THE ISLAND MENTALITY OF PHILIPPINE NATIONS AND THEIR INHIBITING EFFECT ON THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION*

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INTRODUCTION: AN EVOLVING REVOLUTION

"Mankind will not remain bound to the earth forever." — Hannah Arendt (The Human Condition 1, 1958)[1]

The Philippine revolution is an evolutionary process, but we have yet to find the missing link. For many, the peaceful "revolution" that took place in EDSA in 1986 and recognized around the world, although historical, was not a genuine revolution. It failed to produce the broad-based, deeply-rooted, and sustainable changes in society that would improve the lives of the many. The word revolution connotes a full turning around of events or conditions. It implies a change that is not merely political, but social and cultural. It signifies a transformation in consciousness, and the way people interact and live in society. Accordingly, the dialectic of the "transformation of institutions" and the "transformation of people"[2] must be present.

Lowell Dittmer asserts, "Revolutions are 'political' not only in their confrontation with established authority, but in the public character of the challenge they pose."[3] The EDSA Revolution, however, does not even satisfy the minimum requirement for a political revolution—the "smashing [of] the old [authority] structure and [the introduction of] a new one in its

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[1] HANNAH ARENDT, THE HUMAN CONDITION 1 (1958).

[2] Mao, *Concluding Remarks* 90-100, as cited in L. Dittmer, China's Continuous Revolution: The Post-Liberation Epoch 1949-1981 77 (1989).

[3] LOWELL DITTMER, CHINA'S CONTINUOUS REVOLUTION: THE POST-LIBERATION EPOCH 1949-1981 1-3 (1989).

place".[4] Although it unseated a dictator and his cronies, it failed to affect the manner in which politics is conducted in the country. It may have removed a number of disagreeable, corrupt, and abusive personalities, but it also entrenched further those who remained, by granting them a semblance of new-found legitimacy.

Likewise, EDSA II, which led to the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada, failed to produce desirable results. It repeated the mistakes of the past, and was quickly subverted by the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration. Its leaders, a significant portion of whom were from the educated middle class, saw their task as an effort to remove a flawed individual running the system rather than a flawed system. Others, in contrast, aimed to institute reforms while maintaining the system, thereby validating it. This is not to say, however, that a better system more suited to Filipino values and geared at addressing the plight of the masses is obvious and could easily or clearly be arrived at; neither is it meant to suggest that any alternative system is better than the current one. Nevertheless, for the sake of social justice for the many, changes have to be made. No real revolution is easy or bloodless, otherwise long-term transformation is lost in the process. Consequently, it appears that although the Philippines is already on its way to a revolution, it has yet to approach its tipping point.

All the same, even if we look back at Philippine history over the past century, revolutions seem sparse and sporadic. The government established after the Spanish-Filipino war, for instance, retained many of the political practices in government prior to the war. In line with that, this paper aims to illustrate how the Philippines has never had a full-blown revolution due to factors unique to the history of the country, which will be tackled in the subsequent sections of this paper. Presently, our task is to uncover the inherent features of Philippine politics, which have inhibited the development of a full-blown revolution over the past century.

Thus, this paper will focus mainly on probing the Philippines' past—its history which has molded a distinct yet evolving culture—specifically from pre-colonial times to EDSA I. It will begin with a study of how the country's geography, or more aptly its being an archipelagic state, has led to a regionalistic and localized kind of politics. Secondly, it will examine the prevalence of cacique politics, the political maneuverings of local elites especially pivotal from 1898-1902, in Philippine history. Thirdly, it will discuss the Huk rebellion, which initiated the arms struggle of so-

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[4] *Id.*

called militant factions that are currently threatening to end the prevailing status quo and hasten the revolutionary process. Fourthly, it will scrutinize Philippine-American relations, particularly the relations between local elites and American politicians during the American occupation. Fifthly, it will tackle how the decline in patron-client relationships has perpetuated warlordism in the Philippines. And lastly, by analyzing the past vis-à-vis the present using a cultural study and Alexis de Tocqueville's model[5], it will examine the phenomena of the recent EDSA "revolutions" and attempt to predict the direction the Philippines is going in effecting authentic political, social, and cultural change. All in all, this paper will revolve around the common thread which binds these periods together, the "island mentality" which has led to a paradox in Philippine politics; that of a weakened yet legitimized state and a hindered yet evolving revolution.

I. PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS: MYTH SYSTEMS AND THE CRITICAL LEGAL APPROACH

"To tell the truth is revolutionary." — Ferdinand Lassalle as cited by Antonio Gramsci[6] (L'Ordine Nuovo, 1921)

A. PHILIPPINE INTER-ISLAND AND INTRA-ISLAND RELATIONS

Nation building is myth creation. "The Philippines", according to David C. Martinez, "is not a nation but a fabricated state, artificially united, centrally controlled and ruled by a few hundred powerful families who own or control about half of the country's wealth".[7] Much of what holds the Philippines together as a nation are hierarchical institutions run by a few yet competing elite who base their power on the perpetuation of these institutions. They employ what Louis Althusser calls the Repressive State Apparatus, which preserves the state through police power and violence, and the Ideological State Apparatus, which leads people to believe the state should be preserved by creating myths on the value of submission.[8] This paper will focus on the latter as a pattern of myth creation. To describe

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[5] Alexis De Tocqueville's Model may be found in Alexis De Toqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (1955), in Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy, Revolution and Society, Ed. by John Stone & Stephen Mennell, 215-242 (1978).

[6] Ferdinand Lassalle as cited by A. Gramsci, L'Ordine Nuovo 1 (1921).

[7] Corazon PB Claudio, *Mapping the future: Is the Philippines dying?*, PHIL. DAILY INQUIRER, Oct. 31, 2005, at http://www.inquirer.net.

[8] L. Althusser, *"Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press 137 (1971).

further how myth systems and public ideology work, W. Michael Reisman writes:

> 'Legality' may be taken to refer to conclusions drawn by members of the community as to the propriety of practices determined by some method of logical derivation from the myth system... 'Lawfulness', in contrast, may be taken to refer to the propriety of practices in terms of their contribution (or lack thereof) to group integrity and continuity, of which the myth system is a part... Every belief system has a coercive component, but the apparatus for imposing 'evils', or deprivations for deviations from orthodox belief may not be obvious... Few things in life are authentically unilateral, and deception is often a shared process. While elites have an obvious interest in maintaining the integrity of the myth system, key personalities and entire strata in the public may abet the deception avoiding the truth like someone pulling blankets over his head to avoid the cold reality of dawn. [9]

Although this paper will utilize Althusser's idea of an Ideological State Apparatus, it will not delve too much on Althusser's theory, which is based on a predominantly Marxist socio-economic paradigm. Conversely, this paper will illustrate that revolutions are not merely socio-economic struggles marked by economic disparity, but also political and cultural struggles indicated by how people view their leaders and institutions and how people live with others in society. Neither will this paper immerse itself completely in Reisman's theory on the myth system and operational code. They will be used here to simply posit the questions: "How have legality and legitimacy contributed to the myth of a Philippine nation?" and "In a state that is an aggregate of multiple island nations, who is in power?"

B. THE FOCUS ON LOCAL ELITES INSTEAD OF THE MASSES

It may be noted that the focal point of this paper are local elites and the power they wield in Philippine society. This may lead some to think that the aim here is not to empower the masses or to change the situation but to glorify once again the role of the elite in our history. In the end, however, people must be able to determine the challenge to a real political, social, and cultural revolution if they are to overcome it. Dr. Jose Rizal's famous phrase, "*Walang mang-aalipin kung walang paaalipin*[10] (There would be no slave drivers if there were no people allowing themselves to be enslaved)" seems self-

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[9] W. MICHAEL REISMAN, JURISPRUDENCE: UNDERSTANDING AND SHAPING LAW 27-28 (1986).

[10] JOSE RIZAL, KABANATA 7: "SI SIMOUN", EL FILIBUSTERISMO, SALIN NI VIRGILIO S. ALMARIO, ADARNA HOUSE, 54 (1998).

defeating at this juncture, for rather than being empowering it appears to trivialize the abuses of those in power and legitimize the situation of the destitute by suggesting that history is in their hands when the burden of the abuses of history is on their back. Granted, it may free them from their personal attachment to the status quo that functions with their cooperation, but this liberty is not enough to constitute a revolution.

