

Political Science and the Marcos Dictatorship¹

This essay examines the position of political science as a discipline during the Marcos dictatorship. It explores the variations in political scientists' approach to Marcos. Some approved and justified authoritarian rule, while others tried to elevate the political events to the level of "theory." There was hardly any critique of the dictatorship in part because political scientists' interpretation of the world did not dovetail with realities on the ground. Studies critical of martial law came from somewhere else, spearheaded by former political detainees who dabbled in dependency theory and did field research, leaving the discipline catching up with these non-political scientists until the end of martial law.

[Political science] is a device “for avoiding that dangerous subject politics, without achieving science”

Alfred Cobban, British historian (Anderson 2011, 80)

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, four Filipino political scientists agreed to develop a “formulation of [Philippine] democracy [that is] ontologically dynamic, time-sensitive, [and a] historically evolving construct.” The goal was to do away with the “proliferation of adjectives qualifying allegedly democratic regimes, at times reflecting excessive conceptual stretching and/or meaning conflation, arguably leads to much analytical confusion in the study of democracies,” which they claimed had resulted in “analytical confusion,” making it difficult to “operationalize” Philippine democracy (Miranda in Miranda, Rivera, Ronas, and Holmes 2011, 2). *Chasing the Wind: Assessing Philippine Democracy*, was the result of this effort, and senior contributor, Prof. Felipe Miranda, opens the book with this lamentation:

It is with much regret that the writers collaborating in this volume conclude that theirs is not a democratic country, neither at this point in time nor sometime in the recent past. Whether a time frame of twenty-five or fifty years is used in assessing the Philippines makes no difference; it has not developed beyond formal democratic trappings and developed a working, modern democracy in the last five decades (Miranda in Miranda et al. 2011, xiii).

This is an odd lament given that *Chasing the Wind* came out in 2011, a quarter of a decade since the overthrow of the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos, sixty-five years since the United States granted the Philippines its independence, and ninety-six years since the first Department of Political Science was established at the University of the Philippines (UP). Indeed, why did Filipino political scientists overlook this “flaw” in the country’s political system? What “distracted” them from coming up with a precise and modern definition of Philippine “democracy” and instead litter the academic discourse with so much conceptual detritus? The leading culprits behind this

maldevelopment, according to Miranda (Preface in Miranda et al. 2011, 34-35) are, of course, the corrupted inefficient state that the oligarchy has captured, looted, and used to suppress threats from below. Miranda worries that his colleagues have this “natural tendency... to cloak the brutality of oligarchic rule and pass it off as a democratizing albeit feckless governance.” And why has this been the case? The senior scholar gives a very pointed answer: the naiveté of political scientists had gotten the better of them. Miranda grouses:

[m]any academics, driven by wistfulness and intense longing for democratic governance can actually liberally respond to oligarchic politics by extending its practitioners a most liberal benefit of doubt. They are then vulnerable to being recruited by the powers that be and eventually lend their prestige and expertise to anything but democratic national administrations. Quite a few of those who served [Marcos'] Cabinet as well as many who served the past Arroyo administration are of this liberal mindset. Many like-minded Filipinos are in active service in the present Aquino administration (Miranda in Miranda et al. 2011, 35).

Compromised and distracted by their bureaucratic duties, political scientists forgot their critical distance and wasted requisite time needed to theorize. Whatever writings they had done fell short of Miranda's expectations. Coming out of their pens are nothing but a *mélange* of ill-defined concepts that confuse more than clarify. What *Chasing the Wind* wants to do then is bring political scientists back to the business of conceptualizing “ontologically dynamic, time-sensitive, [and] historically evolving construct[s]” about Philippine politics. Sentiment, Miranda argues, must give way to analytical clarity, ideological bathos to ivory tower objectivity, and political compromises to data-driven healthy skepticism. In short political scientists must bring science back to the study of politics and bring back the discipline's forte: a detached evaluation of the political landscape.²

This was not entirely an accurate portrait. The conceptual mess that Miranda depicts is not necessarily the result of liberal gullibility. For one, the decision to become a part of the state administrative apparatus was not solely informed by a liberal and pleasant innocence. Some of Miranda's colleagues were easily lured into joining the bureaucracy, sincerely believing in the state's goals and policies. The discipline

also seemed unable to overcome the enduring habit of undervaluing ethnographic and historical research. Thus you have on the one end, a wholesale embrace of an existing political arrangement, and on the other, a *refusal or lack of interest* of complex realities. Political scientists have spent more time cherry-picking data to fit pre-fabricated frameworks rather than taking the bold step of examining the premises of these perspectives themselves and develop an alternative perspective.³ All these help us understand Miranda's early 21st century dirges and his proposal that his colleagues be more scientific in collecting data upon which they could build plausible explanations about Philippine politics.

