



Routledge Handbook of the Contemporary Philippines

Edited by Mark R. Thompson and Eric Vincent C. Batalla

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF THE CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is a fascinating example of a “poor country democracy” where issues of economic development and poverty, political participation and stability, as well as ethnicity and migration are crucial. The *Routledge Handbook of the Contemporary Philippines* provides a comprehensive overview of the current political, economic, social, and cultural issues of the country. The *Handbook* is divided into the following four sections concentrating on a different aspect of the Philippines:

- domestic politics;
- foreign relations;
- economics and social policy;
- cultures and movements.

In terms of domestic politics, chapters discuss clientelism, bossism, dynasties, pork barrel and corruption, as well as institutions – the presidency, congress, the judiciary, the civil service, political parties, and civilian–military relations. The Philippines is confronted with many overseas challenges, with the foreign relations section focused on the country’s relationship with China, Japan, and the USA as well as assessing the impact of the Filipino diaspora community around the world. Regarding economics and social policy, authors examine industrial policy, capital flight, microfinance, technocracy, economic nationalism, poverty, social welfare programs, and livelihoods. The final section on Philippine cultures and movements highlights issues of customs, gender, religion, and nationalism while also examining various social and political forces – the peasantry, the middle class, indigenous peoples, NGOs, the left, trade unionism, the women’s movement, and major insurgencies.

Written by leading experts in the field, the *Handbook* provides students, scholars, and policy-makers of Southeast Asia with an interdisciplinary resource on the evolving politics, society, and economics of the Philippines.

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Eric Vincent C. Batalla*

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FOREWORD

We would like to thank Lily Brown, Jillian Morrison, and Dorothea Schaefer from the Routledge team for “roping us” into and supporting this project. Although it took much longer than we expected, it has, we believe, yielded a useful overview of the contemporary Philippines in terms of its politics, foreign relations, economy, and social policies, as well as cultures and movements. Written by leading experts in the field, the aim of this *Handbook* is to provide students, scholars, and policymakers of Southeast Asia an interdisciplinary resource on a number of these issues.

Inevitably however much has much been left out, in part because of space considerations but also because many overburdened scholars we approached were too busy to contribute. Thus there is much room for future efforts to put together a volume which covers areas that could not be addressed here. That said, we are very grateful to the talented group of academics we were able to win over to write chapters based on their current research (and for their patience during the long process of completing the manuscript as chapters came in up to the deadline). In that sense this volume is not just a summary of key issues but also a collection of cutting edge scholarship in various aspects of the contemporary Philippines. We believe this helps compensate for some of the unevenness in terms of coverage and makes it a useful contribution to understanding of this Southeast Asian nation.

We would also like to express our thanks to our hardworking research assistants, Anthony Lawrence Borja, Michelle Sta. Romana, and Alyssa Claire Go Uy of the Department of Political Science, De La Salle University in Metro Manila, and to Kitty Chan, research assistant, and Wong Chi Man (Patrick), student assistant, in the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS), the City University of Hong Kong. Without their invaluable editorial assistance this volume would have taken even longer to complete. Finally, Mark Thompson would like to acknowledge that his work for this *Handbook* was supported by the Hong Kong government Research Grants Council, General Research Grant numbers 9042600 and 9041939.

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a fascinating example of a “poor country democracy” where issues of economic development and poverty, political participation and stability, as well as ethnicity and migration are crucial. The *Routledge Handbook of the Contemporary Philippines* attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the current political, economic, social, and cultural issues facing the country. It not only has a domestic focus but also offers analysis of the key aspects of the country’s foreign relations. Written by leading experts in the field, the aim of this *Handbook* is to provide students, scholars, and policymakers of Southeast Asia with an interdisciplinary resource on the evolving politics, foreign relations, society, and economics of the Philippines.

The *Handbook* is divided into four sections concentrating on themes of domestic politics, foreign relations, economics and social policies, as well as cultures and movements. Individual chapters in the politics section of the *Handbook* discuss the major institutions of government (the presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court, the military, and the civil service) as well as political parties. Other chapters focus on informal (and often much criticized) arrangements in politics: clientelism, bossism, political dynasties, corruption, and congressional pork barrel. The second section concerns foreign policy with chapters on Philippine relations with the US, China, and Japan as well as “diaspora diplomacy.” In terms of the economy and social policy, chapters discuss the nature of Philippine capitalism, (the lack of) industrialization, capital flight, efforts at poverty alleviation, informality in women’s livelihood projects, microfinance, economic nationalism, and conditional cash transfers. The final part of the *Handbook* examines cultures (syncretic Philippine culture, the influence of Catholicism on local culture, indigenous cultures, and peasant culture) and movements (middle class, women’s, labor, NGO, left, and Bangsamoro).

Domestic politics

“People Power” which overthrew the corrupt dictatorship of Ferdinand E. Marcos in the Philippines nearly 30 years ago put this Southeast Asian country in the international spotlight. Known in the Philippines as EDSA (named after the major avenue on which the largest crowds gathered), the February 1986 uprising influenced a number of other popular revolts against dictatorships in Asia and beyond: South Korean activists in 1987–1988, Burmese protesters in 1988, and Chinese student demonstrators in 1989. Even where the origins of the term “People

Power” were forgotten, commentators applied it to uprisings such as in Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, and the Ukraine in 2014. Yet for many Filipinos who remain poor and disillusioned with the post-Marcos order, this “heroic” transition to democracy appears to be little more than political folklore, as shown by the dwindling crowds at recent annual official celebrations of the uprising. In the Philippine case, as in many other countries after peaceful revolutions that brought down dictators, People Power has been followed by a troubled transition to democracy.

In the midst of a major economic crisis and the institutional decay of the late dictatorship period, Corazon (Cory) C. Aquino’s government was nearly toppled by military rebels who turned against her administration after she opened negotiations with the communist insurgents who had grown in strength during martial rule. The economy sputtered as foreign, particularly Japanese investors skipped the country, preferring the Philippines’ more stable Southeast Asian neighbors such as Malaysia and Thailand. Aquino’s successor as Philippine president, former General Fidel V. Ramos, brought the military under civilian control, restored political stability, and undertook key reforms during his 1992–1998 presidency, leading to a return to economic growth. The populist president Joseph E. Estrada, a former movie star whose “proletarian pot-boilers” that portrayed him as a lonely fighter for the disadvantaged against malicious upper class villains had won him a mass fan base easily transformed into votes, triumphed in the 1998 presidential election by the largest margin in post-Marcos Philippines. Faced with corruption charges leveled by his elite enemies, Estrada was overthrown in what was known as “EDSA Dos” but which was actually more of a “People Power coup,” driving Estrada from power in early 2001 despite his continued popularity among the poor. Discredited by a number of corruption scandals of her own, Estrada’s elite-backed successor, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, proved to be the most unpopular post-Marcos president. Benigno S. “Noynoy” Aquino III revived calls for good governance (which he dubbed the “straight path”), using the unpopular Arroyo administration as a convenient foil. The son of Cory Aquino, Noynoy Aquino was a political “descendent” of People Power, with strong upper class backing. Rodrigo R. Duterte’s presidency, which began in mid-2016, already represents a sea change in Philippine politics. Duterte moved quickly to replace the “liberal reformist” political order with its emphasis on civil liberties, if limited political participation, with an illiberal regime. A strongman committed to a bloody fight against the drug scourge, Duterte was long a local politician (as mayor of or the power-behind-the throne in Davao city) who then began implementing this policy nationally.

But for many scholars of Philippine politics, such personality-centered, macro descriptions of Philippine politics are secondary to underlying localized clientelist structures. In his chapter revisiting the clientelist paradigm of politics in the Philippines, Masataka Kimura, who has been studying Philippine politics for over three decades, shows the continued relevance of the “traditional” clientelist model of politics, “one involving an affective, diffuse pattern of exchange [typified by the] vertical dyad in the landlord-tenant relationship in traditional Philippine rural communities.” But the breakdown of these traditional clientelist ties has seen the emergence of class-based politics (in the form of a communist insurgency and a moderate social reformism) as well “machine politics” based on more instrumental, short-term dyadic ties and “bossism” in which violence replaces voluntary ties.

In his chapter on local politics, John T. Sidel offers a more critical assessment of the clientelist model. The results of the 1987 congressional and 1988 local elections proved to be a “harsh reality check” as “entrenched ‘provincial warlords’ and local ‘political dynasties’ who had attracted such attention and condemnation for their wielding of ‘guns, goons, and gold’ in defence of the Marcos regime” managed to regain seats in Congress and local offices in large numbers. Sidel’s study of “bossism” is an attempt to solve the puzzle of explaining the “enduring

entrenchment” of “subnational authoritarianism” even as a transition to electoral democracy was occurring nationally.

Distrustful and dismissive of earlier accounts of “patron-client relations” as the underlying basis of local politics, scholars of the 1990s instead noted the accumulated advantages of incumbency, the dull compulsion of economic relations, the structural logic of monopoly, the ubiquity of vote-buying and electoral fraud, and, more broadly, the importance of coercion – rather than clientelism or consent – as the basis of local “guns, goons, and gold,” or understood more subtly as embedded within the everyday fabric of social relations in localities across the archipelago.

In his chapter on Philippine political parties, Allen Hicken shows that the party system is relatively under-institutionalized. He argues that “the introduction of early elections in an environment rich in oligarchic elites but lacking a mobilized citizenry or mass organizations, hindered institutionalization” as did the “adoption of a particular set of electoral institutions [that] reinforced this tendency.” Furthermore, there were key institutional changes that weakened the party system – the creation of the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (New Society Movement) by Marcos during his martial law rule as a hegemonic party, the ban on presidential reelection in the post-Marcos era, and the idiosyncrasies of the party list system. Hicken suggests this low level of institutionalization adversely affects democratic governance because parties have “narrow constituencies and short time horizons – both of which are problematic for the provision of needed public goods” and it “undermines the ability of voters to hold politicians individually and collectively accountable. This can lead to voter disillusionment, providing opportunities for political outsiders with anti-party and sometimes anti-democratic sensibilities to rise to power,” such as Marcos and Duterte.