It is important to qualify that this assertion is not meant to demean Rizal's sacrifice and martyrdom. Rather, it is a reminder to be critical of the historical lessons fed to all citizens. After all, it is important to remember; Rizal was not only an educated Chinese-mestizo, but also a local and landed elite. He was—as some historians have pointed out in the past—the Filipino hero endorsed by the Americans. We must, therefore, be mindful of the men and women we adulate, in order to determine whether or not we should imitate their example as turning points of history or forge a new path in order to bring about revolutionary changes. As such, this paper takes on a critical legal perspective in order to question prevailing norms and existing institutions that legitimize colonial and elitist practices.

C. ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE'S "THE OLD REGIME AND THE REVOLUTION"

In determining the nature of revolutions in the Philippines, and more importantly, whether or not one has ever taken place, it is fundamentally important to develop an analysis that is uniquely Filipino. In order to do this, it seems appropriate to focus on Filipino agents rather than colonial rulers and foreign conquests, and establish a phenomenon that is distinct to the country.

Even so, without insinuating that the situation of France in the 18th century is exactly the same as or precisely the opposite of the situation of the Philippines either today or at any point from colonial times to the present, Alexis de Tocqueville's model or system of assertions can be used by students of history to understand how revolutions progress and finally occur. Certainly, there are a number of identifiable characteristics common to the Philippines' present and long-standing situation, and the situation of France in the 18th century and the decades preceding it. There will always be commonalities to uprisings, since most—if not all—uprisings are based on a history of conflict, difference, discontent, and injustice. Still, the use of de Tocqueville's model in this paper is merely to understand the historical

progression of one of the bloodiest yet ground-breaking events in world history, the French Revolution.

"The subject of revolution has elicited a rich and voluminous scholarly literature. Much of that literature has been directed to the *causes* of revolution, under the implicit premise that if these causes could be avoided [or advanced,] the probability of revolution might thereby be reduced [or reproduced]."[11] Then again, the total adoption of frameworks created by Western theorists, socialist philosophers, or authoritarian rulers that provide requisites to determine what constitutes a revolution seems to prescribe a Western basis for revolutions when the country's history significantly differs from those of Europe and America. Even South American literature and philosophy do not suffice, although their backdrop appears closer to the country's current situation. Moreover, providing pre-requisites to assist people in "recreating" a revolution in their country appears to limit the creative capacity of people as historical beings, as agents of history. As such, this paper will be using de Tocqueville's writing not as a strict paradigm in the form of requisites that Philippine revolutions must satisfy in order to exist, but rather as a guide to analyzing the uniqueness and ripeness of the Philippine situation.

II. THE PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGIC STATE

> Our nation stands on an archipelago—on a sea—rather than on land... When we in the Philippines say that we are an archipelago, we are of course very much stating the ideal, or what is desired. The truth is that our being an archipelagic nation is still very much a work-in-progress, a grand social experiment in the making—or, if you will, a hypothesis. Each of the islands in the Philippines is by itself a distinct society... Not infrequently, there is misunderstanding, conflict and discord within the archipelago, not least because of the deeply rooted so-called "island mentality"—which no doubt is a legacy from our colonial past... We still have to overcome high and difficult hurdles in order to transform the sea from a socially subversive natural barrier to a genuinely connective force in political dialogue as well as an indispensable ingredient in the continuing efforts for national unification and reconciliation.[12]

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[11] L. Althusser, *"Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press 137 (1971).

[12] Peter. Payoyo, *The Contribution of the Common Heritage of Mankind Principle to the Governance of Our Global Archipelago* (Lecture delivered on the occasion of Pacem In Maribus XXV: The Common Heritage and the 21st Century at Valetta, Malta, Nov. 15, 2007), WORLD BULL., 1 (2002).

Philippine politics is regionalistic or provincial in nature. "[S]uperimposed on the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic character of the archipelago are great contrasts and diversities in local customs, religious persuasions, as well as great disparities in income, wealth and power among the islands and their inhabitants."[13]

The establishment of local landed elites can be traced back to Philippine pre-colonial society, where the social unit was the *barangay*, from the Malay term *balangay* (boat). "Most communities were coastal, near-coastal or riverine in orientation". Before the Spanish fleets arrived, there was already a domestic commerce between the different islands as well as between *barangays*. As a result, there was a higher degree of development in coastal and near coastal communities.[14] The *datus* (village chieftains) served as trade mediators, facilitating exchanges between the lowlanders and interior and hunter-gathering societies.[15] "Access to certain fields, fisheries, river passages, and the like was reserved primarily to [their] kin." The *datu's* main functions were to lead his followers in war and trade with other villages. He was thus regarded as the "most capable of securing the surplus with which to engage in a series of reciprocal exchanges with others in the community".[16] Casal et al. clarifies:

> [C]omplex societies have been part of the Philippine cultural mosaic since at least the first millennium A.D. Chiefdoms were characterized by a complex sequence of interlinked exchange systems involving tribute and exchange among lowland agriculturalists under the direct, political dominion of the coastal chief; alliance-based exchanges of raw materials and subsistence goods between distinct lowland complex societies and upland tribal societies; and elite prestige goods exchange between chiefs of neighboring island polities. This trade reached its peak in terms of volume and interpolity competition during the 15th and 16th centuries.[17]

Still, prior to the intermeddling of the Spaniards, the Philippines' identity was amorphous. A native inhabitant's identity was limited to—in no strict or certain terms—the baranganic society to which he or she belonged. The Philippine state, arguably, emerged as a result of the colonial government's uphill climb to centralize its power. As Paul D. Hutchcroft

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[13] *Id.*

[14] I RENATO CONSTANTINO, THE PHILIPPINES: A PAST REVISITED 30 (1975).

[15] II GABRIEL CASAL ET AL., THE EARLIEST FILIPINOS, KASAYSAYAN: THE STORY OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE 161 (1998).

[16] VICENTE RAFAEL, CONTRACTING COLONIALISM 139-141 (1988).

[17] *Id.*, note 15, at 161.

asserts, "Looking across the scope of modern Philippine history, one finds a striking absence of any sustained effort at state building. In their initial colonization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Spanish encountered very localized political units. Except in the Muslim areas of the south (regions that were never effectively subjugated by the central government in Manila until the early twentieth century), there existed no political units that could even begin to compare with the large pre-colonial kingdoms found elsewhere in the region. The central state that the Spanish created was so woefully understaffed that the civil authorities had to rely heavily upon ecclesiastical personnel to extend their reach throughout the archipelago."[18] In addition, "With the process of agricultural commercialization that swept the world in the nineteenth century, the Spanish colonial administration in Manila was largely upstaged by other forces that were able to respond more effectively to new opportunities: British and American trading houses, Chinese traders, and an increasingly powerful landed elite, dominated by Chinese mestizos."[19]

The Philippines, as a number of historical documents reveal, is not a nation, but a state composed of many nations; the former characterized by a homogenous ethnic community, identical culture, and shared belief system, and the latter by a sovereign government, specific territory, and citizenry defined by law.[20] According to Anthony D. Smith, "[W]e have equated the 'nation' and the 'state', because that is the form they took in the two historically influential societies—England and France—at the very moment when nationalism burst forth."[21] Whereas we usually interchange the terms, what we traditionally conceive as both a nation and state is actually a "nation-state",[22] an ideal distinguished by the presence of all the aforementioned characteristics. In reality, there are very few nation-states in existence. Consequently, states usually subscribe to an ideology that "legitimates the whole enterprise [of the nation-state]", that of nationalism.[23]

Moreover, as Smith avers, "'[N]ation building' describes succinctly what Third World elites are trying to do...[as] *the* basic Third World ideology and project, rather than a tool of analysis."[24] The myth, therefore, of the Philippine archipelagic nation-state is that all the islands stand on one

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[18] PAUL HUTCHCROFT, BOOTY CAPITALISM: THE POLITICS OF BANKING IN THE PHILIPPINES 13-30 (1998).