This paper is an overview of these issues as they played out during the Marcos dictatorship when the state was in its most centralized form, and political choices were simplified and polarized. There were political scientists who supported and justified "constitutional authoritarianism," and there were those who tried to "objectively" understand the nature of the authoritarian beast. Only a handful openly opposed the dictatorship. These scholars would also be pushed to the side by non-political scientists who turned out to be better theoretically-equipped, and whose works were solidly empirically grounded. This paper stops at the point when the dictatorship unraveled and a new constitutional order replaced it. This post-authoritarian moment prompted a surge of more animated writings within the discipline and signaled a new phase in the development of the discipline, when a new generation began to take the lead. It therefore deserves a separate essay on its own especially since it's has been 31 years since the ouster of Marcos.

THE ADVOCATES

The initial response by some political scientists to martial law was to help provide the dictatorship for a justification for its existence. Emerenciana Arcellana (B.A. Political Science, UP, 1948; Ph.D. Political Science, UP, 1981) insisted that "[e]ven the world's most reputable democracies assume more authoritarian tones when the situation calls for strong government, stricter discipline, and more restraint on individual rights...temporarily to tide over a threatened system through a crisis" (Arcellana 1974, 42-51).⁴ This option was not associated with authoritarianism; it was, in fact, *an important prop of democratic politics*. As Arcellana put it:

Most democratic constitutions provide for emergencies as a matter of self-preservation, and a crisis government so based may still be constitution though *de facto* authoritarian. Hence the term *constitutional authoritarianism* [and any] attempt to understand Philippine politics today must come to grips with this term (Arcellana 1976, 65).

Arcellana did not say if this “emergency as a matter of self-preservation” had a time limit and said nothing about the New Society – the new status quo that Marcos conjured to distinguish his extended rule from the past. But she expressed confidence that the dictatorship would have no legitimacy problems, averring that since Filipinos were “disposed to obey authority and [were] inclined to peaceable occupations,” it would be “*safe to assume that on the whole Filipinos do wish to develop into a modern and more prosperous nation*” (underscoring mine). To Filipinos, Marcos was the “resolute leader who can show them the way,” and who, with the First Lady, Imelda, embodied the “strong but compassionate father/mother figures” that Filipinos always yearned to have (Arcellana 1976, 68).

Wilfredo Villacorta (B.A. Political Science, UP, 1965; Ph.D., International Law and Relations, Catholic University of America, 1972) agreed with Marcos that Congress and the Constitutional Convention were engaged in nothing but a “petty exercise [of legislative debate which] is uncalled for, especially since it concerns the future of the nation” (Villacorta 1975, 30). The anti-Marcos leaders inside these two institutions were never interested in the pursuit of good governance, and this indifference is evident in their inability to stop the worsening of “social ills,” and put a stop to “the persistent occurrence of crimes, and vices characteristic of the Old Society.” Worse, these politicians had failed to reverse a general “purposelessness among the youth [and] general apathy among the citizenry.” Villacorta revealed his political color here, sharing Marcos’ antipathy towards the activism that took students to the streets to oppose a reactionary state and dream of a better future for “the masses” (Villacorta 1975, 24). The professor was grateful that by declaring martial law, Marcos saved the day, prevented an impending crisis and restored a functioning government in a heart’s beat. Villacorta had deftly removed Marcos from the political game oligarchs were playing, forgetting that the President was a player in it and was, in fact, the most Machiavellian of them all.

Democracy was not the immediate and urgent issue at hand. Villacorta believed that if the country had to hasten its march to political maturity there were more important functions of the state other than democratic politics. He argued that government must: (a) “increase in the capacity of the political system;” (b) maintain the pace of “the process of specialization of political roles and structures;” and (c) the universalization of the “norms in the government’s relations with the population” (Villacorta 1975, 37). And he was clear as to who was in the best position to introduce these “universal” norms, as well strengthen state capacities, roles and structures: the Marcos dictatorship. Villacorta (1975, 37) closed his essay by appealing directly to Marcos to “realize the transformation of our people [for in this] present period of our history ...the political machinery and the national disposition are conducive to positive change.”

Standing apart from these sententious declarations was Onofre D. Corpuz (B.A. Political Science, 1950; Ph.D. Political Economy and Government, Harvard University, 1956), founder of the Development Academy of the Philippines; Marcos’ Department of Education Secretary; and University of the Philippines President). Corpuz called martial law the midwife of vision of a new society that would replace a sick old order of – quoting Marcos – “privilege and irresponsibility whose excesses and inequities [had] spawned the unrest and the violence that threatened the old order, [and which nurtured an] injustice and unresponsiveness to the needs of the greater number” (Corpuz 1976, 4).

Corpuz then turned his sights on “the Anglo-Saxon tradition” and attacked it as actually being anti-people. He argued that the Americans implanted the Jeffersonian version of this Western democracy in the Philippines, but it turned out to be an ideology that provided “the most powerful and respectable justification in western political thought of the oligarchic domination of society” (Corpuz 1976, 16). Worse, this American “democratic” philosophy’s primary concern was quite narrow – it stood for the “liberty and welfare of the privileged,” but not “*the liberty and well-being of the people*” (underscoring mine). To the hungry and illiterate Filipino majority, Jeffersonian democracy and its so-called Bill of Rights did not “offer solace and hope,” because these ideas were “far removed from their [the poor’s] lives” (Corpuz 1976, 18-19).