In his chapter on political corruption, Jon S. T. Quah documents the pervasiveness of corruption in the Philippines, identifying chief causes as low salaries, lack of effective detection and punishment, the importance of family and cultural values, and the lack of political will. He documents the ineffectiveness of many anti-corruption agencies since independence in 1946 but acknowledges that public perceptions toward corruption have improved during the administrations of Fidel Ramos and Noynoy Aquino. Nevertheless, he argues that the country’s anti-corruption model based on multiple anti-corruption agencies continues to be ineffective. Instead, Quah proposes the creation of a well-funded, adequately staffed single agency, which he dubs the Philippine Anti-Corruption Agency. Accordingly, a single anti-corruption agency for the Philippines would eliminate problems of coordination and overlapping functions as well as competition for resources that characterize the existing multiple agency model.

Writing about the Philippine civil service, Rupert Hodder offers a more optimistic take on Philippine bureaucratic performance. Despite the prevalence of models of “elite capture or patrimonialism” and “anarchic families,” he found “constructive informal practice” to be widespread both among permanent civil servants or political appointees. There are often high quality appointments and using “their authority to overcome inertia and entrenched habits within a department is woefully inadequate, most especially given the short time they have to turn a department around and set it on a new course.” Understanding the potential advantages of such informality “may even prove to be essential if the Philippine civil service is to be transformed thoughtfully and imaginatively, and its efficacy improved.”

In his chapter on political dynasties, Julio C. Teehankee argues that through a process of adaptation they have been able to “maintain their dominance in Philippine congressional politics.” He distinguishes between traditional, new, and emerging political dynasties with the

national legislature as the “nexus for national and local power dynamics, the mechanism by which political clans acquire, sustain, and reproduce power.”

In his chapter on congressional “pork barrel,” Ronald D. Holmes provides an overview of a hundred years of national patronage politics in the Philippines before analyzing this phenomenon in the post-Marcos era. In elections, pork barrel allows incumbent politicians to target voters by directing pork funds to their constituencies. But politicians also regularly siphon off funds for direct use in their campaign in order to “maintain a clientelistic network by dispensing various forms of assistance finance by such funds, or for personal enrichment.” Finally the pressure for “pork” means that all post-Marcos presidents must yield to legislators’ demands for particularistic projects in order to secure Congressional support for their preferred legislative programs.

In their chapter on the Philippine Congress, Diana J. Mendoza and Mark R. Thompson suggest that the national legislature is largely subordinated to the president due in part to its reliance on patronage distributed by the chief executive as well as the lack of programmatic political parties. The overwhelmingly elite character of representatives and senators contributes to its reactive character, aimed at protecting the oligarchy’s interest rather than passing innovative legislation. Yet Congress does have some tools with which to challenge presidents: congressional oversight hearings, impeachment/conviction, and other powers. It also has occasionally passed landmark legislation, particularly in areas of gender equality thanks in part to the successful efforts of the women’s movement.

The chapter on the presidency by Mark R. Thompson picks up on the debate about the role of clientelist politics and pork barrel in the post-Marcos Philippines. While recognizing its explanatory power, he warns against reducing “the presidency to its function as patronage dispenser.” He points out that the winners of post-Marcos presidential elections are not necessarily the candidates with the best patronage machinery but rather those with the more compelling campaign narrative. Moreover, he points out that effective patronage distribution cannot guarantee a president’s survival because extra-electoral elite strategic groups can oust them from office through a people-power coup such as against Joseph E. Estrada in 2001. Thompson also critiques a “presidential-style” approach which assumes personality characteristics are crucial, missing key constraints facing presidents. As a supplement to clientelist and presidential style approaches he offers the relational concept of presidential regimes, using a modified version adapted from U.S. political scientist Stephen Skowronek. This allows the evaluation of presidential performance not just in terms of personal and persuasive qualities, but also on the basis of sequencing the presidency within a political regime and analyzes the cycle of presidential challenges within the context of strategic moments that lie between regime structures and agents’ choices.

The chapter on the Philippine judiciary by Eric Vincent C. Batalla, co-authored with Michelle Sta. Romana and Karen Rodrigo, locates the courts in the country’s political system, noting that despite enhanced powers of judicial review and measures to strengthen its impartiality under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the judiciary remains a politicized institution that is highly vulnerable to executive and legislative pressures. The chapter recounts the tension between the Noyon Aquino government and the Supreme Court, leading to the impeachment and conviction of Chief Justice Renato Corona. Likewise, it traces problems of political vulnerability and judicial inefficiency to existing institutional practices and budget constraints.

In the chapter on civil-military relations in the Philippines, Rosalie Arcala Hall shows how they have evolved within the context of “the semi-democratic nature” of post-Marcos politics. Despite being based on a “Western template focused on a set of constitutional-legal civilian control mechanisms and a professional military, the elite-dominated and clientelistic nature of

Philippine politics” adversely affects the military’s relations to civilian authority. The military has been used for internal security and election monitoring as much as it has for external defense making the military “the state’s brokers to local power holders, and tying them inevitably into the murky civilian politics.” Since Marcos’ martial law rule the military has become increasingly politicized with factions emerging that have linked up to civilian groups trying to seize power.

Foreign relations

Philippine diplomacy in the post-Marcos period often seemed to revolve exclusively around the axis of its U.S. ties, but the chapters in this section show that the nature of Philippine foreign relations has been more complex. After supporting the Marcos dictatorship (only partially and tentatively pressuring it shortly before its fall), the U.S. provided support for the fledgling Philippine democracy (that culminated in indirect intervention to help the Philippine government fend off a major coup attempt in 1989). But this was soon overshadowed by the Philippine’s Senate’s decision not to renew the U.S. bases treaty, a legacy of the colonial era, forcing the Americans to withdraw from two of their largest military facilities abroad in 1992. Philippine relations warmed with China economically, particularly in the early 2000s during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. But a series of corruption scandals linked to contracts with Chinese companies and China’s increasingly aggressive stance toward the South China Sea (dubbed the “West Philippine Sea” by Filipinos), led her successor, Noynoy Aquino, to move back toward closer ties with the U.S. while growing increasingly hostile to China. This seems to have changed under Duterte, though it is still unclear whether policy will actually mirror his anti-U.S. and pro-China rhetoric given China’s continued territorial claims in the South China Sea and the links built up over decades of close Philippines–U.S. ties. Throughout the post-Marcos period, the Philippines’ links to Japan have been of great importance.

In his chapter on Philippines–U.S. relations, Howard Loewen argues that there has been much continuity and limited change in this bilateral linkage. These ties evolved from the colonial era and the fight against the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II. The 1951 “Mutual Defense treaty” has long been the basis of the Philippines–U.S. link. Yet when the Philippines decided not to renew the U.S. bases treaty, the Philippines looked more to Southeast Asia to increase regional cooperation. But in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks cooperation with the U.S. again increased as part of the international anti-terror effort. Loewen argues that even the anti-US rhetoric of the current president Rodrigo Duterte is unlikely to lead to “structural change” in Philippines–U.S. relations. Close relations are based on a “normative consensus” in foreign policy, particularly in terms of military cooperation and geo-strategic considerations.

In his discussion of Philippines–China relations, Renato Cruz de Castro contends that efforts to improve relations between the two countries have been inhibited by the South China Sea dispute and the presence of the United States as a Pacific power. Philippine concerns about Chinese maritime expansion waned briefly in the early twenty-first century as Philippines–China economic relations improved dramatically during the Arroyo administration which hoped for major economic benefits brought about by closer ties with China. But this Chinese “charm offensive” was undermined by continued “suspicions of China’s territorial ambitions in the South China Sea” which peaked during the presidency of the Noynoy Aquino administration.

Dennis Trinidad argues that in the twenty-first century the Philippines and Japan have worked towards deepening their strategic partnership. Domestically, Japan has seen the rise of hawks, particularly Abe Shinzo, at a time when the role of the prime minister in security

policymaking was growing. Both countries have been alarmed by China's more aggressive stance in both the East China Sea (particularly its dispute over the Senkaku islands with Japan) and South China Sea (with the Spratlys as a key point of contention with the Philippines) and this common threat has been a factor bringing the Philippines and Japan together. Both countries also (at least until the recent election of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines) have had close security ties with the U.S. But Filipino leaders, including Duterte, who as of this writing has both visited Japan and invited Abe to his home city of Davao, have pragmatically looked upon Japan as a source of overseas development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) to assist in the country's economic development.

In an innovative chapter, Joaquin Jay Gonzalez III argues that Philippine foreign relations should no longer be seen as one based exclusively on security alliances, economic cooperation, and trade but also one which takes into account the influence of large Filipino diaspora communities around the world who far outnumber Philippine foreign service officers in diplomatic missions. The impact of the Filipino diaspora is significant in a number of ways, including through membership in churches and other religious organizations, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, interest and advocacy groups, and other civil society groups. Moreover, migrants from the Philippines influence occupational practices, products, and services in many international cities. Gonzalez contends that a global "Filipinization" process, parallel to earlier Americanization, has a growing impact through the Philippine diaspora diplomacy on many major urban centers around the world.

Economics and social policy

The Philippines has enjoyed strong economic growth (averaging over 6 percent for nearly a decade and a half). Noyonoy Aquino's administration won plaudits not only from Philippine big business and civil society groups but also from international credit agencies and aid organizations, while its rating by Transparency International improved. But the former president's reformist platform – itself a legacy of the call for good governance that has dominated the post-Marcos era – was eroded by a major pork barrel scandal, rampant smuggling, selective justice, poor infrastructure, and a lack of systematic institutional reforms, as well as criminality and still festering insurgencies (communist and Muslim secessionist in the southern Philippines). Moreover, despite a huge increase in funding for a conditional cash transfer scheme (which critics say is often used for political patronage), poverty and unemployment remain stubbornly high in the Philippines. Agricultural productivity has stagnated and industrialization is very limited while the country has become heavily reliant on the service sector, a property boom, and, in particular, on remittances from an estimated ten million overseas foreign workers (about 10 percent of the country's population). Another growth engine has been the booming business process outsourcing sector, largely global call centers; although this boom may prove temporary as other developing countries with large English-speaking populations compete with lower labor costs.