[19] *Id.*

[20] Anthony D. Smith, *State-Making and Nation-Building*, in 1986 STATES IN HISTORY 228- 229.

[21] at .Id230.

[22] *Id.* at 228- 229.

[23] *Id.* at 228.

[24] *Id* at 232.

archipelago, on a body of water whose limits are defined in the Constitution. In reality, the waters between them have divided rather than connected them for centuries.

III. MEN OF LETTERS: ILUSTRADO-CACIQUE POLITICS AND THE "REVOLUTION" OF 1898

> *"Earlier studies of the Philippine Revolution and the Filipino-American War have concentrated on their cosmopolitan ilustrado leadership and various aspects of the conflict between the Malolos Republic and the United States. They are, however, remiss in neglecting the role played by the provincial and municipal elites in the Revolution and their consequent entrenchment in positions of power throughout the country.*
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> *Yet one of the most obvious and significant features of the political situation during the years 1898-1902 is the emergence of these local elites as the real victors of the Philippine Revolution...[25] If the Filipino elite were the ultimate victors of the Revolution, then the masses in the town and countryside were the unwitting victims."[26]* — *Milagros C. Guerrero*

For the most part, classical discourse on what has been termed the Philippine Revolution has centered on the heroes of the revolution. In fact, the history being taught to students throughout the country highlights two main movements of the first and second phases of the "revolution", the emergence of Ilustrado anti-colonial literature, which fashioned a Filipino-nationalist consciousness, and the founding of the Katipunan, which proved that a more substantial and broad-based uprising could be accomplished.[27]

The cosmopolitan ilustrados were initially "downright hostile to the idea of separation from Spain as well as to the society that actively pursued this goal".[28] Nevertheless, many of them contributed to the widespread disdain towards Spaniards through their writings. Their works eventually took on a life of their own, in a way far removed from what their writers originally intended. According to Guerrero, although Bonifacio had access to Father Burgos' writings and Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo,* as

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[25] Milagros Guerrero, *The Provincial and Municipal Elites of Luzon during the Revolution, 1898-1902* in Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations 155 (1982).

[26] *Id* at 179.

[27] Milagros Guerrero, *Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan* in 5 Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People 151-154 (1998).

[28] Milagros Guerrero, ANDRES BONIFACIO AND THE KATIPUNAN IN 5 KASAYSAYAN: THE STORY OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE 154 (1998).

well as those of French revolutionists (including a Spanish translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*), which probably "fired his imagination with the role he was about to play in the impending revolution",[29] he was not "a man of the moral or intellectual stature of Rizal or Father Burgos. Burgos especially would have been amazed if not appalled by what came out of his own efforts to arouse a national consciousness."[30] Moreover, Rizal himself did not believe that the Philippines was ready for a revolution. "Nonetheless, Bonifacio learned much from both of them and he was able to translate their ideas into a program that attracted other Filipinos who had no contact with these ideas."[31]

The La Liga Filipina of 1893, the supposed precursor of the Katipunan was in itself an organization that was set-up to raise funds for the *La Solaridad*, an ilustrado organ devoted to furthering reforms beneficial to ilustrado elite. Not surprisingly, therefore, due to fears by its ilustrado founders of how it could be used by the followers of Bonifacio to fuel *their* revolution and become known to the authorities, it was dissolved not long after it sparked an interest in similar secret organizations.[32]

In contrast, the different municipal and provincial "nations" through the influence of local elites were able to unite against a common enemy, even if they did so in order to secure or further their own interests. Their interests were more radical compared to those of the cosmopolitan ilustrados. Milagros C. Guerrero writes:

> The men who were recruited into the Katipunan before 1896 had stature in their respective communities... It is understandable that the municipal elite, who were ambivalent in their attitude toward the Katipunan, should be drawn to the idea of separation from Spain. Although the Maura Law[33] was passed in 1893 to provide more autonomy to local officials and curb the excesses of the friars, the law's provisions did not do enough to satisfy the local elite... When the revolution reached their respective communities, their response often involved many Filipinos attached or committed to them in the

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[29] *Id.* at 153-154.

[30] *Id.*

[31] *Id.* at 147.

[32] *Id.* at 127, 130.

[33] According to Chief Justice R. S. Puno in *Infra*, see note 47 the Royal Decree of 13 February 1894 or the Maura Law enabled the government to pass laws to legitimize "wholesale land grabbing and provide for easy titling or grant of lands to migrant homesteaders..."

> complex network of social and political obligations that characterize municipal life in the Philippines.[34]

Since it was Emilio Aguinaldo who saw the Philippine Revolution to the finish line, his role as a cacique that circumvented the would-be (or perhaps more accurately, would-have-been) political, social, and cultural effects of a revolution must be noted. In doing so, the Philippine Revolution was reduced to a war or a system of wars and uprisings, typified by violent actions without accompanying substantial changes.

In particular, Aguinaldo's decree on June 18, 1898, is of pivotal importance. "The ground rules established by President Emilio Aguinaldo for the country's political reorganization as it was slowly freed from Spanish control enabled the elites to be the final arbiters of the direction that the Revolution would take in many towns... Aguinaldo called for the reorganization of Philippine provincial and municipal governments as fast as town and countryside were seized from the enemy... In so far as Aguinaldo and Apolinario Mabini, his political adviser, were concerned, political reorganization was the ultimate outcome of the victory of the Filipinos over their colonial masters and the logical step after the declaration of independence."[35] According to Guerrero, Aguinaldo's 1898 decree stipulated,

> [O]nly citizens of 20 years of age or above who were 'friendly' to Philippine independence and were distinguished for their 'high character, social position and honorable conduct, both in the center of the community and the suburb', were qualified to vote.[36]

As a result, Guerrero claims,[37]

> These criteria would have excluded all but the so-called ilustrado or principalia class, an exceedingly small minority in each town, which had dominated the economic and political structures during the Spanish regime. These men were to choose among themselves the jefe local or president of the town and three councilors: the councilor of police and internal order, the councilor of justice and civil registry, and the councilor of taxes and property. The principalia was also required to choose the cabeza or headman for each barrio in the

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[34] Milagros Guerrero, *Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan* in 5 Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People 154 (1998).

[35] Milagros Guerrero, *The Provincial and Municipal Elites of Luzon during the Revolution, 1898-1902* in PHILIPPINE SOCIAL HISTORY: GLOBAL TRADE AND LOCAL TRANSFORMATIONS 159 (1982).

[36] *Id.* at 165.

[37] *Id.*

> municipality. The president, three councilors and the headmen constituted the town's junta magna or popular council. The presidents of the towns, after consultations with their respective assemblies, were to elect by a majority of votes the governor of the province and three councilors, with duties and responsibilities similar to those of municipal officials. The town presidents and the elected provincial officials in turn were to elect from among the principalia of the province their representatives to the Congress in Malolos.[38]

A natural result of Aguinaldo's "revolution", therefore, was the strengthening of the already established power of local elites. His decree not only guaranteed that the local elites were the ones voted into power under the new Filipino-ruled government, but also ensured that they were the administrators and commissioners who adjudicated over election-related issues in their provinces and municipalities.