That popular “solace and hope” would only come in the hands of the State and its leaders. The State, according to Corpuz (1976,

19), was the positive social force that possessed the potential to turn the poor majority into a “partner in the search for a better quality of human life.” A strong state would “redress radical imbalances in the distribution of values amongst its citizens, [redistribute the] wealth amongst them, [and provide the] special services [to create the] opportunities [for] the less fortunate members of the community to rise nearer to the levels of ease and dignity attained by others” (Corpuz 1976, 20). In the Philippines, that “strong state” was embodied in the Marcos dictatorship. Corpuz was effusive in his admiration for the dictator: Marcos was the “mirror of our triumphs and ideals, our highest virtues and strengths... of what we can be, and ought to be.” The New Society that the autocrat established “invites us to liberate ourselves from the old prejudice of underestimating our capabilities as a people, and instead to arm ourselves with a sense of potency and confidence in our resources” (Corpuz 1976, 34).

This was the intimate bond between Marcos-as-leader and the people he leads that many historians missed, engrossed as they were about “the protracted suffering until death of millions of human beings due to malnutrition, ignorance, unemployment, etc.” Corpuz (1976, 30-31) was contemptuous of these leftwing scholars, referring to them as “elitist in this old and narrow sense, and so we have little awareness of this great struggle” of poor Filipinos. Although he never mentioned them directly, Corpuz was clearly pointing his fingers at the nationalist (and radical) historians from the University of the Philippines who were cognizant of what the political system had done to the poor, but whose notions of liberation – as Corpuz saw it - were anti-state and still informed by the politics of the “Anglo-Saxon tradition.”⁵

THE PARADIGM BUILDERS

Where Corpuz saw state and society as interconnected but also distinct realms, Remigio Agpalo (B.A. Government, University of Maine, 1952; Ph.D. Political Science, Indiana University, 1958) saw fusion. The University of the Philippines professor and a colleague of Emerenciana Arcellana, described the Philippine political system as “an organism with a head, body, arms, legs, hands, feet, fingers and toes [that] grows through the ingestion and absorption of an external element that can be incorporated.” The system consisted of “the political elite and the people, the political elite acting as head,” while the people were “the

body, together with its limbs and other organic part.” Within this “organic-hierarchical paradigm, leaders arose from the “principal part of the body” (the brain; the *pangulo*) who exercised their authority over the people through “symbiosis and paternalism” (Agpalo 1992, 132-133).⁶

This paradigm reached its apogee when Marcos declared martial law and overcame the linguistic and ethnic divide that deterred the development of the body politic. With the New Society, Agpalo suggested, the Filipino identity had become whole and the body politic mutated into its most mature form: the “societal *pangulo* regime” where inside the brain “a strong executive tackle[d] adequately and effectively the crises of identity, of participation, of distribution, and of government.” And how would this *pangulo* regime deal with those opposed to it? Agpalo referred to the anti-Marcos groups as “elements that cannot be incorporated because they are destructive or cancerous, are purged, rejected, destroyed, or neutralized” (Agpalo 1992, 169).⁷ They would cease to be part of the body politic. Revolutions and anti-state violence would never be able to make a breach in the system and destroy it; in fact despite their virulence they could be neutralized, not destroyed but assimilated. For the *pangulo* regime possessed this ability to engage in the “politics of incorporation,” and any anti-state politics – be it be politicians or revolutionaries – was doomed to fail.

Agpalo’s younger colleague, Alexander Magno (B.A. Political Science, University of the Philippines, 1975; Certificate, University of Poitiers, France, 1980; and M.A., Political Science, University of the Philippines, 1981) used neo-Marxist optics to scrutinize the dictatorship’s complex armature.⁸ Magno borrowed extensively from the sociologist Nicos Poulantzas’ amplification of Karl Marx’s “relative autonomy of the state,” and asserted that, the Philippine state, in its authoritarian form, had assumed “the role of leading instrument for ‘national development’ in response to the intensifying crises of underdevelopment” (Magno 1990, 183-218).⁹ Under the Marcos dictatorship, the state had become “relatively autonomous” and thus placed itself in a position to be the development leader. This new position was the result of its strategic personnel being able break from the control of powerful elites and pursue a “pro-people” and “pro-nation” agenda. Magno was referring in particular to the Marcos technocrats whose professionalism and protection from a pro-development President, enabled them to also withstand pressure from popular social forces like labor unions, business associations and professional organizations.

Magno, who dabbled in Marxism in his younger academic years, wrote his pieces with the resurgent communist movement in mind. While the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) recognized that the state had assumed a fascist visage under Marcos, and thus had discarded any pretensions of being liberal democratic, its ideologues still did not deviate from the orthodox Marxist (and Maoist) description of the state as a mere “executive committee of the ruling class.” Magno saw this as too simplistic, and thereby was unable to explain “the warped class circumstances of underdeveloping (sic) societies” like the Philippines (Magno 1990, 183-218). If it looked at the dictatorship from the prism of Poulantzian “relatively autonomy,” then the CPP must make major adjustments to its political and military strategies. Under the dictatorship, the Party’s “three basic problems” – the comprador capitalists, their imperialist masters, and the landed families – had ceased to be the main targets of the revolution. Instead, the CPP must refocus its political attacks on the state’s technocrats and its military assaults on strategic units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The goal would be to weaken if not destroy these two foundations of this relatively autonomous state and therefore weaken the state to a point where it will be overthrown (or, from a Leninist perspective, be “smashed”). Only after the “reactionary state” had collapsed will the revolution then turn its attention back to its class enemies.