After recovering from its worst economic crisis in recent history (1983–1987), setting the Philippines back decades and similar to the current Greek economic crisis in magnitude, there was only moderate recovery through to the Asian financial crisis (1988–2001) despite major economic reforms. But for the past 15 years the Philippines has been one of the high growth Asia economies and is now often touted as "new economic tiger." Yet despite a doubling of the size of the economy in the last decade and a half the distribution of wealth remains highly unequal.

In his chapter on the Philippine economy, Eric Vincent C. Batalla writes that the country's recent accelerated growth is mainly a product of various government reforms and initiatives

since the 1990s that stimulated the inflow of overseas remittances, the growth of the business process outsourcing and information technology (BPO-IT) industries, and the remarkable increase in government revenues. Huge foreign exchange earnings from overseas remittances and the BPO-IT industries have helped relieve the country of the foreign exchange and debt-service difficulties it experienced starting in the early 1980s. Despite its recent impressive growth record, serious economic challenges and weaknesses (e.g., poverty and economic inequality) remain. Given that the Philippines has bypassed the traditional route of industrialization for capital accumulation, the chapter reiterates the need to reconsider reviving the industrial sector as a national priority in order to sustain accelerated growth and absorb the still large and growing labor surplus.

While the economy has advanced in recent years, the chapter of Edsel Beja takes on the often ignored problem of capital flight. Using a new computational methodology, he shows that unreported foreign exchange flows amounted to more than US\$600 million during the period 2000–2013. Beja traces this problem to the weakness of the existing regulatory framework, arguing that “there are now more opportunities for trade mis-invoicing and financial flight today.” As such, he challenges government to rethink this framework and revisit its capital flow management techniques in order to reduce economic vulnerabilities.

Antoinette Raquiza examines how the Philippine big business exploited economic opportunities to gain dominance in the emerging service economy. The explosive growth of the service economy in the last two decades should also take account of the responses of the business sector to the changing economic and policy environments. Regardless of their sectoral origins, Philippine business groups established holding companies and used strategic partnerships, mergers, and acquisitions to gain entry and dominance in the services sector. These institutional arrangements, Raquiza contends, along with other business practices allow for a more nuanced study of the changing nature of Philippine capitalism.

The chapter on economic nationalism by Yusuke Takagi provides an alternative to the view that nationalist economic policies from the 1930s to the early decades of political independence reflected the influence of, or capture by, vested interests. He argues instead that the leading policymakers were influenced by policy ideas prevalent at the time. The framers of the 1935 Constitution decided on a strong executive branch of government and protectionist policies in reaction to the Great Depression and the rise of the Soviet Union. The 1950s adoption of import-substitution industrialization and retail trade nationalization reflected the leading and worldwide policy prescriptions and ethnic sentiments during this era. Furthermore, the autonomy of policymakers from the powerful economic interests was demonstrated when the government imposed foreign exchange controls which were opposed by the mighty sugar bloc. Takagi finds it relevant in this regard that most economic bureaucrats and economists did not come from the elite but from the middle class.

Teresa Tadem writes about the persistence of neo-liberal, technocratic policies but argues that elite class politics (i.e., inter-elite and intra-class conflicts) have impacted on technocratic policymaking in the post-Marcos era. This has produced mixed results, suggesting unpredictability caused by contention between the neo-liberal agenda and local vested interests. For instance, during the Cory Aquino administration, powerful technocrats sympathetic to the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank defeated a proposal made by other technocrats for selective debt repudiation. On the other hand, “crony capitalists” in Aquino’s administration allowed the survival of monopolies such as the Philippine Long Distance Company (PLDT), which is controlled by her natal family, the Cojuangcos. But the neo-liberal agenda has been significantly advanced since the Ramos presidency. Tadem sees class dynamics and populist politics still leading to the appointment of socially minded technocrats to

government whose interests are not necessarily aligned with those of the dominant neo-liberal technocrats.

The chapter of Ma. Victoria R. Raquiza questions the effectiveness of the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, the flagship anti-poverty program of the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Noynoy Aquino administrations, and backed by the World Bank as well as the Asian Development Bank. She argues that technocrats have favored it because of its consistency with the neo-liberal project. Yet evaluations of the CCT program in the Philippines have not shown a reduction in poverty levels or a significant impact on health and education outcomes. Under the Duterte administration, although the CCT still forms part of the government's ten point socio-economic agenda, a faction of socially minded technocrats is seeking its phase-out in favor of implementing a more universal poverty alleviation strategy.

The chapter by Lynne Milgram probes the used clothing retail trade run by women in the streets of Baguio City. Milgram provides a picture of the blurred boundaries between formal and informal economies as well as between legal and illegal practices surrounding the livelihoods of the marginalized. Despite local ordinances against street vending, street vendors do not consider their means of earning their livelihood to be illegal but a right to make a living. Through location-based associations, they are able to secure concessions from the city government to sell in the streets and aisle locations in public markets so long as they pay the daily rent. Milgram argues that both government authorities and urban vendors are "complicit" in creating gray spaces of livelihood practice that serve both parties.

In his chapter on poverty alleviation, David Timberman argues that the root problem of poverty in the Philippines is principally one of politics/governance and less one of economics. Timberman notes the durability and power of a "hybrid elite" whose policies have disregarded and even damaged the interests of the poor, as reflected in their perennial unwillingness to support family planning, inclusive growth, and end armed conflicts. Government spending has been chronically inadequate and misused, and agriculture neglected, with a rice policy that raises the cost of this dietary mainstay for poor Filipinos. Accordingly, how to overcome elite and special interest dominated policymaking is a fundamental challenge, with the chapter offering some suggestions in this direction.

Financing plays a crucial role in poverty alleviation and in the development of the livelihoods of the entrepreneurial poor. The chapter by Asuncion Sebastian looks into microfinance as an alternative to government and other private sources of credit. Noting that microenterprises comprise more than 90 percent of the total number of enterprises in the Philippines, she argues that keeping the microfinance sector robust is critical to the economy. However, Sebastian makes a distinction between successful and less-successful microfinance institutions (MFI) based on loan repayment delinquency rates and MFI sustainability, arguing that success does not depend on lending methodology nor on social capital alone, as emphasized in the microfinance literature. Her research suggests that the more successful microfinance institutions combined social capital with efficient credit management systems.

Cultures and movements

As suggested by the chapters in the economy and social policy section, culture and ideas play an important role in the country's political, social, and economic development. The Philippines also has a wide variety of social movements that aim to bring significant change to Philippine culture and society.

Paul Rodell provides a short introduction to Philippine culture, which he labels as syncretic, as Filipinos have adapted various historical and external influences to produce their own

distinctive cultural adaptations. The chapter elaborates on fundamental values evident in everyday Filipino life – family and kinship, food, and music. The discussion of the latter two demonstrates Rodell’s argument about the syncretic nature of Philippine culture, which is enriched and not necessarily overcome by historical and external influences. Despite strong family traditions, Rodell observes changing gender relations that “promise to reshape the future Filipino family,” with fathers spending more time with their children and being more openly affectionate and mothers pursuing professional careers after birthing resulting in household duties being increasingly shared between the parents.

Coeli Barry analyzes Catholicism’s profound influence on the Philippines’ cultural, political, and social fabric. The chapter discusses nationalism and Church–State relations as well as focusing on gendered social norms that ensure the continuity of Catholic religiosity. A critical aspect of this continuity is the preponderance of Catholic schools founded by women’s orders which strengthen ideals of family and values of “motherly sacrifice and female virtue” among the daughters of the elite and of the growing middle class admitted to these schools. Barry shows the powerful role the Church has played in shaping the country’s history since the Spanish times. In fact, the country in the early decades of independence identified itself with Catholicism and proudly proclaimed itself as the only “Catholic country in Asia.” However, the expression of anti-Church sentiments, especially by many nationalist politicians and intellectuals, has likewise been a significant part of the country’s political history. The recent passing of the Reproductive Health Bill in 2012 signifies the increasing complexity in the relations between Church leaders and the laity which Barry believes has implications for the country’s traditional identity as a Catholic nation as well as its economic development. She writes that “there is a great deal that remains to be seen about how the country’s economic development may be affected and great hope that reduced family size might help reduce the high levels of poverty in the country.”

The chapter written by Oona Paredes deals with the Philippines’ indigenous peoples (IPs), a sector of society threatened by what she terms “development aggression” and often caught in the crossfire between the military and insurgent groups. Yet IPs, aided by a law that further protected their ancestral domains, have had some success in preserving their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities. However, social discrimination and economic marginalization are forcing young IPs to move out of their ancestral domains and pursue mainstream educational and employment goals. Thus, despite government support for their rights, IPs face a serious challenge of retaining their ethnic and cultural distinctiveness.

Eduardo Tadem examines the peasant moral economy in a province north of Manila which shows the resiliency of the peasantry as a class despite the decline of the peasant mode of production. Accordingly, against the backdrop of a rapidly changing social and economic landscape, the peasants of the Sacobia villages in Pampanga province retained their class character and community identity which distinguished them from rural workers in service-related occupations. Their resilience was supported by the observance of traditional cultural norms, which placed a high value on traditional concepts of land property rights and dispute resolution; on family and kinship ties as well as cooperative and reciprocal forms of labor; on the special status of village elders; and on informal credit systems. Tadem’s chapter calls for a rethinking of government policy which, with its prolonged urban and industrial development biases, has neglected the agricultural sector and the peasantry as a class.

Temario Rivera chronicles the rise of the middle class and its participation in the country’s political development. While not a cohesive group, the middle class has demonstrated its influence through its participation in critical political episodes and led various social and political movements from the 1950s through the Marcos and post-Marcos periods. During the term of president Noynoy Aquino, middle class civil society organizations figured prominently in the

passage of key legislation such as the Reproductive Health Law, Human Rights Victims Compensation Law, and the Sin Tax Law. They were also in the forefront of the public outrage against controversies involving government corruption and incompetence such as handling of the disaster wrought by Typhoon Haiyan, the pork barrel scandals, the *tanim-bala* (bullet-planting) at the airports, and the Mamasapano incident. Rivera argues that the Aquino administration's failure to address the travails of the middle class helped enable Rodrigo Duterte to win the presidency in 2016. He notes that the election of the new president opened up new opportunities but also new risks for the middle class.