There were, however, some exceptions. In some municipalities, such as Solano, Nueva Ecija and Urdaneta, Pangasinan, non-elites had been voted into power.[39] Yet, the ilustrados who were removed from office by these non-ilustrados initiated protests that eventually succeeded in unseating them. "Aguinaldo and his [election] commissioners [who were also from the *principalia* class], tended to take the side of the *principalia*, so much so that such elections were regularly voided and others called to install more 'qualified' persons."[40]

There are therefore two factors closely tied up with Aguinaldo's background that must be pointed out in order to understand the result of the Philippine Revolution of 1898. Firstly, because Aguinaldo was a member of the municipal aristocracy, "although less educated and with less properties than the other luminaries of the second phase of the revolution, [he] doubtless shared the same views and goals peculiar to the *principalia* of the time. In simpler terms, although he participated in the violent uprising that led to the changing of hands of the government, in many ways he also believed that the leadership must remain with the knowledgeable elites if the Philippines is to stand a chance in surviving the backlash of the war.[41]

In line with this, secondly, "[r]ecognizing the 'dearth of talents' in the top echelon of the government, Aguinaldo appointed wealthy and highly educated Filipinos who were at one time indifferent and sometimes strongly

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[38] *Id.*
[39] *Id* at 168 .
[40] *Id.*
[41] *Id.* at 167.

opposed to the Revolution..., [b]elieving that the *ilustrados'* inclusion in the government would bring not only expertise but also prestige."[42] Consequently, Aguinaldo appointed to his Cabinet prominent Filipinos like Pedro Paterno, Felipe Buencamino and Gregorio Araneta, "despite complaints from friends and rebel leaders who did not possess the wealth, education and experience that Aguinaldo considered necessary for running the affairs of the nation."[43]

IV. THE AGE OF REBELLION: CAPITALISM AND THE HUKS

> *"[The family is] the strongest unit of society, demanding the deepest loyalties of the individual coloring all social activity with its own set of demands...[Unfortunately] the communal values of the family are often in conflict with the impersonal values of the institutions of the larger society."*
> *— Jean Grossholtz*[44]

The Huk rebellion is perhaps the most massed-based uprising in Philippine history. Its effects are far-reaching in history and continue to haunt the country to this day. The continuing nationalist discourse on how to quash the rebels such as the New People's Army of Central Luzon can be rooted in the growing rebellion of the early 20th century. In tracing the origins of rebellion in the Philippines, Benedict Kekvliet claims, "Capitalism, which had been creeping into Philippine society long before the Americans came, picked up speed in the twentieth century... Far more than before, land ownership became a means to wealth... The contrast between the rich and the poor became greater than before. It angered the peasants that landed families refused to share their good fortune with them. To share would have been in keeping with traditional values, but it was not part of a developing, capitalistic society."[45]

According to Kerkvliet, traditional patron-client ties had three main characteristics: first, they were "numerous, diffuse and flexible"; second, they were "personal and face-to-face"; and third, they were "not based on compulsion or force but on reciprocity".[46] To elaborate on the patron-client relationship, Kerkvliet says:

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[42] *Id.*
[43] *Id.*
[44] JEAN GROSSHOLTZ, POLITICS IN THE PHILIPPINES 86-87 (1964).
[45] BENEDICT KERKVLIET, THE HUK REBELLION: A STUDY OF PEASANT REVOLT IN THE PHILIPPINES 18 (1977).
[46] *Id.* at 251.

> For both, the relative absence of effective impersonal guarantees such as public law for security of family and property was also an important reason for the development of patron-client bonds... Hence, theirs was a symbiotic relationship in which expectations and obligations grew through practice and personal interaction... [T]heir landlords' paternalism was precisely one vital means for peasants to keep their heads above water. A strong patron-client relationship was a kind of all-encompassing insurance policy whose coverage, although not total and infinitely reliable, was as comprehensive as a poor family could get... Owning land could pose even greater risks—such as having to carry the burden of all expenses for a crop that could easily fail if drought or blight hit. Owning land could also be less secure than tenancy—it implied having only weak or no claims on wealthy persons for rations and loans and no protection against land-grabbers.[47]

Unfortunately for the tenants, in contrast to traditional landlords, the new generation of landlords in the 1920s was detached from their fathers' traditional and paternalistic tenancy system. Most of them had been educated in Manila and even abroad. Their absence, consequently, made them see the tenants as workers or lessees rather than clients with whom they had particular obligations.

The expanding central government also favored local elites. For instance, Act No. 926 or the Public Land Act of 1903, "governed the disposition of lands of the public domain".[48] The act was the embodiment of the American colonial government's policy to survey and properly title all property in the Philippines according to Western law in order for government to settle land ownership. "It prescribed rules and regulations for the homesteading, selling and leasing of portions of the public domain of the Philippine Islands, and prescribed the terms and conditions to enable persons to perfect their titles to public lands in the Islands... [It also] provided for the 'issuance of patents to certain native settlers upon public lands, for the establishment of town sites and sale of lots therein, for the completion of imperfect titles, and for the cancellation or confirmation of Spanish concessions and grants in the islands.'"[49]

From the point of view of the tenants, however, the Public Land Act of 1903 "placed land ownership, based on a government-recognized

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[47] BENEDICT KERKVLIET, THE HUK REBELLION: A STUDY OF PEASANT REVOLT IN THE PHILIPPINES 252 (1977).

[48] *See* ,.Puno,J) (2000) 128SCRA .347Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, .Cruz vs .(separate opinion

[49] *Id.*

title, above the peasant's traditional right to landholding, based on his ties to the landlord and his continued use of the land." This showed that the landlord's legal title "carried far more weight than the peasant's appeals to traditional rights and verbal agreements with the landowner...[since] the landlord could invoke the whole legal system, including the police, to support his claim."[50]

Furthermore, the expansion of capitalism, which the American occupation advanced, "favored American investors and wealthy Filipinos."[51] For instance, U.S. tariff policies "stimulated cash crops (especially sugar cane) for export (principally to the United States) but inhibited the development of a diversified Philippine economy,"[52] simultaneously allowing Filipino capitalists to invest in export-oriented businesses through credit and banking allowances.

"People in Central Luzon tried numerous strategies to protect themselves against the worsening conditions and growing uncertainties of the 1920s and 1930s. They adapted old ways while simultaneously venturing into new ones. Gradually at first, but then with a tempo that quickened as other efforts proved unsatisfying, villagers turned to collective action. Still clinging to the tenancy system, they protested and organized in hopes of forcing the landed elites to be judicious landlords."[53]

Contrary to the presumption that the unrest was extreme and forceful, save for a few violent encounters, the nature of the actions remained mostly nonviolent and with moderate demands. Kekvliet writes, "One reason was the orientation of the peasant movement itself—reform and protest rather than rebellion and revolution... The peasants' demands were modest and remained fairly constant."[54] Most of them only wanted landlords to live up to their obligations; to "give rations, give loans without charging interest, guarantee tenants a parcel of land to use for life, increase the tenant's share of the harvest, and stop using armed guards or calling out the Philippine Constabulary against them".[55] As proof of this, Kerkvliet quotes a peasant from Talavera: "Our worst problems were debts, high interest rates, and not enough rice. So we wanted... low interest rates or

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[50] KERKVLIET, *supra* note 22.
[51] *Id.* at *23.*
[52] *Id.*
[53] *Id.* at 26.
[54] *Id.* at 44, 39.
[55] 254at .Id

none at all, and a larger share of the crop—55 percent of the harvest instead of only 50 or 45."[56]

As a result, "the government's own moderate reforms of the 1950s had a deadening effect on the Huk rebellion".[57] Nonetheless, since the government failed to provide long-term assistance, membership in these peasant organizations continued to grow and gain political strength in the 1960s. "Increasingly peasants realized their shared predicament and common grievances. And they learned that individually or in small groups, they had little power. The only way to make an impression on landlords or government officials, they concluded, was to protest together." [58]

There were two types of leaders during the unrest, the local leaders and the non local leaders. The local leaders were those in the barrios and municipalities who "were peasants themselves and who were closely identified with the villagers in a small geographic area".[59]Conversely, the non local leaders were "provincial and inter-provincial leaders that might be called for shorthand purposes, top leaders".[60] The non local leaders "spoke on behalf of people in many barrios and municipalities and often were elected provincial and national officers in organizations like KPMP (Kalipunang Pambansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Pilipinas or National Society of Peasants in the Philippines) and AMT (Aguman ding Malding Talapagobra or General Workers Union). [They] included both peasants and persons from middle-class occupations and, in a few cases, upper-class families. Some of those from nonpeasant backgrounds identified closely with villagers and lived among them; others remained aloof."[61]

Even the history of the role of the Partidong Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines or PKP) in these peasant movements is nowadays being debunked and rewritten. As Kerkvliet claims, "During the 1930s...the PKP lacked strong ties with the peasantry. Few of its members were peasants, and the party did little political work in the countryside. Most of the active members lived in towns and cities where they focused on labor unions, especially those in Manila."[62]

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[56] *Id.* at 39.
[57].255 at .Id
[58] at .Id 45.
[59] at .Id 48.
[60] .48 at .Id
[61] *Id.*
[62] at .Id50.