Political reality, however, was harsh to these paradigm builders and flaws in their analyses began to appear, as the dictatorship began to reveal its real temperament. Marcos’ political behavior turned out to be riven with contradictions. The dictator claimed his regime was national developmentalist, but, in fact, he placed premium in looting the state. Together with his wife, he claimed to be the Filipinos’ Adam and Eve, but they were only father and mother to their kin and their cronies. The Marcoses maintained they were in power there to serve the nation, but they were more concerned with factional politics and patrimonial plunder.

The dictatorship controlled the military, but Marcos’ use of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was but a Frankensteinian version of warlord or clan use of coercive agencies of to advance their interests. Marcos’ was “cacique” rule in its most intense form. The AFP was supposed to guarantee peace, but its ability to sustain this depended on how its top civilian leaders compromised with regional, provincial, and city elites. Moreover, by the end of the 1970s, it

became evident that the military was losing the protracted war in the countryside, unable to slow down communist expansion and caught in a no-win situation with Muslim separatists (Lallana 1989, 43-62). It was not the relatively autonomous coercive state machine that Magno and others thought it was.

Benedict Anderson's succinct description of Marcos showed how far off Agpalo and Magno were in their description of a powerful *pangulo* and a relatively autonomous state leader.

Don Ferdinand can be seen as the Master Cacique or Master Warlord, in that he pushed the destructive logic of the older order to its natural conclusions. In place of dozens of privatized 'security guards,' a single privatized National Constabulary; in place of personal armies, a personal Army; instead of pliable local judges, a client Supreme Court; instead of a myriad pocket and rotten boroughs, a pocket or rotten country, managed by cronies, hitmen and flunkies (Anderson 1998).

Agpalo's and Magno' paradigms had short shelf lives in the discipline's library. No one among their peers debated with or against them, and none of the younger scholars had any interest in continuing the inquiries these pioneers had begun. In 1986, a flummoxed Agpalo saw his *pangulo* paradigm fall to pieces when Marcos was ousted from power. He spent the first months of post-authoritarian period questioning the legitimacy of President Corazon Aquino. For a brief moment, the senior professor who was always sensitive to being "objective," fell off his academic perch and was submerged in "politics." Agpalo later on recovered his bearings and made a dramatic revision to his paradigm. He described the Aquino regime as representing a third strand of the organic-hierarchical political body, distinguished by a more pronounced contention between political and social forces. The political and institutional combat were intense but these never broke up the body; in fact, it only became stronger. The organic-hierarchical paradigm was still alive (Agpalo 1999, 45-60). Deep down, however, Agpalo remained an admirer of Marcos. In 2007, a year before he passed away, he published a 224-page tome that argued that the dictator had a place in Philippine history, having contributed immensely *and positively* in the shaping of the body politic. *Ferdinand E. Marcos: A Hero in History* was published by the Marcos Presidential

Center, which also happened to be the Marcos museum where, until recently, the presidential cadaver was frozen and preserved (Agpalo, 2007). There is no evidence that the book caught the eye of his fellow political scientists.

By the last years of martial law, Magno had abandoned paradigm building and switched to writing about political conjunctures as he, and many others, competed to explain why the dictatorship was faltering.¹⁰ It was the end game and figuring out the how the regime would end and what possible coalition would replace it was the call of the day. Magno eventually stopped any pretense of academic research and scholarship soon after, and he ended his flirtations with neo-Marxism and decided it was time to go conservative. Nothing was heard of the “relatively autonomous” state after that.

Nothing came out of Corpuz’s pen after his 1973 essay was published. His “secondment” as Education Secretary took much of his attention and energy, and his UP presidency was no walk in the park. After a year he took office, the UP President committed his first faux pas, announcing tuition fee increases by the start of the 1977 school year. Corpuz would face the largest student protest since the declaration of martial law, a signal to him as well as the dictatorship that the communist underground at UP had regained the footing it lost in 1972. By the time he completed his term, the New Society – that “mirror of our triumphs and ideals, our highest virtues and strengths... of what we can be, and ought to be” - was in free fall. After Marcos was ousted, Corpuz quietly went back to his first passion, historical research and wrote the two-volume *Roots of the Filipino Nation* (Corpuz 1989). The first volume is an excellent review of pre-colonial and Spanish Philippines, but the second volume is quite uneven: the first seven chapters were about the Philippine revolution against Spain, the next three on the American colonial era. Then Corpuz abruptly stopped there; he never extended his studies to the post-war period, including the martial law years.