Gerald Clarke provides a comprehensive background on NGOs, covering that community's bright and dark sides in the "neo-Tocquevillian environment" of the post-Marcos Philippines. After its explosive growth in the 1990s, Clarke observes that the NGO community is now "diffused and fragmented." Despite its weakening arising from political differences and the decline in foreign and government funding, this community has retained its relevance in the country's institutional landscape, serving as an important political actor and likewise responding to state weaknesses in promoting sustained and broad-based development. An important development in government-NGO relations, according to Clarke, is the interchange of personnel between government and the NGO community. He regards appointments of NGO personnel to government as beneficial, bringing "progressive NGO developmental perspectives into government while helping NGO peers to negotiate the labyrinthine features of Philippine bureaucracy and to organise and lobby with political guile."

By contrast, Ben Reid considers such NGO "crossovers" as having limited efficacy, especially in the context of the Philippines' exclusionary, elite-based politics. In his chapter based on research on the Estrada to the Aquino administrations, Reid instead sees elements of clientelism at work in government-NGO alliances. Select NGO groups and leaders are able to gain access to government and reap select advantages. Despite the rhetoric of reform, such alliances with government have failed to produce broad-based gains in social reform. Reid argues that the experience of crossovers supports the Gramscian perspective about civil society in that NGOs are "critical to maintaining the hegemony of elite over society and ensuring consent."

In his chapter on the Philippine left, Nathan Quimpo discusses the decline of the movement in the post-Marcos era but argues that the Philippines still offer opportunities for rejuvenation for the Philippine left's program for structural change because of continuing widespread poverty and economic inequality as well as political instability. The chapter provides historical background and analysis of the democratic and revolutionary left, particularly the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and New People's Army (NPA). Quimpo notes that because of changed political conditions and organizational strife in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the CPP-NPA has weakened and has had little impact in the Philippines recently, with an estimated armed strength of less than 4,000 in the 2010s. As such, the CPP has opted to support the participation of national democratic (ND) groups in elections and has used peace negotiations with government for tactical purposes while waging its strategic, protracted war. However, splintered, non-ND left groups, which distinguish themselves from the CPP and regard themselves as the Democratic Left (demleft), have experienced gains as party-list groups in Congress. Nevertheless, given their limited mass base, Quimpo argues that they remain ineffective in countering the strategies and "dirty" tactics of traditional politicians during elections.

Social movements emerging from the influence of the Philippine left are similarly fragmented and have had a mixed impact on state and society. The chapter by Carmela Abao discusses the Philippine labor movement, once a powerful countervailing force against big business and government. Since the mid-1990s, the movement has experienced considerable decline, both in terms of numbers and militancy. Trade union density peaked in 1994 with 31 percent

of the total number of wage/salary workers. By the 2010s, union membership registered less than 9 percent of the total number of wage workers. Similarly, unionists going on strike were less than 1 percent of union membership in 2011 as compared to 4 percent in 1981. Abao attributes the decline of trade unions in the Philippines principally to “contractualization,” or temporary employment arrangements.

Diana J. Mendoza writes about the women’s movement, its history, and performance. The movement, initially spawned by national and social democrats but now joined by independent feminists, has brought about dramatic changes in a conservative Philippines despite opposition from powerful institutions like the Catholic Church. Although fragmented, women’s movement organizations have demonstrated their ability to unite and influence policy. They have been instrumental in the passage of important legislation including the Magna Carta for Women, the Anti-Rape Law, the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Law, and the Reproductive Health Law. Notwithstanding these significant advances, Mendoza argues that restrictive laws and policies still exist, including the ban on divorce and abortion and the delisting of emergency contraception.

An area in Philippines studies that has received increased attention in recent years is the Mindanao conflict, more particularly the Bangsamoro conflict. In his chapter, Rizal Buendia discusses two competing perspectives on territorial rights that are at the root of the conflict, namely: the right of the sovereign Philippine state and the Moros’ right to self-determination. Buendia argues that the controversy over self-determination has led peoples and states to armed conflict, including in the Philippines. Although not able to transcend their separate ethnic identities, the Moro aspiration for a nation-state continues, spawning secessionist armed movements from various groups. Buendia points out that Moro secessionism faces resistance not only from the Philippine state but also from other states confronted with similar problems. Buendia argues a more appropriate institutional framework of political governance that would accommodate social and ethnic diversity is necessary, suggesting the failure of the unitary system of government to establish lasting peace in Mindanao.

The chapter written by Bruce Barnes discusses third party mediation in local and international initiatives to resolve the Bangsamoro conflict since the 1970s. Traditionally, third party mediators were Muslim countries and organizations including the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), Libya, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In 2009, the consortium International Contact Group assumed the role of mediator in the peace talks, thus breaking the traditional practice of having solely Muslim countries and organizations as mediators. The chapter points to the political, cultural, historical, legal, and institutional complexities that were present in negotiations for peace since the 1970s. Drawing from these experiences, Barnes stresses the need to take account of diverse cultures, personalities, religions, and political mechanisms in the design and conduct of mediation.

Patricio Abinales contests dominant views of state-building and nation formation that mainly come from the “cosmopolitan metropolis” and not from the body politic’s “backwaters,” arguing that such perspectives only tend to reinforce marginality of certain people in the national narrative. He points to the problematic character of writing from a national perspective “when political actors, processes and institutions that are based in the ‘unsafe’ frontiers and in minority communities, are factored in.” He examines this difficulty by looking “through the eyes of a Muslim woman with Chinese lineage, a smuggler and whose family members are ‘spread’ all over the world as overseas workers.” Abinales also touches on the need to dwell on the political and economic netherworld populated by smugglers, drug lords, and assassins. He argues that the illicit sector has been indispensable to the success of every major Filipino political leader since the time of Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon. Abinales also points to factors indicating that these “fissiparous tendencies can be reversed.”

Conclusion

Returning to the theme of the challenges facing democracy in a poor country, chapters in this *Handbook* document a number of the dilemmas the country faces. While its electoral system is competitive, the Philippines is still characterized by extensive clientelism, bossism, and weak parties, with Congress dominated by dynasties, the Supreme Court subordinated to the President, and Presidents sometimes facing coup attempts by discontented elites. Efforts to combat corruption in government have met with only limited success, but informal practices in the civil service have often proved constructive.

In terms of diplomacy, the post-Marcos Philippines, like other relatively weak developing countries in the region, has attempted to “balance” between rival great powers – an effort complicated by a nationalist reaction against the U.S. (a legacy of the colonial period and of American intervention) and the need to rely on the U.S. to counter a rising China, with close relations with Japan also a part of this balancing strategy.

Despite the return to strong economic growth in the past 15 years – after a major economic crisis in the 1980s and only slow recovery in the 1990s – the Philippines continues to suffer from widespread poverty and high levels of inequality, in large part a legacy of the failure of the country to industrialize. Efforts to combat this with government programs by socially minded technocrats, such as the Conditional Cash Transfer scheme, have produced only limited success with a neo-liberal economic paradigm still hegemonic. Agricultural productivity and industrialization have stagnated while the country, and a new breed of leading capitalists, have become heavily reliant on the service sector, a property boom, and on remittances from overseas foreign workers (who also make up a politically significant diaspora that influences the country’s foreign relations). Even under a self-proclaimed “leftist” president, Rodrigo Duterte, there are few signs of the revival of nationalist economic policies, prominent from the 1930s to the 1950s.

The Philippines has long been dominated by a “hybrid elite” whose policies have disregarded the interests of the poor, with government spending chronically inadequate and often misused, and agriculture neglected. A key challenger to elite interests, the Philippine left movement, has been in decline in the post-Marcos era but continues to highlight the need for structural change given continued widespread poverty and economic inequality. The Philippine labor movement, once a powerful counterpoint to both big business and government, has suffered major setbacks, both in terms of membership and the frequency of strikes, with “contractualization,” or temporary employment arrangements, being a major reason for the decline. This however has not meant that at the grass roots level, ordinary people have not been active in trying to improve their own welfare as the example of female street vendors shows. Microfinance has played a crucial role in improving the livelihoods of the entrepreneurial poor, particularly in ones that combine social capital with efficient credit management systems.

Filipino culture can be understood as syncretic, with Filipinos adapting external influence to produce their own distinctive cultural adaptations. Although indigenous peoples in the Philippines have been threatened by “development aggression,” with many young people leaving to seek opportunities outside their communities, thanks to legislation that protects their ancestral domains, indigenous peoples have had some success in preserving their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities. Similarly, resilience in the Philippine peasantry can be found, supported by the traditional concepts of land property rights and dispute resolution, on family and kinship ties as well as on cooperative and reciprocal forms of labor, the special status of village elders, and on informal credit systems. A relatively small but influential middle class has had a major influence on the country’s political development.

Introduction

Although the “neo-Tocquevillian environment” of the immediate post-Marcos Philippines has given way to fragmentation and diffusion, NGOs have brought progressive perspectives to issues of political, social, and economic development. Yet in the context of elite-based politics, the “crossover” of NGO leaders into government has often failed to produce broad social gains, but rather served to maintain elite hegemony.

The influence of Catholicism in the country has been particularly profound, influencing Church–State relations and working to uphold gendered social norms. Yet anti-Church sentiments by nationalist politicians and intellectuals have also been an important part of the country’s history. The women’s movement, by contrast, has been quite successful in pushing forward its agenda despite opposition from conservatives, particularly in the Catholic Church.

In terms of the country’s major religious minority, Muslim Filipinos, although often unable to transcend their distinct ethnic identities, the Moro aspiration for a nation-state or substantial autonomy remains. Despite the involvement of third party country mediators, particularly from the Organization of Islamic Countries, conflict between Muslim rebels and the Philippine state remains one of the country’s most important unresolved problems.