There were a good few, however, who immersed themselves in the peasant movement. Pedro Abad Santos was one of them. Born in 1875 to a "well-to-do" family, he acquired his education in Manila, became a lawyer and was elected to Congress, where he served until 1922. There he came to realize the effect of the worsening disparity on rural folk. In the 1930s, he offered his free services as a lawyer to "indigents" and became active in the Socialist movement. After the Socialist Party and the PKP merged in 1938, he became the new organization's vice-chairman.[63]

On the other hand, his sentiments reveal the relatively moderate views of the leaders of the movement at that time: "We have no intention of importing the Russian brand of communism into this situation. Russian conditions are utterly different... Indeed we would welcome... twentieth-century capitalism in the Philippines. If our workers could approximate the living conditions, status, and rights that... American workers have obtained under modern capitalism, we would be satisfied."[64]

Moreover, the avenues that the leaders decided to utilize were humps on the road for the movement. Although they mostly took part in collective public actions, they also tried legitimate channels that in some ways co-opted the movement, since they deviated from the time spent on organization and mobilization. The Huks "petitioned mayors, governors, congressmen, and presidents[,]...took landlords and sugar central owners to court[,]...and even ran candidates for municipal offices and for congress". Through the last avenue mentioned, they were even able to win six seats in the House of Representatives due to the sheer number of Central Luzon voters behind them. Unfortunately for them, the "national government authorities, including President Manuel Roxas, manipulated Congress so as to refuse illegally to seat the six elected officials."[65]

The archipelagic character of the Philippines, leading to a regionalistic or provincial way of thinking, was also an encumbrance for the Huk movement. "When a few Huks tried to export their rebellion to other parts of the Philippines—for example, to the Bisayas and Northern Luzon regions—they failed, apparently because they were outsiders themselves and

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[63] at .Id52.
[64] at .Id53.
[65] at .Id258, 262.

the political conditions were not bad enough from the viewpoint of villagers there to warrant revolt."[66]

Eventually, the central government's own efforts at quashing the rebellion are what pushed the budding rebellion, which was now being influenced by leaders advocating communist ideology, further on its tracks. Laws which required written contracts between tenant and landlord, which initially seemed beneficial for tenants, later on proved to be disastrous for the tenants for they "straightjacketed a relationship which ideally was diffuse and flexible"[67]. This forced the peasants to a life which could no longer meet their former day-to-day subsistence requirements and pushed them more drastically outwards to the periphery of society, aggravating them and stimulating resistance. "Legislation in the 1950's to 1960s also included provisions allowing share tenants (*kasama*) to become leasehold tenants (*buwisan*), in which case tenants would pay a fixed amount of rent each harvest. But the leasehold system also absolved landlords of all responsibility to help pay agricultural expenses and give loans to their tenants."[68]

In other words, in some ways, the movement was even held back by the people who were supposed to have been catalysts for the unrest. Although the unrest in the beginning was a moderate and nonviolent attempt to restore traditional relationships that cultivated mutual duties it was actually the government and the elite that prodded the peasants to radicalize their uprisings. Consequently, for the first time in Philippine history the peasants were able to assert themselves against landed elites even if they continued to lose against the government's police power. In the end, as Kervliet emphasizes, "The movement's success was the movement itself and what it did to people in Central Luzon's villages."[69]

V. BOOTY CAPITALISM AND THE AMERICANS

> *"In the reality of political systems, patrimonial and legal elements are mixed, though all societies have patrimonial traces while some have only a few legal ones." — Daniel S. Lev*[70]

Philippine politics has been marked by a long standing tradition of patrimonialism. American colonial rule rather than changing this fact,

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[66] 257 at .Id.

[67] at .Id 268.

[68] .268 at .Id

[69] .268 at .Id

[70] DANIEL S. LEV, JUDICIAL AUTHORITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AN INDONESIAN RECHTSSTAAT (1978).

instead contributed to its verity. The Americans "reinforced the decentralized nature of the Philippines by concentrating far less on the creation of a central bureaucracy than on the introduction of representative institutions."[71] Benedict Anderson explains, "[U]nlike all the other modern colonial regimes in twentieth century Southeast Asia, which operated through huge autocratic, white-run bureaucracies, the American authorities in Manila, once assured of the mestizos' self-interested loyalty to the motherland, created only a minimal civil service, and quickly turned over most of its component positions to the natives.' The representative institutions enabled local caciques to consolidate their hold on the national state, and fostered the creation of 'a solid, visible, national oligarchy.'"[72] Paul D. Hutchcroft adds:

> Civil servants frequently owed their employment to legislator patrons, and up to the end of the American period the civilian machinery of state remained weak and divided... In short, the legacy of U.S. colonialism was considerable oligarchy building, but very little in the way of state building. Under the American regime, the oligarchy consolidated itself into a national force, took control of the central government in Manila, and responded to countless new opportunities for enrichment.[73]

Through the Filipinization of government under the administration of the Democratic governor-general Francis Burton Harrison from 1913 to 1921, Filipino elites were able to rule once again by controlling both houses of Congress, and enjoying "considerable influence within the executive branch through a Council of State comprising the governor-general, the speaker of the house, the president of the Senate, and members of the Cabinet."[74] Hutchcroft points out, "Simultaneous to the expansion in the role of the state in the economy, then, was an expansion in the oligarchy's control over the state."[75] Although the caciques welcomed the Filipinization, they did not welcome complete independence from the United States. Anderson explains:

> Though the caciques could not decently say so in public independence was the last thing that they desired, precisely because it threatened the source of their huge wealth: access to the American

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[71] HUTCHCROFT, *supra* note 18, at 254.

[72] *Id.* at 25 *citing* Benedict Anderson, *Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams*, NEW LEFT REVIEW NO. 169, 3-33, at 9-10 (1988).

[73] HUTCHCROFT, *supra* note 18, at 26.

[74] *Id.* at 27.

[75] *Id.*

> market.' When the independence did come, in 1946, it was accompanied by provisions that were clearly advantageous to the landed oligarchy that controlled the state. First a bilateral free trade agreement ensured continuing dependence on the American market. Second a new source of riches came in the form of $620 million in U.S. rehabilitation assistance for war damages, which helped finance 'conspicuous consumption of luxuries and non-essential high-income groups.[76]

The advent of the Japanese occupation further illustrated the caciques power. On the one hand, the detrimental effects of the war were mostly felt in Manila and hardly felt in the provinces. Many city-dwellers retreated to peripheral provinces and municipalities, where resistance to the Japanese was strong and difficult to penetrate. Also, since most provinces and municipalities were self-subsisting, there was no need for residents to depend on the national economy. They lived on corn and root crops and were able to establish small business, while those in Manila starved. Moreover, some local elites living in areas occupied by the Japanese were able to utilize their ties with the American allied forces and Filipino guerilla forces as well as with the Japanese. They were able to use their wealth as leverage in the Japanese-established government, while at the same time engaging in foot-dragging and sabotage, which delayed Japanese forces from reaching the resistance.[77]

Consequently, although a number of them were accused of collaboration after the war, since many local elites were given government positions by the Americans, hardly any of them were prosecuted. Some of them were freed on bail, while charges against the others were dropped due to President Roxas' amnesty proclamation on January 28, 1948 to all wartime collaborators. Among the many elites released were Claro M. Recto, Jose P. Laurel, Benigno Ramos, Jose Vargas, and Jose C. Zulueta.[78]

Moreover, according to Hutchcroft, even after independence, "there was seemingly a strengthening of patrimonial features, or a blurring of the distinction between 'official' and 'private spheres'. First, within the central bureaucracy, personal contacts became even more important for entrance to the bureaucracy [than competitive examination]... in 1959, the palace and Congress worked out the so-called *50-50 agreement*, in which

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[76] *Id.* at 27-28 *citing* ANDERSON, JOINT PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FINANCE COMMISSION, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FINANCE COMMISSION 3 (1947).

[77] BENEDICT KERKVLIET, WITHDRAWAL AND RESISTANCE: THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND HOW PEOPLE LIVED DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION IN THE PHILIPPINES, IN AUTONOMOUS HISTORIES, PARTICULAR TRUTHS: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF JOHN SMAIL 181 (1993).