Emerenciana Arcellana went back to full time teaching, and wrote two books, the first on Philippine-American relations, and the second on the continuing relevance of the ideas of the late nationalist senator Claro M. Recto (Arcellana 1996). Wilfrido Villacorta diversified his academic interests and was all over the place. His tracts ranged from the international relationships of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Japan and the Soviet Union, the late Marcos and early Aquino periods, national security and economic policy, American

influence on the Philippine constitutions, and even political linguistics! He eventually became a senior official in the ASEAN. In his resume, Villacorta's list of publications began in 1983; the 1975 piece on the New Society was not mentioned (Villacorta 2014).

Political science remained an intellectual wasteland under martial law because the most adroit among its scholars had stopped exploring and elaborating on their paradigms. But equally responsible was this lingering reticence of many from the field to figure out whether their conclusions were correct or not. The empirical foundations that the paradigms first built their arguments on were scrawny, and this glitch was never resolved because of the absence of empirical heft from the "real world." For critiques of the dictatorship one had to look elsewhere and outside the discipline.

IN THE REALM OF REAL POLITICAL CRITICISM

In 1975, taking advantage of a speech by Marcos where he claim to be a Third World leader, Francisco Nemenzo, then dean of UP's College of Arts and Sciences, set up the "Third World Studies Program (TWSP)," to revive "critical thinking" inside the university. The Program also became a place of refuge for newly released political detainees, who, as "research fellows," began collaborating with a small leftwing UP faculty to revive radical research. Among these fellows, two stood out: Rigoberto Tiglao (B.A. Philosophy, UP, n.d.) and Eduardo Tadem (B.A. Philosophy, 1975; M.A. Asian Studies, 1985; Ph.D. Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, 2016), both former communists who were detained during the early years of martial law and, after their release, completed their undergraduate degrees at UP and invited to join the TWSP's circle of fellows.

A UP Law Center team hired Tiglao to join a research team that was tracking the growth of transnational capital under martial law. He would use the raw data to write several exploratory essays on the Philippine political economy using dependency theory as a theoretical guide. These essays challenged communist assertions that the Philippines was eternally "semi-feudal and semi-colonial," a state that "US imperialism" preserved since the latter would never allow its neo-colony to achieve full capitalist development. The country would also be eternally agricultural, thanks also to a landlord class that would never cede its power in the countryside. The law research data

however showed the opposite. As a result of the entry of transnational corporations, Tiglao observed the emergence of a capitalist economy, evidenced by a rapidly expanding export-agriculture and semi-manufacturing sectors, where transnational corporations were a visible presence. This *dependent capitalism* had diminished “semi-feudal” relations of production, as the landed elites moved their monies to export crop production or assembly plants. Peasants were dispossessed of rice lands after their owners became corporate growers of primary export crops and because state corporations were now leasing their public lands to transnational corporations. With no work in the rural areas, many were compelled to move to the urban centers where jobs in the manufacturing and service sector were available. Those who stayed ceased to become tenants or small land proprietor and moved to plantation work.

Tadem moved back to Mindanao after graduating and settled in Davao, just in time to learn of the Muslim separatist wars, and to witness up close the rise of export crop agriculture in the southern frontier. He became a “research fellow” at the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC), a leftwing organization composed of priests and nuns. The interests dovetailed with each other. Tadem wanted to look at corporate agriculture and the MSPC were concerned with the plight of the Mindanao peasantry. Tadem went on to conduct research and write about Japanese investments in the fishing industry, American fruit companies and their Filipino corporate growers, and the impact of the opening of the East Asian market to Philippine exports (Tadem 1978 and Tadem 1979). The results were the first ever progressive study of the fishing industry, and of peasant resistance to the spread of corporate agriculture. Both were published by AFRIM and the TWSP, with the latter then gradually shifting its interests on capitalism in the country’s largest land frontier (Tadem 1978 and Tadem 1979).

These studies on dependent-capitalism in the Philippines posed worried ideologues of the CPP. The decline of the agricultural sector meant that “genuine land reform” as an issue with which the Party would attract peasants had become superfluous. Without the peasantry, the revolution had lost its principal source of recruits to its New People’s Army (NPA) and without this mass base, the Maoist dream of “surrounding the cities from the countryside” was no more. The Party must now have to shift to an urban-centered strategy and convert rural cadres into organizers of labor unions, urban poor communities and student federations. Most important of all, the decisive battles against

the state would now be a combination of organized armed attacks on major government military and civilian institutions by urban guerilla units, propped and protected by continuous mass mobilization in the cities.

The party's defenders rebuked Tiglao and Tadem, but instead of resorting to polemics some agreed to the *dependistas'* proposal that both sides engage in field research to determine which of their positions were empirically correct. In 1980, AFRIM hosted Tiglao who wanted to study the coconut industry after a Marcos crony took over its production and marketing. The research was published by AFRIM in 1981 as a book with the awkward title: *Looking into Coconuts: Export Oriented Agricultural Growth* (Tiglao 1981). *Looking into Coconuts* was the first ever-Marxist analysis of an industry that was once a workhorse of the economy. Tiglao (1981) used Marx's theory of "ground rent" as starting point to show that it was capitalist exploitation, not "feudal rent," that had been the driving force of the industry. An agricultural proletariat now composed the industry's labor force; not scrawny petty producers selling their harvests to different small to medium coconut oil producers. The catalyst for this capitalist transformation was the dictatorship, which intervened and "rationalized" the industry.