Finally, dominant national narratives from the “cosmopolitan metropolis” of Metro Manila have reinforced the marginality of a number of groups: women, overseas workers, Moro separatists, and criminals, despite the importance they have played, usually behind the scenes, in the country’s recent history.



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PART I

Domestic politics



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1

CLIENTELISM REVISITED

Masataka Kimura

Clientelism is a personal relationship between a pair of individuals with unequal socioeconomic statuses where reciprocal exchange of goods and services takes place in a particularistic way. It is found to varying degrees and in different subtypes across time and space, and has political bearing. In the context of Philippine political studies, clientelism was introduced in a systematic way by Carl H. Landé in his study of political parties in the late 1950s, where he realized that the Philippine polity was structured less by organized interest groups than by a network of mutual aid relationships between pairs of individuals or dyadic ties and that those with significance for Philippine politics were vertical ones, that is, bonds between prosperous patrons and their poor and dependent clients (Landé 1964, 1). The introduction of the dyadic model, of which clientelism is one subtype, into political science then dominated by the group approach could have been viewed as a kind of paradigm revolution and as an interesting example of how a theory developed in another discipline (the bilateral kinship model of anthropology in this case) was adopted and succeeded in political analyses. In fact, clientelism was effective in explaining the characteristics of the Philippine party system, and provided a model of political integration in the society where the gap between the rich and the poor was extremely conspicuous. Since then it has been one of the dominant conceptual frames in Philippine political studies.

Starting with the dyadic model, the following arguments focus on the theories that developed around clientelism in relation to the social phenomena that these theories tried to explain.

The dyadic model

To understand the basic characteristics of dyads, a comparison with groups is useful. In the group theory, politics is considered as a struggle among different groups to control the activities of government. It is assumed that individuals behave as a member of a group(s). A group is a collectivity of individuals who share the same political attitude and behave together to attain common goals that fit their shared attitude. It is also assumed that the individuals behave this way because to do so is reasonable to attain their goals and that those individuals who belong to the same group receive the same benefits. The focus of groups' political activities, therefore, is on the legislative process and their political interests are secured by favorable legislations and their strict enforcement. Those individuals who share the same political attitude and form a group usually belong to the same social categories (occupation, class, race, etc.). In other words,

one of the most important assumptions of the group theory is that individuals behave together with those who are alike. Another important assumption is the rule of law. It is reasonable for those individuals who belong to the same social category to behave together, because laws are written in universalistic language and their strict enforcement brings the common benefits to the same category of people.

These assumptions were, however, questionable in the Philippines as well as in many other developing countries. Personal relations were more important than interest groups in organizing political behavior, and authoritative allocation of values on the basis of favoritism were pervasive. Furthermore, the pre-martial law party system was dominated by the two major parties which were identical in terms of policies and socioeconomic support bases which included all the social classes, occupational groups and regions. Interest groups took pains to avoid permanent identification with either party. In the group theory, parties are supposed to differentiate among themselves in making policy priorities and choosing socioeconomic support bases; voters to vote for the party that best serve the interests of the social category they belong to. The dyadic model was introduced to explain such realities that the group theory could not adequately grasp.

The dyad is a relationship between a pair of individuals where exchange of values takes place. It is a direct and personal relationship, and is distinguished from interaction between two individuals that takes place because the two occupy specific positions in a formal organization, although in reality personal relationships may develop in such an organization. Theoretically there are not only supportive dyads where positive values are exchanged but also antagonistic ones where harms (negative values) are exchanged, and in reality the two can be mixed just like politics among nation states. Only the supportive ones are referred to by the term dyad in the following arguments unless otherwise specified.

The dyad has the following characteristics:

- 1 The values exchanged between two individuals are particularistic. While one needs to satisfy the other, he/she does not have to satisfy the social category as a whole to which the other belongs.
- 2 The dyad binds together two individuals who are unlike as well as those who are alike in one way or another, because one needs to exchange what he/she has with what he/she does not have. The difference between the two individuals may merely be quantitative or temporal such that, although both have similar resources, one has excess and the other has shortage. In this case, the two belong to the same social category. The difference between the two is qualitative when the two have different resources from each other. Even in this case, the two may have comparable social statuses such as a politician and a businessman who exchange political influence and financial contribution. The exchange relationship between two individuals who have comparable social statuses is called a horizontal dyad. On the other hand, the difference between the two may be of social statuses as seen in the relations between those who have wealth and power and those who do not. The exchange relationship between two individuals who have different statuses is called a vertical dyad.
- 3 The exchange is based on reciprocity. But, it does not have to be completely reciprocal. When the two are exposed to competition with others who can provide the same values and if the two have comparable resources, the exchange tends to be reciprocal.
- 4 Dyadic ties of one individual are different from one another in their quality and quantity of exchange. The level of favoritism varies from one dyad to another. This is a corollary of the fact that dyads are based on particularism.
- 5 Every individual has a set of dyadic ties, which may overlap, but is never identical, with those of others.

- 6 A dyad can be linked to other dyads. Every dyad forms a part of networks of dyads in a society. Dyadic ties that an individual has form a web-like network extending outward from him/her connecting his/her allies and their allies.
- 7 The size of the dyadic network of one individual is circumscribed by his/her resources, and is in proportion to his/her social status, wealth and power (Landé 1973, 104–106).

The patron-client model

Since the dyad binds together two individuals who are not alike, it can unite those who are not equal in the social status, wealth and power. This makes it possible to construct a model of political system which is structured by (networks of) vertical dyads between leaders and followers. This model may be called the patron-client model. In addition to the general characteristics of dyads, it has the following characteristics.

- 1 The system is structured centering around a leader who has a large following.
- 2 In contrast to the pre-existing groups producing their leaders, the system is formed by an aspirant leader who attracts other individuals who voluntarily become his/her followers. A corollary of this is that the leader is never replaced no matter how ineffective he/she becomes. The leader remains as a leader until the last follower disappears.
- 3 The system is integrated by the vertical dyadic ties between leaders and followers, whereas solidarity among followers is weak.
- 4 The interests that bind a leader and a follower are particularistic, because the two do not pursue their common goal but their personal goals which may be complementary but are not the same. The interests pursued are different among individuals involved. For example, a leader may pursue power and prestige, while a follower may seek protection and largesse.
- 5 The relationship between a leader and a follower is a voluntary one based on reciprocity. Therefore, the leader has to make efforts to bring benefits to his follower and the follower to show his/her worth. Otherwise, the follower may abandon the leader and look for another one; the leader may no longer try to provide benefits to the follower.
- 6 The system structured by dyadic ties between leaders and followers is dynamic and unstable. If its leader acquires new resources to provide benefits, his/her following will increase rapidly; and the reversal can also occur. When its leader disappears (for such reasons as retirement or death), although some part of the system may be taken over by his/her immediate follower, the large part of it disintegrates and the followers may gravitate toward other leaders.
- 7 A large system composed of vertical dyads has a multilayered pyramidal structure: immediate followers of the leader have their respective followers, each of whom in turn has followers, and so on. This multilayered structure makes the system even more unstable. If the relationship between the leader and one of his/her immediate followers breaks, the latter will leave the system together with his/her followers. The followers at the lower layer have little reason to stick to the top leader, because the former have no personal relations with, nor prospects of getting benefits from, the latter (Landé 1964: 141–148).

The traditional patron-client model

It is possible to distinguish subtypes of the patron-client model on the basis of qualities of the vertical dyad. The model Landé presented was characterized by paternalism on the part of

patron and deference on the part of client, and may be called the traditional patron-client model involving an affective, diffuse pattern of exchange. He found the typical vertical dyad in the landlord-tenant relationship in the traditional Philippine rural communities, which had been formed in the late Spanish and early American colonial periods and had a two-class structure composed of a small number of big landlords and a large number of tenants. Tenants were in a chronic state of poverty and insecurity, while the landlords who had sufficient wealth to spare were expected to help the tenants in times of need. Tenants repaid landlords with special loyalty and small services.

Landé considered that the tendency of Filipinos to further their interests through the cultivation of dyadic relationships with superordinates and subordinates was not confined to the landlord-tenant situations and that this had important consequences for Philippine society and politics at the village, town, provincial and national levels. The two major parties were described as structured by vertical chains of patron-client relationships extending from great and wealthy political leaders in each province to lesser gentry politicians in each town, down further to petty leaders in each village, and finally to the clients of the latter, the ordinary peasantry. Thus both parties contained among their leaders and supporters members of all social strata, occupational groups, and regions. This also explained other characteristics of the party system such that intra-party solidarity was minimal and that interparty switching was endemic (Landé 1964, 1-10).

The machine model

The socioeconomic change has transformed the qualities of patron-client relationships and the viewpoint that linked this transformation with political change yielded new theories, among them application of the machine model. The machine is a political organization typically found in immigrant-choked cities in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which is interested less in political principle than in securing and holding office for its leaders and distributing income to those who run it and work for it. It relies on what it accomplishes in a concrete way for its supporters and not on what it stands for. The sociopolitical conditions that gave rise to the machine were also present in many developing countries, which included selection of political leaders through elections, mass adult suffrage and a relatively high degree of electoral competition over time in the context of fragmented political power, widespread ethnic cleavages and/or social disorganization and mass poverty (Scott 1969, 1142-1159).

Compared with the traditional patron-client relationships, the vertical dyads found in the machine are more of instrumental relations maintained by specific, short-run material inducements, and are therefore less durable. The transformation of the qualities of patron-client relations in the Philippines as well as other Southeast Asian countries are explained as follows. First, the commercialization of economy and the penetration of the central (colonial) government into local communities made patrons' positions vulnerable to external forces. As a result, the relations became fragile and less durable. Second, differentiation of the socioeconomic structure meant differentiation of patrons' resources and made the scope of patron-client exchange narrower and more specific and the patron-client clusters distinct from one another. Third, while the traditional patron's resource bases were local such as landholding, importance of external resources such as office-holding increased radically. Since the new resource bases were prone to be affected by the developments at the center, patrons tended to pursue short-run interests. Fourth, as the patron-client ties became weaker and less comprehensive, and because the new patrons were often from outside the local community, instrumental nature of exchange became more prominent. Fifth, from the aforementioned changes followed the breakdown of local

patron monopoly and intensification of factional competition. Lastly, these changes reduced the universality of coverage and the people outside the patron-client network increased (Scott 1972, 105–111).