[78] *Id.*

responsibility for filling new bureaucratic posts would be divided equally between the president and House of Representatives. While bureau directors complained about the requirement that they bring unqualified personnel into their units, they lacked the power to stand up to external pressures."[79] Furthermore, he asserts, "Throughout the postwar years, oligarchs have needed external support to sustain an unjust, inefficient and political and economic structure; Washington, in turn, received unrestricted access to two of its most important overseas military installations."[80]

In conclusion, Philippine American-colonial and post-colonial history is laden with incidents illustrating the power of local elites. Kent Eaton claims, "In this earlier democratic period, traditional clans dominated the country's policy-making institutions and successfully blocked equity enhancing reforms. Over the course of these decades (from 1946 to 1972), elite dominated parties mastered the art of clientelism in which local power brokers delivered vote blocs to national politicians in exchange for the granting of particularistic favors and the blocking of progressive legislation."[81] As a consequence, [T]he civilian state apparatus remained weak and divided in the face of powerful oligarchic interests.[82]

VI. THE ART OF WARLORDISM

> *"[W]hether in modernizing Makati or Mindanao backwater, the truism still holds: all politics is local. Elections are won not by national party organizations but by powerful local families or clans deploying massive resources of money, machine, reputation and goodwill built up over many decades" — Leah P. Makabenta*[83]

If we are to scrutinize Philippine history, it is clear that because of intra-elite competition, rather than having revolutions, the country has wars. Wars are different from revolutions in their scope and effect. Although "wars" and "revolution" are used interchangeably nowadays, for the purposes of this paper, let us limit their meanings. In our case, we will focus on how "revolutions" are defined by the drastic change they achieve and how "wars" are defined by the conflict they produce. The emergence of

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[79] HUTCHCROFT, *supra* note 64, at 28-29.

[80] *Id.* at 28.

[81] K. EATON, RESTORATION OR TRANSFORMATION? "TRAPOS" VERSUS NGOS IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES IN 62 JOURNAL OF ASIAN STUDIES 469 (2003).

[82] HUTCHCROFT, *supra* note 64, at 30.

[83] L. P. Makabenta, *Filipino political families, an 'octopus'*, PHIL. DAILY INQUIRER, April 23, 2004 *available at* http:// www.inq7.net.

violence in the 1960s as a result of changing patron-client relations and the advent of warlordism—a means for elites to eliminate their competition during elections and to silence the dissenting masses—in the Philippines can perhaps show how subsequent uprisings after the 1960s were not revolutions but wars.

The Philippines, cites Paul D. Hutchcroft, fits Max Weber's definition of a patrimonial state:

> In general, the notion of an objectively defined official duty is unknown to the office that is based purely upon personal relations of subordination... Instead of bureaucratic impartiality and of the ideal—based on the abstract validity of one objective law for all—of administrating without respect of persons, the opposite principle prevails. Practically everything depends explicitly upon the personal considerations: upon the attitude toward the concrete applicant and his concrete request and upon purely personal connections, favors, promises, and privileges.[84]

According to Hutchcroft, apart from the weak degree of autonomy and high degree of favoritism, ("as when oligarchs and cronies plunder the state apparatus for particularistic advantage"), existing in a patrimonial framework, "the capacity of oligarchs currently holding official position to inflict punishment on their enemies" can also be present.[85]

Since patron-client ties were evolving in the Philippine countryside in the 1950s, "Private armies and warlords emerged in the early postcolonial years when the landed elite sought to subdue restive peasants and restore uncontested cacique rule."[86] As a result, by the late 1960s, Nathan Gilbert Quimpo states, "The traditional faction based on patron-client bonds was being transformed into a political machine. Instead of relying on traditional patterns of deference, the machine resorted to widespread use of short-run, material inducements to secure cooperation... With increasing intra-elite competition, politicians hired more and more 'private security guards.' Political warlords emerged with their private armies." What is more, by the mid-1970s, "While patron-client bonds could still account for a great deal of the political behavior in both rural and urban areas, they could not explain 'the role of violence, coercion, intimidation, monetary inducements, and the considerable autonomy elites have to manipulate formal democratic procedures to their liking.'"[87]

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[84] HUTCHCROFT, *supra* note 18, at 14.

[85] *Id* at 15.

[86] Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, Oligarchic Patrimonialism, Bossism, Electoral Clientelism and Contested Democracy in the Philippines 239 (2005).

[87] Id at 234.

Hutchcroft uses the concepts of elite and cacique democracy to describe the persistent and mounting rule of local elites in the Philippines. "Elite democracy," he proposes, "is the creation of cultural or ideological hegemony [by local elites to obtain]...the consent of the ruled through the use of institutions, symbols, and processes that enjoy a strong degree of legitimacy among the ruled."[88] On the other hand, "cacique democracy," as Benedict Anderson coined it, is "the marriage of American electoralism with Spanish caciquism."[89]

President Ferdinand Marcos' regime or political maneuvers seems to be the archetype for warlordism, often identified with the phrase "guns, goons and gold". However, caciques were already employing this form of politics in elections even before his term. Moreover, although Marcos' long line of cronies seems to illustrate how most local caciques have a following, some historians consider his regime as a break from cacique politics. Hutchcroft says, "The term elite democracy seems to have caught on fast in the post-Marcos era..., characterizing the coming to power of Corazon Aquino as the restoration of elite democracy. Cacique democracy returned after Marcos, and members of the traditional political families again dominated electoral politics."[90]

Since Marcos curbed the power of the local elite in order to centralize his own political power, many view his term in office as a different period in the history of the Philippines. To them, this period was still elitist in that it promoted the interests of the ruling class, but different in that it limited the ruling class. In other words, Marcos' authoritarian rule limited the access of elite. McCoy states: "[Marcos'] major achievement, and ultimate failure, lay in his attempt to restructure the national elite, replacing established families with a coterie of his own... [He] portrayed his dictatorship as a "revolution from above" but his regime soon lost its populist thrust and became a coalition of rising families expropriating the wealth of established elites... Using the state and its army, he became the first president since Manuel Quezon in the 1930s to reduce the autonomy of provincial elites. With considerable dexterity, he then employed economic regulations, backed by the threat of armed force, to pursue the main aim of his rule: changing the composition of the country's economic elite... After

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[88] Hutchcroft, supra note 78 at 14.
[89] *Id.*
[90] *Id.*

disarming the provincial warlords and stripping opposing oligarchs of their wealth, he transferred their assets to his relations and retainers."[91]

VII. PERSONAL TIES AND THEIR SOBERING EFFECT ON REVOLUTIONS

> *'Is it plausible to think of happiness not as a state of mind or a state of the pocketbook, but as an actual sovereign state? ...In study after study on national happiness levels, my country, the Philippines, gets unlikely top scores. On top of that, the Philippines is so regularly battered by typhoons, earthquakes, landslides, floods, volcanic eruptions and other natural catastrophes that it's been ranked the world's most disaster-prone nation by the Brussels-based Center for Research and Epidemiology of Disasters. For Filipinos, happiness isn't material—it's social... The small group is our bastion against life's unfairness.*
>
> *Hundreds of years of bad government have taught us to expect little from impersonal institutions. We know that our leaders are corrupt, that our country is marred by inequality, that there's plenty of injustice. We just try not to let it get in the way of enjoying life. Filipinos often describe themselves as 'mababaw ang kaligayahan', or easily amused. There's a dose of self-deprecation there. But let's take it from the national to the personal level. We all know people who aren't easily amused. You rarely think of them as happy...'*[92] — *Allan C. Robles*

A dualism crucial to understanding Philippine politics is that the Filipinos have remained for the most part an agricultural nation (albeit held together by the state and its myth systems) and that they make up a vastly accommodating populace, their ties are excessively personal and that they are highly individualistic.

According to Robles, "For Filipinos, happiness isn't material—it's social." He cites a study conducted by the University of Michigan entitled The World Values Survey comparing the "subjective well-being" of citizens in 82 countries, wherein the Philippines resulted in one of the highest scores in happiness levels in Asia, thus surpassing far richer nations such as Taiwan,

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[91] ALFRED W. MCCOY AND ED.. DE JESUS. PHILIPPINE SOCIAL HISTORY: GLOBAL TRADE AND LOCAL TRANSFORMATIONS (1982).