AFRIM also published Tadem's *Mindanao Report*, a comprehensive study of transnational companies, and the regime's ambitious road building projects across Mindanao, the expansion of corporate agriculture and its debilitating effects on rural life, and on workers in the smaller industrial sector (Tadem 1980). He combined government statistics with the extensive data collected from the field, to show how much of the island's economic landscape had been changed because of a more intrusive national state and a more assertive transnational capital. Like Tiglao, Tadem (1980) also notice how dependent capitalism was now the dominant mode of production in the island.. When the book came out, there were some grumblings among Mindanao communists, but AFRIM added it to its list of readings for its political education programs.¹¹

Tadem's and Tiglao's works, as well as that of the other fellows and the TWSP staff itself, were welcomed by young faculty in search of readings for their courses. The TWSP papers were particularly instrumental in introducing Mindanao to the UP community, to allow students and faculty to understand the larger picture that framed the increasing trickle of stories about the Moro separatist rebellions, and the expansion of the communist party into the southern frontier.

Despite its small size, TWSP was able to accomplish its goals – provide critical and alternative perspectives in the study of Philippine politics and sociology.

This circle of fellows, however, would not last long. In the last years of the dictatorship, this kind of Marxist theory-based research had fallen by the wayside as academic and public attention were riveted on the decline of the dictatorship. Fellows also left the TWSP for various reasons: Tiglao became a journalist, while Tadem went back to full-time teaching. In the post-Marcos period, even the TWSP had drifted away from strictly doing research to enrich leftwing theorizing. The priority now was “practical” policy-related tracts to help stabilize the new regime and suggests directions that it could pursue. In the meantime, the CPP splintered, depriving radical intellectuals of their most significant ideological adversary.¹²

What the fall of Marcos did was reinvigorate political science, as it did practically all sectors of a society suddenly released from 14 years of suppression. The *Philippine Political Science Journal (PPSJ)* was publishing more diverse and critically relevant pieces especially from a younger generation of political scientists. The optimism, however, was mitigated by the discipline still being unable to overcome the long-standing handicap in its long history. Political science remained haunted by an old debility: people.

DISCIPLINARY DECREPITUDE

In 1998, Agpalo took the lead in writing the first historical assessment of the discipline. The portrait he painted was not heartening. Focusing his attention on the 1960s, Agpalo (1998) deplored the small number of social science graduates in the 1969–1970 academic year: there were 225 social science graduates among the 13,825 college graduates across the country, an extraordinarily low 1.62 per cent. From this cohort group, only 45 (0.32 per cent) finished college with a political science degree. Further disheartening was that none of these graduates was trained in political science; fifteen were in Foreign Service graduates, and the rest (30) majored in public administration (Agpalo 1998, 4). All the more were these numbers discouraging given that the country’s first Department of Political Science was founded in 1915.¹³

In 2005, seven years after Agpalo’s review came out, his colleague Olivia Caoili published a second review of the discipline,

albeit looking more on the obstacles she and her colleagues faced as faculty members. The foremost was the heavy teaching load, which took a toll on faculty research time. Moreover, since the majority of courses taught were at the undergraduate level (the appeal for the law remained, but foreign service as a program was abolished in UP), the graduate program suffered. Moreover, if it was hard to recruit students into the latter, it became much harder for students who got into the program to complete their studies, especially at the Ph.D. level. Government “secondments” took away the best faculty members, who were supposed to develop and enrich UP’s graduate program, and help colleagues in other schools to expand the teaching of political science (Caoili 2005, 164-165).

There were attempts to remedy the situation and in 1962, members of the UP Department of Political Science established the Philippine Political Science Association (PPSA) to give the discipline a permanent presence and attract colleagues from other schools. These objectives were never accomplished, and PPSA was not heard of for the next 13 years. The association was revived in 1976, and it was able to hold several national conferences across the country until the early 1980s (Appendix 1). The PPSJ’s editorial board reprinted papers from these conferences, including several that were muted critical appraisals of the dictatorship (these, however, never reached the same level of sophistication as the works of the TWSP fellows). The majority of the journal essays, nonetheless, hewed closely to development priorities of the dictatorship (Appendix 2). Finally, the association was given added boost when the Philippine Social Science Council, the umbrella association of various social science disciplines invited it to join its board. In 1978, PPSA joined the International Political Science Association.¹⁴

Five years after Caoili’s review, it was Julio Teehankee’s turn to appraise how far the discipline had gone forward (Teehankee 2010, 4). He wrote that the discipline had gained “speed of development in the discipline particularly on a variety of issues, ranging from civil society studies, local government, democratization and the peace process in the southern island of Mindanao (Teehankee 2010, 8).” Teehankee partly attributed this to the transformative impact of the 1986 People Power Revolution and the subsequent return of constitutional politics as the catalysts for this newfound vigor of the discipline’s clerisy. Alas, this resurrection was short-lived. Soon after its formal revival, the PPSA once again “went into its second period of inactivity for the next 13

years” (Teehankee 2010, 8). Political science remained an unattractive career and the discipline’s graduate programs continued to be lethargic. UP’s Political Science department graduated its first Master of Arts (M.A.) graduate in 1925, but it produced its first Ph.D. student only in 1970, fifty-five years since the Department’s establishment in 1915 (Agpalo 1998, 167).

