ignorant. Mendoza, Hutchcroft, Sidel and Quimpo were right in their contention that where a political power predator flourishes, there exists extreme capability deficit. Poverty and political dynasty, especially in rural areas, are necessarily intercorrelated. Poverty, in this regard, is not a contingent phenomenon caused by environmental and social principles; rather poverty is intended, designed by the ruling elite to keep the people in constant need for their patronage help in the process of rent-seeking activities.

Furthermore, the family was enjoying its seemingly absolute power over the city; when a progressive leadership was introduced by the person of Police Chief Inspector Jovie Espindo that has totally changed the fate of the city. For the first time, for over 30 years, the people of the Ozamiz have experience true bureaucracy. Though the system, designed by the ruling family, remained to be problematic, but from the ruins of the past dynasty the people of Ozamiz started to build a new democracy. The radicalization of democracy in Ozamiz was necessitated, disruption was deemed essential in order to salvage the dying politics in the city. For years antagonism ceased to exist in the place; political protestations and contestations were long been immured in the tombs of monopolistic power-rule that the family built for decades. The political was denied of its being and was replaced by a self-

serving rationality and universalism designed by the Parojinogs in order to proliferate in power. Moreover, what transpired in Ozamiz during the rule of the family is precisely the danger that Mouffe referred as inevitable when deliberative democracy is left on its own to insist for too much consensus. The main problematic of our country's liberal democracy is that it is predatory, power is centralized within elites and warlords who immure the land with violence and intimidation, and in the process loot the country of her resources and divide among themselves the spoils. They milk in the country's strong but predatory system of democracy; thereby enriching themselves from the often-incoherent bureaucracy of the land. The Parojinogs have understood this very well, to the extent that they have made a political dynasty fortified by systemic political deprivations and injustices. But in the advent of a progressive leadership, the radicalization of democracy of the city was realized. Strong policies were promulgated and implemented without discretion. The city begun to see the dawn of democracy from above, power was no longer centralized within the political clan and the people were slowly empowered.

However, the radicalization of the city's democracy was not without contestation from the ruling family that eventually led to the death of some of the family's constituents and close relatives. The return of the political in Ozamiz city was caused by a leader whose courage and faith in his God have brought about the downfall of a dynasty whose power control has been rotted for decades. For some, PCI Jovie Espinido is a hero, someone whose name will be part of the entire history of Ozamiz. His progressive leadership has freed the city from the clasp of the power predators who held hostage the people and whose incompetence in running a democratic state is exhibited in the dire lives the people of Ozamiz are living. Espinido revolutionized the state by enforcing policies with an iron hand. He knew that it is only through fire that the crooked ways the people are accustomed to doing and living in Ozamiz will be straightened. What Mouffe calls the "particularization" of the masses was reinstated, the public sphere was cleansed from the capricious and oppressive rationality imposed by the former ruling bosses. The return of the political in Ozamis city is slowly coming to its realization. Though right now one must not be complaisant for, as Mouffe says, democracy presupposes a paradox. She writes: "Central to this approach [radical/agonistic democracy] is the awareness that a pluralist democracy contains a paradox, since the very of its realization would see its disintegration. It should be conceived as a good that only exists as good so long as it cannot be reached."¹⁶⁴

Conclusion

Ozamis City is one of the many bailiwicks in Mindanao that is under the rule of apolitical dynasty. Taking advantage of the predatory nature of Philippine state, the Parojinogs were able to establish a dynasty within the city. Though it is undeniable that the family somehow was responsible to the growth of the city but it cannot likewise be denied that during their reign of power corruption and other irregularities and social injustices were rampant. With their most effective political machinery, I argue above that, they were able to flourish without contestations as the bosses of land. All form of political contestations and antagonism were canceled out, if not silenced by the very political machinery they are using. They live in absolute prosperity and prodigality while most of the people are poor and in dire misery. The political, for decades was silenced, immured by the violent force the ruling family in the past has imposed. But in the advent of the progressive leadership of PCI Jovie Espenido, the political was radically reinstated. The prevailing force of the ruling family was demised to the minimal and was replaced by a sense of democracy from below. Democracy is no longer in service of the power predators, but was reinstated to the people of Ozamiz. The autonomization of the people is realized, the political is reborn; so that for the first time in the history of Ozamiz, a mass protestation was made in front of the Capitol ground, where the people finally raised their head and shouted for justice against their long-standing oppressors. The radicalization of democracy in Ozamiz was achieved not by a revolution that came from the outside, but rather from within. The democratization of Ozamiz marked the return of the political in Ozamiz politics.

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he openly addresses his critics in his public speeches by fully displaying a certain distaste and annoyance.

⁴⁴ GMA News, “Duterte: Additional P3M in SALN paid for ad not aired by ABS-CBN” *GMA News Online*, May 16, 2017. Florentino-Hofileña observed that there is an impending network bias for political candidates as “networks also had to deal with the biases and preferences of their owners and top news executives” in the airing of political ads and the coverage of political campaigns. See Chay Florentino-Hofileña, *News for Sale: The Corruption & Commercialization of the Philippine Media*, 2004 edition, Quezon City: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 2004, pp. 33-35.

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⁵⁴ Sara Malm, “Philippines’ President Duterte says he will boycott the media for his ENTIRE term because ‘if there are interviews, there will be criticism’,” *MailOnline*, June 8, 2016.

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⁶³ Atty. Jude Jose Sabio sent communications to the ICC asking for an investigation on human rights violations in Duterte’s drug war accusing the latter for “crimes against humanity”. Magdalo partylist representative Gary Alejano and Sen. Trillanes also filed a supplemental complaint to ICC. Alejano later run for senator under LP’s line-up. Atty. Jude Jose Sabio, on the other hand, was Edgar Motabato’s legal counsel. Motabato was the self-confessed hitman claiming involvement in the Davao Death Squad, presented to Sen. Leila de Lima being the chair for the Senate committee on justice and human rights. Though in hiding claiming for death

threats, Atty. Sabio managed to ask a friend to file a COC on his behalf for his senatorial bid in 2019. Like Lascañas, Motabato has also gone into hiding. See “Alejano, Trillanes file supplemental complaint vs Duterte at ICC” ABS-CBN News, June 6, 2017. See also Gil C. Cabacungan, “De Lima’s committee to protect Matobato” *INQUIRER.NET*, September 18, 2016. See also Rey E. Requejo, “Sabio’s conspirators to be investigated” *manilastandard.net*, May 02, 2017. See also Katrina Domingo, “Lawyer behind Duterte case in ICC runs for senator” *ABS-CBN News*. October 15, 2018.

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