The machine model has been employed to analyze and explain various changing aspects of Philippine politics. For example, local politics had traditionally been characterized by factional competition among prominent landed families that usually grouped themselves into two factions. It was pointed out that the traditional factions composed of traditional patron-client relations with extra-political character had been transformed into politically specialized organizations in the face of increasingly intense national political competition and growing mass participation. Instrumental reasons for participation became widespread and the importance of kinship ties were much reduced. Under these conditions emerged upwardly mobile new men from more humble backgrounds in the local leadership positions (Machado 1974). The changing characteristics of local factions, in turn, have bearing on the party system since they constitute local organizations of the national parties. The post-redemocratization multiparty system where parties and their coalitions are formed around presidential aspirants has its local foundation on the increasing instability of factions and resultant multi-factionalism (Kimura 1997).

The breakdown of patron-client relations and the rise of class politics

Transformation of the traditional patron-client relations not only resulted in the emergence of machine type organization but also could lead to breakdown of vertical ties and give rise to class-based organization. Whereas both the traditional patron-client model and the machine model were to explain political integration, the Philippines had experienced large-scale peasant revolts in Central Luzon by the 1930s, culminating in the Huk Rebellion, a communist-led peasant uprising that took place shortly after World War II. This was a most dramatic expression of class conflicts. To understand how vertical dyads disintegrate and give rise to class consciousness and class-based organization and action is to explain the mechanism of peasant revolt.

According to James C. Scott and Benedict J. Kerkvliet (1972), the legitimacy of the patron in vertical dyads is related to the balance of goods and services exchanged and to the comprehensiveness of the exchange. The legitimacy is not simply a linear function of the balance of exchange, there are thresholds in the balance which produce sharp changes in the legitimacy. The minimum terms the peasant traditionally expects for his deference are physical security and subsistence livelihood. A breach of these minimum terms if it occurs on a large scale serves to undermine the legitimacy of the landlord class and to provide the peasantry with a moral basis for action against them. The balance of exchange, in turn, depends on the relative bargaining positions of the landlords and peasants, which are influenced by political and economic structural changes.

The major categories of goods and services exchanged traditionally between the landlord and the peasant were as follows. Those from the former to the latter were (1) basic means of subsistence such as the granting of steady employment or land for cultivation including the provision of seed, equipment, marketing, technical advice and so forth; (2) subsistence crisis insurance which was provided in time of economic distress and in case of sickness and accident; (3) protection from external dangers; (4) brokerage and influence to extract rewards from the outside; and (5) collective patron services which were indivisible and performed by the patrons as a group for the community as a whole. They may subsidize local charity and relief, support local public services, host visiting officials, and sponsor village festivals and celebrations. They may also mediate disputes to preserve local order and protect the community from outside forces. Flows of goods and services from client to patron were (1) basic labor service to the farm, office or enterprise;

(2) supplementary labor and goods such as supplying water and firewood to the patron's household, personal domestic services, food offerings; and (3) promoting the patron's interests. The last category includes such activities as election campaign that he is expected to perform to the success of his patron and indirectly to his own prosperity.

The traditional exchange relations between the landlord and the peasant cited above came to undergo considerable changes to the latter's disadvantage in the early twentieth century as a result of shifts in their bargaining positions caused by the political and economic structural transformation of the country which included the growth of population and the growing scarcity of lands, the shift to commercial agriculture and the expansion of state power. First, the landlord needs tenants as agricultural laborers and also as followers for political reasons. When peasants were scarce relative to the farmland, the landlord had to maintain the terms of exchange that satisfy peasants in order to secure tenants. Otherwise, they will move to another landlord's farmland or to unoccupied arable land if it exists. The increase in the peasant population and the resultant scarcity of land reduced the dependency of the landlord on the tenants, leading to the aggravation of the terms of exchange for the latter. Second, in the traditional setting, it was necessary for those in the privileged status to have their status recognized as legitimate by the majority of the people in the local community or to attract a large loyal following in order to defend their positions. This was an incentive for landlords to perform their traditionally expected roles. In other words, there was a strong social pressure for redistribution. However, with the penetration of the colonial state into the local communities, the landlords could now rely on the institutions from outside to maintain their physical security, wealth and status. This was another important factor that aggravated the bargaining position of peasants. Third, the commercialization of agriculture facilitated concentration of land into a small number of big landlords and increased tenants and farm workers who work for and depend on their land. Furthermore, the commercialization increased absentee landlords, and the once paternalistic whole-person patron-client relations became more instrumental and weak. As a result, it became difficult for the peasants to obtain what they had traditionally expected of their landlords for their physical security and subsistence livelihood. When this becomes widespread, the legitimacy of landlords from the peasant viewpoint is lost, and conditions conducive to class consciousness and class organization emerge. In fact, it was in Central Luzon where the impacts of colonial rule and commercialization of agriculture were most strongly felt that rural unrest was most pronounced.

The specialized patron-client model

Socioeconomic differentiation tends to confine the patron's ability to a specific field where he/she is strong; and when patrons with whole-person relations involving multi-faceted exchange are no longer available, clients may seek alternative patrons. This leads to specialization of patron-client relations. While the machine type organizations are not necessarily specialized in the sense that they may contain diverse types of specialized patron-client clusters, it is possible to construct a model where the patron-client clusters are aggregated in a way to create a specialized patron-client pyramid. This may be called the specialized patron-client model and is applicable to the moderate segments of the Philippine peasant and labor organizations.

Shortly after the communist-led peasant uprising was defeated by the government forces, a moderate peasant organization named the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) was formed in 1953 and dominated the peasant movement in the 1960s. Along with the success of the FFF, a number of other moderate organizations emerged, while the Communist Party of the Philippines, reestablished in 1968, also started to organize peasants and workers. In this period, a similar

pattern was observed in the labor movement, that is, proliferation of moderate organizations starting with the foundation of the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) in 1950. Presently, both the militant class-oriented and the moderate peasant and labor movements exist.

The most salient characteristics of the moderate peasant and labor organizations are that they are led by professionals and intellectuals, most notably lawyers specialized in industrial and agrarian relations. They assist peasants and workers in handling legal cases, negotiating collective bargaining agreements, and so on. Professionals with managerial expertise help peasants run cooperatives. While peasants and workers depend on the professional leaders for their economic well-being, the latter thrive on these relationships. In contrast to the class-oriented, more radical ones, the moderate peasant and labor organizations are anti-communists and pursue their goals through peaceful means, seeking harmony between social classes. These characteristics are explained by the specialized patron-client model (Kimura 2006).

Coercion and exchange of negative values

Clientelism is a reciprocal exchange relationship, which implies voluntarism. In reality, however, the relationship may involve some degree of coercion ranging from withholding of goods and services to application of negative values such as violence. The degree of coercion depends on the bargaining positions of the patron and client. If the latter has alternative sources of patronage, their relations tend to be fully reciprocal and voluntary. Conversely, when the former monopolizes sources of goods and services the latter needs, the latter may be coerced to serve the former. Furthermore, if the patron can rely on outside backing, like the landlord on the central (colonial) government, he/she may even resort to physical force if he/she chooses to. When coercion is the main binding element, however, the relationship is no longer of clientelism by definition and should be understood under another concept such as bossism.

If the superordinate people use coercion, the subordinate may also resort to various kinds of resistance short of rebellion to mitigate exploitation by the former. Among the peasants in Southeast Asia are found footdragging, dissimulation, false-compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on. Unlike outright rebellions, these everyday forms of resistance require no organization, no leadership or little coordination. But they are flexible and persistent, supported by peasants' subculture (Scott 1986; Kerkvliet 1991). Many of these acts can take place within the context of vertical dyadic relations.

Other issues

Clientelist politics has some advantages, but it also has serious limitations. Given the social structure where extremely unequal distribution of wealth exists and poverty is widespread, clientelism can be a responsive mechanism to meet the immediate needs of poor clients. However, it does not address the need for substantially redistributive social reform which affects the patrons' interests, while it may try to promote a harmony between classes. In the case of machine politics with a nationwide scale, the clientelist system is not sustainable unless the economy continues to grow at a substantial rate, because distributive pressure is so strong that it cannot afford to meet all the increasing demands.

One may then ask whether or not the heavy reliance of Filipino political behavior on personal relations itself will change. If the developmental model constructed based mainly on the experience of the western countries is universally valid, one may expect political ties based on group or class concerns to develop along with socioeconomic transformation. Up to the present, however, such political ties, if they exist at all, have not produced political organizations to be

reckoned with, except for a segment of peasantry which was organized by the communists. An interesting phenomenon was Metro Manila's middle class participation in the anti-Marcos struggle right after the Aquino assassination. They formed a large number of voluntary organizations then called cause-oriented groups, most of which were small in membership size. These organizations were composed of a network of horizontal dyadic ties and could hardly maintain cohesiveness once they grew beyond a certain size because the loyalty of membership would diffuse. Instead of each group growing large, coalitions were formed among them based on common purposes (Kimura 1995). Whether this was a transition to class-based ties is yet to be seen.

At present, the machine is the most prevalent political organization in the Philippines, providing a foundation of the major parties. Other political forces of different persuasions have been trying to organize people mainly along social sectoral lines (peasants, workers, the urban poor, the youth, etc.), but are not successful enough to match the major parties especially in elections. At the same time, the people who are neither effectively organized within the clientelist network nor covered by other types of political organizations seem increasing. It is this organizational vacuum that best explains the strong electoral showing of showbiz candidates in the last couple decades.