[92] Allan C. Robles, *Happiness Viewpoint: It Doesn't Take Much*, TIME-ASIA MAGAZINE, 37 (2005).

Japan and South Korea. Robles further asserts, "For Filipinos, happiness isn't a goal: it's a tool for survival."[93]

Because "[t]he Philippines has long been a society of unequals", "social stability" is placed "over social reform and social justice"[94] On the one hand, one can look at Robles' article as a way to contribute to the discussion of who is in power and why they are in power by showing why time and time again Filipinos have chosen to let abusive leaders go free. On the other hand, one can also look at Robles' article as a part of the ideological state apparatus. If one looks, however, at these two views, they are probably both right in that they work in dialectic fashion. After all, coercion and consensus are two sides of the same coin. Consequently, the previously mentioned dualism is actually indicative of the complexity of both the myth system and the ideological state apparatus.

Although the country's decision-makers, the elite, are the largest contributors to political warlordism, oligarchy, social injustice and economic disparity, they are also leading the discourse on social justice. At the same time, the judges tasked to adjudicate on issues of justice are themselves elite, which ensures the legitimacy of the system as a guarantor of justice. The masses have either accepted the fact that the elite themselves are the promoters as well as protectors as fact or ignored it completely due to the hardships of everyday life.

Because Filipinos have a left-over patron-client-relationship consciousness due to their history as ruler and ruled, and because of their continued adherence to the mores attached to these roles, a majority of Filipinos seem to affirm the power the elites wield. On the other hand, because the majority of Filipinos are impoverished and struggle with day-to-day subsistence, they really have no time to dabble with theories on how to provoke change. For them, there is a perceived friendly and mutually beneficial balance to this relationship of leader and follower. Quite a number of them still believe in the myth that, in order for society to function and run smoothly, there needs to be a leader "who by superior force and intelligence, will prevent some individuals from usurping the rights of others, and who will allow everyone to work in accordance with their

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[93] *Id.*

[94] J. J. CARROLL, THE PHILIPPINES: A NATION IN DENIAL, IN MEMORY, TRUTH TELLING, AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE: A CONFERENCE ON THE LEGACIES OF THE MARCOS DICTATORSHIP 259 (2001).

respective specializations."[95] To them the problem lies in finding out "Who shall be that power who will order others to whom obedience is necessary... and who will mediate on the clash of interests—that chronic disease of society."[96]

Somewhat amicable—or at the very least, temperate—ties between most of the elite and the urban poor, although uneven, continue to exist precisely because people as human beings value "stability over justice",[97] which is probably why the state exists in spite of oligarchic manipulation. Such is the reason why the Philippines is at a standstill or at least at a decelerated pace in the revolution. Hence, for Filipinos friendship and forgetting are values in themselves and are among the highest values in their everyday lives, which go beyond matters of personal preference. Therefore, they must dig deep and open themselves to discussions to understand first whether their valuation of friendship and forgetting is due to a consequent obscuration of values or an antecedent rootedness in our culture, for without understanding them, we will not be able to truly change the prevailing status quo.

VIII. CONCLUSION: REVOLVING DOOR REVOLUTIONS

> *"History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors, and issues."— T. S. Eliot[98] (Gerontion, 1950).*

The metaphor of the revolving door describes two aspects of the history of politics and revolutions in the Philippines. First, it seems that the local elite simply take turns in power; one minute it is the distinguished gentleman from Ilocos in power, the next minute the distinguished lady from Pampanga. This leads to history going around repeatedly in circles, held in by the centripetal force of traditional politics, instead of revolving efficiently to produce a desired end to arrive at the other side. Second, it seems that this repeated rotation has accumulated a number of people who have managed to slow down or even jam the system due to intra-elite competition and personal gain. At any point in time, undesirable people can leave and free the system, new ones can enter and repeat the process, or from time to time it may even run smoothly. Still, the inefficiency is in the

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[95] C. A. Majul, *On the Origin, Necessity, and Function of Government,* Ideas of the Philippine Revolution 44 (1967).

[96] *Id.*

[97] *Id.* at 260.

[98] T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1935: Gerontion* 21 (1950).

fact that only a few can pass at a time. The solution, therefore, seems obvious, to replace the door.

Hutchcroft avers, "[N]ew families appear out of nowhere and some of the old families fall by the wayside."[99] For instance, Filipinos, albeit spurred by the state and its myth systems, put such a premium on educational attainment. Sometimes even those who start out poor work their way up to high-paying jobs and high government positions end up sending their children to private schools, creating their own economic and political dynasties, and perpetuating their own new breed of elites. As such, it seems, even if one would like to get rid of the economic elites through legal means, it is still necessary for at least intellectual elites to lead our country to progress. Unfortunately, under this kind of system, they themselves end up becoming economic elites in the end. "For those families who find themselves on the right side of this ever-shifting line, the spoils are legion."[100] As Adrian Cristobal former special assistant for special studies to President Marcos once said, "Every administration in this country has spawned its own millionaires."[101]

Consequently, if a revolution really must happen, and reforms are truly myths, it will most likely occur through an alternative process, a process that is free from traditional legal methods and not easily co-opted, that will most likely be spontaneous and from the most basic of human need, and that will be immovable amidst intellectual persuasions and discourse (in other words, which cannot be subverted by rational-legal influence). It is only when the masses believe that they have something to gain from the utter and complete destruction of the system, when they simultaneously feel that the law no longer benefits them or applies to them and they have to make their own laws in order to thrive, and when they are collectively stripped down to the basest instincts and susceptible to following their embittered urges or high emotions that revolution becomes inevitable.

As Cesar Adib Majul cites,

> When a people is muzzled and its dignity, honor, and liberties are trampled upon; *when it has no legal resources* against the tyranny of its

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[99] Hutchcroft, *supra* note 78 at 22.

[100] *Id* at 21.

[101] Adrian Cristobal, former special assistant for special studies to President Marcos, as cited by Paul Hutchcroft, in *The Political Foundations of Booty Capitalism in the Philippines*, Booty Capitalism: The Politics of Banking in the Philippines 22 (1998).

> oppressors; when its complaints, supplications and laments are not listened to; when its last hopes are even uprooted from the heart and it is not even allowed to cry—then, and only then, is there no other remedy left but to wield the bloody and suicidal dagger of Revolution.[102].

However, compared to de Tocqueville's France, revolution in the Philippines does not seem to be the foregone conclusion. In fact, although there appears to be a movement towards a revolution, namely the persistence of the New People's Army in Central Luzon and Abusayyaf in Mindanao in spite of (or perhaps gaining ground because of) rampant and brazen extrajudicial killings, the future of the Philippines seems indeterminate and unpredictable, which is probably why most people would rather stick to the myth of reforms and the status quo.

A. MEN OF LETTERS, THEIR LEAD IN POLITICS AND THEIR WELL-INTENTIONED EFFORTS

While in France in the 18th Century, the men of letters stayed away from the political arena, were "without wealth, social eminence, responsibilities or official status",[103] and were far removed in their thinking from the reality of the political changes that they envisioned for France due to lack of experience in political life, in the Philippines, the men and women of letters who encourage the discussion of the need for socio-economic and social justice are members of the elite ruling class.

The middle-class and the elite are the men and women of letters, the ones with access to education and the ones cultivated by society to become prolific writers. Moreover, those considered elite nowadays are not only the old landed families, but also nouveau riche entrepreneurs and capitalists, as well as educated middle class (also known as intellectual elites). The elite are composed not only of professional politicians (administrators and legislators), but also justices and businessmen. In fact, the leadership of the elite is so wide-spread that in a number of cases, they are even the national leaders leading the rebellion. Some elite families even have a representative in the different leading elements that make up the state and society and utilize a complex web of personal and filial relationships.[104]

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[102] From a document signed by "Los Filipinos" (Oct 19, 1889), and whose authorship— C.A. Majul argues—is questionable, in C. A. Majul, *On Obedience to Law,* in Ideas of the Philippine Revolution 59 (1967).