Then in 2012, Ronald Holmes published a “cursory survey” of the state of the discipline. The study showed that there were now seven schools out of the 239 major universities of the country offering an M.A. degree, but only two – UP and the University of Santo Tomas – have Ph.D. programs (Holmes in Miralao and Agbisit 2012, 3).¹⁵ This numerical thinness is evident once again in the discipline’s debility: in 2012, 97 years since political science was formally established in the Philippines, Holmes listed 35 political scientists with M.A. degrees and 26 with doctorates (see Table 1).

Institution	Bachelor’s	Master’s	Doctorate
University of the Philippines Diliman	0	17	11
Ateneo de Manila University	0	8	5
De La Salle University	0	7	6
University of Santo Tomas	1	3	4
Total	1	35	26

Table 1. Highest Degree Attained by Political Science faculty in four Manila universities (Holmes 2012, 4)

CONCLUSION

This paper tried to explain why a discipline, that is now a century old, was hampered for most of its life by an incapacity to theorize. Until recently, political science has lagged behind historians, political economists, and journalists when it came to explaining the Byzantine world of Philippine politics. During the Marcos era, the discipline was stymied by timidity and fear, as well as by influential and senior political scientists believing in the dictatorship. Anti-state criticism was muted and while there were attempts at paradigm-building (for and against

the state), these were constrained by two other obstacles—political science’s *raison d’être* (pre-legal education; public administration) and the peculiar and still-unexplainable unwillingness of political scientists to test their theories in the field.

As a result, political criticism moved elsewhere, in the etchings of leftwing non-political scientists who wrote excellent works on the martial law political economy and on authoritarian politics and culture. Political science eventually caught up with these exceptionally good non-specialists, but this happened only after Marcos fell from power. *PPSJ* issues began to publish works on oligarchs, institutionalism, gender, environment, international relations, and Asian regionalism (Solidum 1975, Makasiar Sikat 1976, and Duka Ventura 1979). Yet, none of the essays showed any potential for becoming the precursors Agpalo, Corpuz, and Magno did in the 1970s. A palpable reticence among many of the authors to push their arguments to a logical theoretical conclusion is still evident.

There were “outliers,” of course, who distanced themselves from the popular oligarchic rule-cum-cacique democracy paradigm. The works of Nathan Gilbert Quimpo and Jennifer Franco revealed a post-authoritarian political landscape that was not simply dominated by oligarchs and caciques. “Redemocratization,” these scholars argued, did not mean a restoration of the pre-1972 status quo as the post-authoritarian era exhibited its own distinct features suggesting a “break” from the old order. The most prominent of these is that the co-existence between oligarchic politics and a bevy of left-wing movements, “civil society” groups, and autonomous community organizations was now a permanent facet of state-society relations after Marcos (Quimpo 2008 and Franco 2001).¹⁶ These forces fought *but also compromised* with each other in the political arena.

The drawback of Franco and Quimpo’s works was timing (their books were published at a time when the EDSA revolution had ceased to inspire many) and of the authors living abroad, and thus unable to debate with colleagues at home. Their impact was thus minimal, its effectiveness aggravated by this recurring tension between “local” and “foreign” scholars over whose works are better in capturing the nuances of Philippine studies.¹⁷ Where the “breakthrough” came from was in “scientific” polling. The founding of the Philippines’ top two professional public opinion agencies (Ateneo Social Weather Station in 1985 and over a decade later, Pulse Asia in 1999), and the frequent use of surveys by politicians and governments themselves made this

kind of research the centerpiece of the discipline. One of the founders of these two agencies was Felipe Miranda

Will “science” and “the political” find full theoretical happiness by the middle of the 21st century Philippines? Will Felipe Miranda’s discomfort be assuaged? There are signs that indicate leading political scientists are moving towards this direction. Two are worth mentioning here. The recent works by Julio Teehankee on electoral politics attempt to return to the critical study of this popular ritual since the 1996 survey of elections as a form of mass mobilization by two senior non-Filipino scholars (Teehankee 2006, Teehankee 2002, Anderson in Taylor 1996, and Tria Kerkvliet in Taylor 1996). Teehankee has begun probing deeper on the relationship between clientilism on party politics and the power of political clans. This is heartening as the first topic was covered extensively by political scientists abroad but hardly given any attention in the domestic front, while the second’s best evaluations were written by journalists and never political scientists (Teehankee in Tomsa and Ufen 2013; Teehankee 2001). Teehankee’s colleague Francisco Magno has brought in social capital and state-society relations into the study of forestry and environmentalist politics and diplomacy, an interesting cross-pollination of disciplines and topics (1993).