Finally, there is another interesting issue raised against clientelism in the critique of orientalism. According to this criticism, the colonial discourse continues to inhabit the study of Philippine politics and has constructed it as a negative other of the Euro-American post-enlightenment political idea. The Philippine tradition is viewed as the antithesis of the American ideal of a nation united in their devotion to the welfare of all, and its persistence has been invoked to justify its colonization, to explain the failure of America's democratizing mission, to establish and reinforce the American national imaginary, and so on. Among the elements of the tradition is clientelist politics. Filipino political behavior is depicted in American literature as determined by patron-client factional and familial considerations. Other things like nationalist sentiments and revolutionary visions are reduced to empty rhetoric and posturing without being understood from within. The theory of clientelism is blamed for providing such literature with a theoretical foundation. Furthermore, Landé's construction of Philippine politics is also a product of the binary view with which he encoded the Philippine data in terms of the modernization model. It is necessary therefore to break away from the clientelist paradigm in order to analyze and critique Philippine politics on its terms (Ileto 2001).

While this criticism has far-reaching implications, its validity depends on the scholars' world view and attitudes toward subjects of study and the way they apply the theory rather than on the theory itself. For example, the group model is primarily for explaining self-interested behavior as much as the dyadic model, and is not for devotion to the welfare of all. Dyadic ties make a difference in certain aspects of Western politics as well such as presidential appointments to high ranking government positions in the US. Dyadic ties can also be mobilized for a common cause beyond personal interests under extraordinary circumstances such as the anti-Marcos struggle, where the networks of horizontal dyads among the urban middle class in Metro Manila were the organizational basis of a large number of voluntary organizations that led the people power revolution. From a normative viewpoint, personal exchange relations tend to blur distinction between public and private, and therefore can cause graft and inefficient allocation of resources. At the same time, it must also be recognized that, no matter how legal they may be, special group interests pursued by pressure group politics can be detrimental to the common good as much as particularistic individual interests pursued through personal relations.

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2

PATRONS, BOSSES, DYNASTIES, AND REFORMERS IN LOCAL POLITICS

John T. Sidel

Of all the countries in the world aside from the United States, the Philippines arguably boasts the longest tradition and richest body of scholarship on local politics. The extent – and potential importance – of academic research and writing on local politics in the archipelago was already widely acknowledged in the 1960s in the heyday of interest in local politics across the developing world, as seen in the prominence accorded to Carl Landé’s landmark study on ‘leaders, factions, and parties’ in the Philippines (Landé 1965) by scholars working on clientelism and patron-client relations elsewhere in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southern Europe. This richness of academic research on local politics in the Philippines is arguably understandable not in terms of the inherent appeals of the setting(s) for study or the idiosyncratic tastes of this group of scholars, but rather as a reflection of the long history of decentralized competitive politics in the archipelago, dating back to the first years of the twentieth century under what some have termed ‘colonial democracy’ under America rule. Thus by now scholars have had the accumulated benefit of more than one hundred years of local elections – and thus local election results – to analyse across the dozens of provinces and hundreds of municipalities and cities scattered across the archipelago, encouraging and enabling myriad efforts to understand and explain observable patterns of variance, continuity, and change in local politics in the Philippines.

Early studies of local politics in the Philippines

Over the course of the 1960s and stretching into the early 1970s, the primary analytical framework for understanding local politics in the Philippines was that of ‘clientelism’ and ‘patron-client relations’. Carl Landé’s aforementioned early (1965) study provided a schematic picture of clientelism as an integrated system of local and national politics, with patron-client relations linking – through a wedding cake-like structure of brokerage – ordinary Filipino voters to local *leaders* to municipal councillors, vice mayors, and mayors up through provincial board members, vice-governors, governors, and congressmen and reaching the pinnacle of national politics among (nationally elected) senators and presidents. By Landé’s account, these patron-client relationships, and the selective benefits they delivered through discretionary use of state resources and regulatory powers, provided the incentives, attachments, and affiliations which mobilized Filipino voters and constituted Philippine political parties, with presidential democracy enabling

two-party competition and turnover and thus ensuring both regular alliances and recurring defections across the party divide and self-correcting mechanisms for the division of the spoils of elected office and the maintenance of a stable equilibrium in Philippine politics and society.

By the late 1960s, however, developments and trends in the Philippines had helped to prompt a new round of revisionist scholarship which took seriously the clientelist foundations of local (and national) politics in the archipelago but emphasized evidence and anticipation of change rather than continuing stasis and stability. By some accounts, population growth, urbanization, industrialization, and economic diversification promised the 'modernization' of 'traditional' patron-client relations into more 'professional' forms of machine politics, or the diversification and attenuation of patron-client relations into forms of voter mobilization and interest aggregation more conducive to the delivery of collective goods and the promotion of the broader public interest. By other accounts, these demographic and sociological trends, accompanied by rising landlessness, un(der)employment, socioeconomic inequality, and poverty, heralded the breakdown of patron-client relations in ways which enabled the emergence of class-consciousness, class-based mobilization, and class conflict previously discouraged, diffused, diverted, and deferred by the 'vertical' webs of cross-class (inter-)dependence produced and reproduced through clientelist forms of electoral competition and use of state power (cf. Shantz 1972; Kerkvliet 1974; Doronila 1992).

With the declaration of martial law in September 1972, the closing of Congress, and the establishment of centralized authoritarian rule under President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr until his fall from power in February 1986, this budding field of scholarly research and writing on local politics in the Philippines fell fallow for more than a decade (but see Williams 1981), and perhaps understandably so given the difficulties and hazards of fieldwork during this period. These 'lost' years for scholarly research – like so much else about the martial law era – are clearly to be lamented, given how they left unresolved questions about how systemic changes in Philippine society had helped to produce the shifts in national politics enabling the breakdown of democracy in 1972, and how they left local politics and centre-local relations essentially unstudied during what may have been the most important period in post-independence Philippine history. Thus we are left to wonder how much of a genuine departure Marcos's 'New Society' and martial law regime really represented vis-à-vis the oligarchical democracy of the preceding decades; how much the Philippines' brief and bitter experience with authoritarian rule was due to its civilian, elected, and less than fully insulated form of presidential leadership and continuing reliance on local intermediaries for voter mobilization; and how much the growing revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines had been enabled by the diverse consequences of the dramatically diminished competitiveness of electoral politics between 1972 and 1986.

Scholarship on local politics after Marcos

In any event, the fall of Marcos in February 1986 and the reversion of the Philippines to decentralized democratic politics in subsequent years enabled and encouraged a second wave of scholarship on local politics in the archipelago, by now rather distanced from, and in some ways dismissive of, the earlier literature on 'patron-client relations' and 'clientelism'. This second wave came in the wake of both the so-called 'People Power Revolution' that forced the ouster of Marcos from power in Manila and the congressional and local elections of 1987 and 1988 which simultaneously helped to consolidate this transition from authoritarian rule to democracy at the national level and revealed the limits of what this restoration of democracy meant for local politics across the archipelago. For scholars, activists, and other observers previously anticipating

a full-blown social revolution or, after February 1986, a more modest transition to liberal democracy, these elections came as a bitter disappointment. With the 1987 congressional and 1988 local elections came a harsh 'reality check': the Marcos dictatorship had been overthrown in Manila, but across the archipelago, the entrenched 'provincial warlords' and local 'political dynasties' who had attracted such attention and condemnation for their wielding of 'guns, goons, and gold' in defence of the Marcos regime in the 1984 and 1986 elections regained congressional seats, provincial governorships, and municipal and city mayorships in impressive numbers, re-establishing their local pre-eminence after the brief hiatus of Aquino's imposition of temporary 'Officers-In-Charge' in 1986 in city, municipal, and provincial offices across the country. In political terms, these election results were deeply disappointing to Filipinos (and foreigners) who had struggled not only to oppose and overthrow the Marcos dictatorship, but also to promote more genuine political and social change, as exemplified by the widespread calls for comprehensive agrarian reform (Kerkvliet and Mojares 1991). In analytical terms, moreover, these election results created a new puzzle and challenge for scholars and other observers of local politics in the Philippines: how to explain the pattern of enduring entrenchment of local politicians and 'dynasties' in municipalities, cities, congressional districts, and provinces across the archipelago? Why did forms of subnational authoritarianism persist in some localities, even after authoritarian rule at the national level had given way to democracy?

Against this backdrop, the early 1990s witnessed a veritable renaissance in the study of local politics in the Philippines, but one which recast the earlier body of scholarship and the pre-martial law era of democracy in a new and more critical light. In contrast with the structural-functionalist assumptions and 'systemic' arguments of the political scientists who had depicted local politics in the Philippines in the heyday of modernization theory, the scholars who began to publish new studies of local politics in various parts of the archipelago in the early 1990s were mostly historians or otherwise inclined to adopt an historicist (and in some ways Marxist) approach focusing on (class) formation and (capital) accumulation over the full breadth of the twentieth century and often stretching back into the nineteenth century (McCoy 1993). Situating the Philippines in comparative historical and sociological perspective, these scholars traced the roots of local politics back to the opening of various ports across the archipelago to foreign trade in the mid-nineteenth century and the consequent emergence of Chinese *mestizo* merchants, moneylenders, landowners, and local office-holders in the hinterlands of these new entrepôts over the final decades of Spanish colonial rule. In contrast with contemporaneous developments in nearby Java or the Federated Malay States, for example, where 'plural society' arrangements preserved a bifurcation of ('Chinese') commercial intermediation and capital accumulation in the market and 'traditional' ('native') authority (e.g. sultans) within the colonial state, the late Spanish colonial era thus saw the crystallization of local élites whose mixed parentage enabled a unique fusion of economic and political power, however limited to the ranks of the *cabezas de barangay* and municipal-level *gobernadorcillos* of the archipelago (Anderson 1988).