[103] A. De Toqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution,* translated by Stuart Gilbert 139 (1955).

[104] HUTCHCROFT, *supra* note 18, at 15, 21-23.

At the same time, as result of their presence as leaders in almost all fields involving skilled work and intellectual pursuits, the literature on how to achieve social transformation is in many ways homogenous. Leaders who constantly shift alliances depending on who is in power all say the same things. They all claim that their goal is progress and sustainable development for the many. Even works considered purely literary or artistic such as poems, short stories, novels, plays and even movies are also steeped in the issues of the day, namely poverty, inequality and injustice. Likewise, although writings on political and social change by journalists and politicians alike may differ slightly in perspective, they all appear to say that corruption must be eradicated and social justice accomplished. The slight differences in approach can be attributed to differences in perspective, whether they view the situation from a coercion or consensus standpoint, and whether they believe in radical revolutionary change or conservative reforms. Still, it seems that by protesting for revolutionary change, the more radical leaders are also promoting reforms, but only more actively because the goal of reforms and revolutionary change appears the same, a more apparent equity. Looked at in another way, they act as catalysts *within* the democratic process, because they too enjoy the benefits that democracy provides.

It, therefore, appears that the reality of the Philippine situation of massive destitution is so pervasive that it penetrates individual consciousness and affects all aspects of societal life, partly because of community-centeredness and personalism; partly because of continuing patron-client ties seen in the relationship between elites and their household help (where employers more often than not still feel a sense of responsibility for the helpers who live with them and become in a way a part of their family); partly because politicians continue to use the poor and their condition in their speeches, keeping the subject of poverty up-to-date; and partly because even greedy politicians following the myth system for their own interests participate in outreach projects, which expose them to the reality of poverty and heighten their awareness of the real situation. Consequently, some elites who actually do want substantial and widespread changes are either desensitized by the constant speechifying of self-interested politicians and presence of poverty from as far back as they can remember, or overwhelmed by the massive overhaul that needs to be done and the realization of not knowing where to start.

B. ANTI-RELIGIOUS FEELING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION

Although this paper focused mainly on the role of local elites as men of letters for purposes of limiting the scope of the discussion and securing coherence, it will touch briefly on the role of religion in the Philippine context in order to reveal how the Philippine situation is different from that of 18th century France. Nowhere in the Philippines is there the same disdain for religion. There may be anti-religious feeling towards certain established religions but for the most part, there are no apparent or critical moves for its complete abolition. Furthermore, many of those who would rather do away with established religions quickly replace it with an ideological one, while quite a number of those who advocate Marxists ideologies that rebuke religion have found ways to reconcile their belief in both.

"Religious leaders", which in the Philippines predominantly means the heads of the Catholic Church, have played an integral role in the preservation of the status quo. On the one hand, the Church inculcates the values of restraint, obedience, temperance and moderation. On the other hand, many of the Church's leaders are the first to criticize government's abuses and actively pursue social change. Ever since Vatican II, the Church has taken a more progressive stance on the issue of poverty. Nowadays, because of the emergence of Liberation Theology advocated by Jesuits and Church scholars around the world, it has been the first to promote a preferential option for the poor. The Church has become both dynamic and traditional at the same time, thereby ensuring its survival. Unlike the Catholic Church of France in the 18th century which was considered by many of the revolutionaries as archaic and backward thinking,[105] the Church today has kept itself afloat amidst the demands of the changing times with the use of reason. It would be easy to discredit the work of the Church as just another element in the Ideological State Apparatus, a coercive organ of conformity, a body of useless and self-inhibiting practices, or a hierarchy that meddles with issues beyond its jurisdiction, if placed under the close scrutiny of delegitimizers. But it prevails because it has managed to rationalize, liberalize and thereby realize its purpose, and now provides visible benefits to society. By offering a certain degree of happiness, it acts as an inhibitor to the revolution.

If religion is really an opium for the masses, then many people would gladly use it for their survival. For many, religion fills or at least masks

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[105] Toqueville *supra* note 102 at 149.

the void that economic disparity and social injustice has left behind. Oftentimes, the parish priest, for example, assumes the role of altruistic patron to his underprivileged parishioners, guaranteeing that they have food when they are short of money, helping them with their medical needs by referring them to fellow parishioners or friends, offering his gratuitous services to them as a presider in times of jubilation or loss, or as a mediator in times of conflict. Given this example, it may be worth noting that even prior to the Filipinization of government under the Americans was the beginning of the Filipinization of the Church even under Spanish rule. Moreover, if we look at it more closely, the Church hierarchy is itself an elite group of educated men who wield a certain degree of power over the people under them. Other times, however, it is simply the belief that religion provides something beyond their everyday experience, which gives the masses something to hold on to, that preserves the power of religious institutions.

C. THE DESIRE FOR REFORMS VS. THE DESIRE FOR FREEDOM

In the Philippine context, the desire for freedom is integral to and inseparable from the desire for reform. In fact, the desire for freedom is the accelerant that fuels the fire for reforms. Thus, the doublespeak regarding public affairs that politicians often engage in is not always sufficiently described by reducing it to simple bickering, agenda-setting or political-maneuvering, for often the doublespeak is indicative of something deeper that is frequently unexamined, the diversity in the ways people envision freedom. Consequently, when some people disagree on reforms or revolutionary changes, they may have the same ideal outcome of a more visible freedom and sustainable equity for all. The divergence of opinion may, nevertheless, be on the accompanying effects of this freedom and how much they are willing to sacrifice on the way to that freedom they envision.

While their men of letters had lofty ideals and unrealistic expectations of what a revolution entails, due to a lack in experience,[106] and while their physiocrats had a ruthlessly egalitarian view of what had to be done,[107] the view of the Philippines' educated class who shape the discourse on freedom, equality and fraternity—of politicians, lawyers, economists, journalists, etc.—has already been infused with the very ideals that resulted from the French experience. As such, it has become difficult for people to

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[106] Toqueville *supra* note 102 at 140-141.
[107] Toqueville *supra* note 102 at 158-159.

think of reforms for reforms' sake, without any ideal behind them. Not only that, the view of the educated class on what freedom is has also been blocked and bombarded by all the theories and experiences of other nations. Accordingly, it would perhaps be accurate to say that while most of the Philippines' decision-makers, movers and shakers have an idea of the changes that have to be done, and the freedom, justice or happiness that must be attained, the paradigms surrounding their views are very diverse.

Lastly, the 18th century physiocrats or economists, who led the clamor for economic reforms with an idea of economic freedom detached from socio-political freedom and the "rights of man", were inspired by Chinese practices that were rigidly egalitarian and utilitarian.[108]

All things considered, while 18th century France's physiocrats and economists could take such a pure theoretical stance, the Philippines' economists no longer have the same luxury. The country's social scientists, whose disciplines converge at certain points yet differ in orientation or focus, have become conscientious of the mistakes of other nations and wary of any change that is absolute or rigid. Consequently, it seems difficult to lead the masses, committed to just one ideology or theory.

D. PROSPERITY THAT WHETS THE APPETITE OF THE MASSES, PRACTICES OF THE CENTRAL POWER, AND REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Moreover, although the Philippines has had periods which the people could look at as better times, such as the high point of the Marcos regime or the golden age of patron-client relations, there have not been many changes in either Philippine politics or social life. The government has been the same in that the central power is weak amidst capitalist interests. There have been no revolutionary changes in the administrative system. And although the situation has worsened in that corruption is more brazen nowadays, and although there are periods in Philippine history that experienced more financial stability and a more equal distribution of wealth, the ups and downs of the country are not as drastic as those of other countries, such as the United States during the great depression. The situation has remained somewhat stable in that changes are mostly incremental, cushioned by the self-sustaining system of provinces, and the same in that personal ties continue to promote friendships that forgive the

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[108] Toqueville *supra* note 102 at 162-165.

indiscretions of those in power. There has been no high pedestal for the masses to fall from. Consequently, there are no real reforms that have whetted the appetite of the masses to speak of. If anything, minor reforms instituted by the government have actually contributed to the legitimacy of the state.

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