The elephant in the room, however, remains unstudied. Filipino political scientists have yet to set their eyes on the 15 years of the Marcos dictatorship, and pick up where their “elders” left off.¹⁸

NOTES

- 1 When I first suggested to my colleagues that we should offer a course on the history of political science, and found that no one thought it was a good idea, I interpreted the resistance in practical terms. Perhaps they thought we had no one who could devise and teach such a course? It turned out that it was not necessarily the case. The problem was how to interpret the relationship between 'political' and 'science.' If one emphasized political and bracketed 'science,' then the course would have to start with Plato and continue through, say, Fukuyama. But if one did the reverse, the history would not go back much more than a hundred years, when the term was invented in the context of a very American merger between public administration and constitutional law (Benedict Anderson 2016, 158-159).

I wish to thank Caroline S. Hau and Robin Tatu for enriching this essay, correcting its mistakes, and commenting on its strength and inadequacies. Problems associated to this essay, after its publication, are of his own making.

- 2 Autobiography greatly informs this introduction. Despite his known pre-martial law leftwing sympathies, Miranda was not arrested but was "seconded" to the one of the regime's think-tank, the Development Academy of the Philippines, staying in his post until the 1980s: one of those liberals who would "lend [his] prestige and expertise to anything but democratic national administrations." He only turned into a critic of the regime after the 1983 assassination of the top Marcos opposition leader (and father of the current president) Benigno Aquino, Jr.
- 3 I am extremely grateful to Carol Hau for reminding me of this bigger picture. Political economy is also one area where there is a dearth of writings. I shall, however, not include this in this paper but reserve it for another piece.
- 4 On Arcellana, see the articles by Olivia C. Caoili, 2013, Emerenciana Yuvenco Arcellana, *Philippine Political Science Journal*, 34 (1): 4-5; and Linda B. Bolido, 2011, The other Arcellana, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 23 May.
- 5 The scholar Lisandro Claudio refers to this nationalist school as "the Diliman Consensus" in the book *Liberalism and the Postcolony: Thinking the State in 20th -Century Philippines*, Singapore and Kyoto, Japan: National University of Singapore Press, and the Kyoto University Press, 2017: 25-28, 33-36.
- 6 The essay was originally published as a monograph in 1973.
- 7 This essay was originally published in the *Philippine Law Journal* (56) (March 1981): 56-98.
- 8 Magno's senior colleague, Francisco Nemenzo, wrote an abridged summary of dependency theory but did not follow this up a longer piece to elaborate on the paradigm. See Francisco Nemenzo, Jr., A Summary of Dependency and Liberation, *Philippine Political Science Review*, Nos. 5-6 (June-December 1977): 3-4.
- 9 Andre Gunder Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment*, New York. Monthly Review Press, 1966 and Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, London and New York. Verso Press, 1978.
- 10 The middle and latter parts of Magno's only book illustrate this shift away from theory to conjunctural analysis. See his *Politics without Form: Essays on the Filipino State and Politics*, Manila. Kalikasan Press. 1990:183-218.
- 11 AFRIM supported the next phase of Tadem's research, and together with younger researchers, Tadem turned to more specific export industries: fish, forests and fruits. See Eduardo C. Tadem, Johnny Reyes and Linda Susan Magno, *Showcases of Underdevelopment in Mindanao: Fishes, Forest and Fruits*, Davao City: Alternate Resource Center and Forum for Approaches in Research, Media and Development, 1984.
- 12 Self-disclosure: I was a research associate at the TWSP from 1979 to 1988, and was involved in several of the Program's research projects (the banana industry, and a Southeast Asia-wide collaboration on "transnationalization, the state, and the people." I was also doing my own research on the Marcos military and the CPP. This section is an abridged version of an introduction I wrote in the selected reprint of the successful TWSP book *Marxism in the Philippines*. See Patricio N. Abinales, Introduction, in *Revisiting Marxism in the Philippines*, Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, 2010: 1-12.
- 13 See the "History" section on University of the Philippines Department of Political Science website, <http://polisci.upd.edu.ph/about/history.html>. There is no record as to when a Department of Political Science was created at the University of Santo Tomas, the country's oldest institution of higher learning.

- 14 See the Association's website at <http://www.philpolsci.org/home/about-us>
- 15 This has increased lately. De La Salle University started its Ph.D. in Political Science in 2015.
- 16 There is no record of these two books selling well.
- 17 On this complicated interaction between "local" and "foreign" scholars, see: Lisandro Claudio, 2013, Postcolonial fissures and the contingent nation: an antinationalist critique of Philippine historiography, *Philippine Studies* 61 (1): 45-75; and Caroline S. Hau, 2014, Privileging roots and routes: Filipino intellectuals and the contest over epistemic power and authority, *Philippine Studies* 62 (1): 29-65.
- 18 The regressive consequence of not studying martial law have become apparent of late: the complete rehabilitation of the Marcoses with popular backing, a populist approbation of the Marcos dictatorship and dissatisfaction towards post-authoritarian politics, and, worse, a widespread ignorance about those fateful 15 years by the younger generation of Filipinos. See this recent report by Jonathan Kaiman and Sunshine de Leon, In the Philippines, the Marcos name is back, even as memories of the dictator have faded.

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