With the invasion, occupation, violent 'pacification', and colonization of the Philippines by the United States at the turn of the century, moreover, these embryonic local élites experienced a drastic expansion of opportunities for capital accumulation and political entrenchment. Even as colonial states (and the absolutizing Siamese monarchy) elsewhere in Southeast Asia were busy establishing more centralized and insulated forms of bureaucratic rule across the region, the first four decades of the twentieth century saw the establishment of a decidedly American-style, but rapidly 'Filipinized', 'colonial democracy' based on highly limited but gradually expanding suffrage. Elections for municipal mayors and then provincial governors were held in the first years of the twentieth century, followed by those for a Philippine Assembly in 1907, an American-style bicameral legislature by 1916, and, under the newly established Commonwealth

Constitution, a president in 1935. This early electoralization of state power preceded the construction of a modern bureaucracy, enabling elected officials to exploit state resources and regulatory powers with few restrictions. Municipal mayors controlled the appointment of municipal treasurers, police chiefs, jail wardens, tax assessors, and circuit court judges; provincial governors enjoyed analogous discretion over provincial Constabulary commanders, district engineers, and district superintendents of schools; congressmen likewise dispensed 'pork barrel' projects and diverted budgetary resources within their districts with similar freedom from constraint. Alongside expanding opportunities for the appropriation and exploitation of state personnel and state powers for personal advantage came unprecedented access to state resources for purposes of capital accumulation. Thanks to their control over the Bureau of Lands, the Bureau of Mines, the Bureau of Forestry, and the Philippine National Bank, for example, elected officials and their allies among the landowners and businessmen of the archipelago were able to purchase or lease vast tracts of public lands, win lucrative logging and mining concessions, and avail themselves of generous state loans for the construction and operation of sugar centrals (i.e. refineries) across the archipelago. Thus by the end of the American colonial era, the Chinese *mestizo* landowners, merchants, and local worthies who had begun to emerge in villages and towns in various parts of the Philippines in the final decades of the nineteenth century had evolved into a nation-wide oligarchy entrenched in municipal halls, provincial capitols, and congressional seats in Manila and, at the same time, equally established in positions of control over the circuitries and commanding heights of the economy (Paredes 1989). With independence in 1946 and the onset of import-substitution industrialization in the 1950s, the advantages of incumbency and the opportunities for ('upstream') accumulation further multiplied, in tandem with budgets for public works projects, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) loans for cement and textile factories, and subsidies for the protection of the tobacco industry (Rivera 1994). Thus scholars identified the 'provincial warlords' and 'political dynasties' dominating local politics in the 1990s not as new fixtures on the scene but rather as heirs to individual fortunes and local political empires and an established pattern of local entrenchment and intertwined economic and political power in municipalities, provinces, and congressional districts across the Philippines (Gutierrez 1994).

In contrast with depictions of local politicians as 'patrons' enmeshed in webs of reciprocal ties or patron-client relations with their constituents, scholarship in the 1990s thus portrayed local politicians – whether of the post- or pre-Marcos eras – as engaged in processes of capital accumulation, rent-seeking, and state capture. Empirical research focused on the acquisition of landholdings, the securing of state loans, contracts, and concessions, the establishment and enforcement of local monopolies and monopsonies, and the enjoyment of control over illegal economies, rather than on the provision of particularistic benefits and services to clients and broader constituencies. The exercise of power by local politicians was shown to be predatory rather than paternalistic in nature (for a notable exception, see Kimura 1998), organized around the monopolization and manipulation of access to scarce resources rather than a 'moral economy' entailing norms of reciprocity and redistribution (Lacaba 1995).

In contrast with the earlier interest in clients as well as patrons and attentiveness to the (individuated and particularistic) pressures and demands of constituents on politicians, scholarship on local politics in the Philippines in the 1990s largely assumed, asserted, emphasized, and perhaps even exaggerated the apparent autonomy and obliviousness of 'provincial warlords', 'local bosses', and 'political dynasties' vis-à-vis the broader populations and electorates in their localities. Distrustful and dismissive of earlier accounts of 'patron-client relations' as the underlying basis of local politics, scholars of the 1990s instead noted the accumulated advantages of incumbency, the dull compulsion of economic relations, the structural logic of monopoly, the

ubiquity of vote-buying and electoral fraud, and, more broadly, the importance of coercion – rather than clientelism or consent – as the basis of local ‘guns, goons, and gold’, or understood more subtly as embedded within the everyday fabric of social relations in localities across the archipelago. If the scholarship of the 1960s now appeared to be culpably uncritical and culturally essentialist in its – ‘blame the victim’ – account of ordinary Filipino voters’ putative acquiescence and active role in producing and reproducing ‘clientelist politics’, the scholarship of the 1990s with few (if notable) exceptions (Kerkvliet 1990) disregarded ‘everyday forms of peasant resistance’ in favour of a pessimistically top-down, élite-centred account of local politics in which peasants and labourers, voters and citizens appeared as effectively disenfranchised or devoid of agency, importance, and thus blame. This tendency was evident in the language used to describe local politics across the Philippines: ‘warlordism’, ‘bossism’, ‘caciquism’, and so forth, focusing narrowly and exclusively on local powerholders rather than the broader local environments and electorates within which they might otherwise have been understood to be embedded.

From case studies to comparative analysis: Cavite and Cebu, and beyond

But if the varying longevity of individual local politicians and ‘political dynasties’ across the municipalities, provinces, and congressional districts of the archipelago did not reflect their varying success in attending to their constituents’ needs and demands in classic patron–client fashion, how then to explain the observable patterns of enduring entrenchment in some localities alongside persistent factional competition and electoral contestation in others? After all, for every municipality, congressional district, and province where one or another politician or political dynasty had remained in power for decades without interruption, there were others where regular turnover in office was observable, raising questions as to the patterns of variance in ‘subnational authoritarianism’ and ‘subnational democracy’ observed. Neither poverty, nor landownership, nor geographical remoteness/rurality could be said to correlate closely with enduring entrenchment, as seen in prominent cases of local bosses and ‘political dynasties’ in wealthy urban and suburban settings, on the one hand, and evidence of lively electoral competition and regular turnover in local offices in famous plantation-belt provinces like Negros Occidental.

A comparative study of the provinces of Cavite and Cebu conducted by this author in the early-mid 1990s offered one potential answer to this question of subnational variance in the patterns of local politics in the Philippines (Sidel 1999). In both Cavite and Cebu provinces, there were multiple instances of enduring entrenchment over the course of the twentieth century at the municipal, congressional district, and provincial levels, observable in the absence of turnover in mayoral, congressional, and gubernatorial elections over successive decades, and in journalistic coverage, official reports, and legal documentation of electoral fraud and violence, and other forms of coercion underlying the achievement and maintenance of power by incumbents. In both Cavite and Cebu, there were municipalities, congressional districts where incumbent elected officials had constructed local political machines and local economic empires that overcame – or prevented – challenges for decades at a time, with occasional periods of authoritarian entrenchment at the provincial level as well. But in both provinces, there was, especially at the municipal level, also evidence of the limitations of this pattern, with factional competition and turnover persisting in some localities even as local monopolists survived and prospered nearby.

Alongside these similarities between Cavite and Cebu, moreover, striking differences between the two provinces were also observable. In Cavite, it was possible to identify individual

mayors, congressmen, and governors who achieved and maintained authoritarian rule over their respective bailiwicks for decades at a time, yet in no instance were such local bosses able to pass on their political machines and economic empires to their children in dynastic form. Instead, the pattern of 'local bossism' in Cavite was one of long tenure interrupted, fairly abruptly and ultimately irreversibly, by a swift downfall engineered not only by local rivals but by supra-local enemies as well. This pattern of single-generation 'bossism' in Cavite was overwhelmingly male-dominated, macho and gangsterish in style, and highly violent, with all of the twenty-one municipalities in the province featuring a mayor who had been murdered or accused of murder. Indeed, five mayors out of twenty-one were murdered during the tenure of a single provincial governor in the 1980s and early-mid 1990s (allegedly on his orders).

In Cebu, by contrast, by the 1990s there were a large number of towns and districts where municipal mayors' offices and congressional seats had been held by – and passed on within – extended families in dynastic form, and through almost all of the twentieth century a single family enjoyed pre-eminence at the provincial level as well. The pattern in Cebu was not only one of long tenure for entrenched local dynasties, but also one in which external interventions from within the province and beyond were much less successful, and much less irrevocable in their consequences overall. In addition, the pattern in Cebu was one in which women played a much more prominent role, and which remained much more paternalistic (and, at times, maternalistic) in style and less violent in substance than Cavite, by a considerable measure, with hardly any Cebu mayors – across fifty-two municipalities – or other politicians murdered or accused of murder over the course of the twentieth century. Thus overall, Cavite and Cebu offered a rich empirical basis for the analysis of patterns of variance in subnational authoritarianism, whether across, between, or within these two Philippine provinces, over more than one hundred years.

How, then, to explain the patterns of variance observed? Close analysis of data on crop patterns and landownership as well as sustained investigation of commodity chains, transportation routes, and other dimensions of the economies of Cavite and Cebu over more than two years allowed for a mapping of the contexts for local 'bossism' in the two provinces which revealed striking patterns. In all cases, local entrenchment in Cavite and Cebu was preceded and/or accompanied by the accumulation of a position of monopolistic or oligopolistic control over what can be termed the commanding heights of the local economy. Detailed and fairly reliable records of large landholdings from the mid-1950s and mid-1990s provided ample evidence of this pattern in the realm of proprietary wealth, but *latifundia* constituted only one element in the diversified empires of these local bosses and dynasties. Those who controlled mayors' offices, congressional seats, and provincial capitols for decades at a time also owned rice mills and sugar centrals, monopolized the copra trade and the marketing of fertilizers and pesticides, held exclusive franchises for local bus and ferry routes, cockfighting arenas, electric companies, gas stations, ice plants, and rural banks, and won mining and logging concessions and public construction contracts within and beyond their localities. Over the course of the twentieth century in Cavite or Cebu, there was not a single case of enduring political entrenchment that was not accompanied and/or preceded by this pattern of predominance in the local economy. Through elected office, moreover, such local bosses enjoyed a position from which to regulate a wide variety of legal and illegal economic activities, ranging from real estate transactions to illegal lotteries (*jueteng*), smuggling, and dynamite fishing, to win loans from state banks and tax and regulatory breaks from state agencies, to control state budgets, lands, and other resources (e.g. irrigation), and to create employment opportunities for hundreds if not thousands of their supporters in government positions within and beyond their localities. The construction and persistence of a local political machine, in other words, was coterminous with the accumulation and maintenance of a local economic empire, with the location and longevity of subnational authoritarianism closely